

## Chapter 5

### School evaluation

*For many years, schools have been required to undertake school development planning and offered supporting tools, but recent policies aim to strengthen the role of self-evaluation. A well established system of external school evaluation incorporates quality assurance and transparency of procedures and results. Since 2010, the Education and Training Inspectorate is rolling out a more proportionate and risk-based approach to school inspection, which puts an increased focus on school self-evaluation. The Department of Education produces comparative school performance measures that feed into school evaluation and are used to promote school system improvement. A Formal Intervention Process allows the Department to intervene more actively in schools that are identified as in need of improvement. There is a proposal to reorganise traditional school support services within a new Education and Skills Authority.*

## Context and features

### *Overview of the approach to school evaluation*

In Northern Ireland, there are well established mechanisms for both school self-evaluation and external school evaluation. Both types of evaluation draw on comparative school performance measures and these are used to promote school system improvement.

Schools are governed by a Board of Governors (BoG) and are responsible for self-evaluation and school improvement. A legal framework for school self-evaluation was put in place by the 1998 Education Order, which introduced a mandatory school development planning process. More recently, the Department of Education has developed policies that strengthen the focus on school self-evaluation for improvement: *Every School a Good School (ESaGS)* (DENI, 2009), updated guidance for school development planning (DENI, 2010) and *Count, Read: Succeed* (DENI, 2011).

The Department of Education is legally responsible for the external evaluation of schools, as specified in the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Within the Department of Education, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carries out the external evaluation (known as “inspection”) of early years, primary, special and post-primary schools. The ETI also inspects professional teacher education, further education and work-based learning provisions on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning, provision for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and works along with the Criminal Justice Inspection in prison inspections. Since 2010, the ETI is rolling out a more proportionate and risk-based approach to school inspection, which puts an increased focus on school self-evaluation. The ESaGS policy also includes a mechanism for the Department of Education to intervene more actively in schools that are identified as in need of improvement.

The aim of school evaluation is to improve student learning and student outcomes. Historically, there has been a school support function offered by the Education and Library Boards (ELB). In the proposed Education Bill 2012, the Department of Education envisages a new body, the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), to offer support to all schools. This dynamic is an important context for the OECD review team findings.

### *Responsibilities and roles in school self-evaluation*

Since 1998, school self-evaluation has been firmly rooted in the School Development Plan (SDP)<sup>1</sup>. Boards of Governors have the duty to prepare, and periodically revise, an SDP. They can delegate the execution of this to the school principal, but the BoG has to approve the SDP formally. The SDP contains school aims, targets for raising standards, evaluations of where the school stands at a certain starting point, and assessments of the attainment of school aims and student results.<sup>2</sup> School self-evaluation is built into the SDP process. Schools are encouraged to be ambitious in their aims: the main objective of the SDP is that schools choose priorities and measures to raise standards.<sup>3</sup> The *Every School a Good School* policy (DENI, 2009) reaffirms the school’s responsibility for improvement (Box 5.1).

### Box 5.1 The Every School a Good School policy

*Every School a Good School* (ESaGS) weaves the Department of Education’s policy to raise standards into the actions schools take. The ESaGS policy is based on the premise that schools themselves are best placed to identify areas for improvement and to implement changes that can produce better outcomes for pupils.

Schools are accountable to parents for the action plans that summarise their results and the actions taken to improve further. Schools are encouraged to publish these on their websites for a broader public.

The key principles of the ESaGS strategy emphasise the school’s responsibility for improvement:

- The recognition that every school is capable of improvement; that the school is best placed to identify particular areas for improvement; and that sustained improvement comes from within the school;
- The recognition that, while the Department of Education and its support bodies are accountable for overall standards, it is the school and its Board of Governors that is accountable for the standards achieved by its pupils;
- The recognition that the improvement process is a collaborative one, requiring communication and co-operation within the school and between the school and its parents and the wider community that it serves.

But key principles also recognise the need for adequate support services for schools and, if necessary, external intervention:

- An acceptance that support from their governors and from the education support bodies is vital in ensuring that schools can deliver sustained improvement;
- A recognition that there will, at times, be a need for an external view of progress as well as support and, possibly, more active interventions to ensure, in keeping with the pupil-centred focus of the policy, that poor quality educational experiences are not allowed to continue;
- A corresponding need for the nature and purpose of any interventions to be clearly explained and fairly applied.

Source: DENI (Department of Education, Northern Ireland) (2009), *Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement*, DENI, Bangor, [www.deni.gov.uk/esags\\_policy\\_for\\_school\\_improvement\\_final\\_version\\_05-05-2009.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/esags_policy_for_school_improvement_final_version_05-05-2009.pdf).

### *Envisaged role for the proposed Education and Skills Authority*

The ESaGS strategy (DENI, 2009) aims “to provide the support systems needed to help all schools to engage positively in robust self-evaluation and to use the findings from self-assessment and performance and other data to determine priorities and to plan for continuing development”. The proposed Education and Skills Authority (ESA) would be responsible for school improvement functions. School principals and Boards of Governors will be required to co-operate with the ESA on school improvement. They will also be accountable to the ESA for the quality of provision and the standards attained by pupils. The ESA will be responsible for:

1. monitoring the performance of individual schools, particularly the standards of attainment;
2. challenging schools about their performance where it is clearly declining or where the ETI identifies weaknesses;
3. providing the necessary support to schools seeking to improve;
4. taking the actions required to deliver and sustain improved performance in those schools where provision and progress is deemed unsatisfactory. (ESaGS, p.44).

ESaGS envisaged that the ESA would be established in 2010.<sup>4</sup>

Policy documents ESaGS (DENI, 2009) and *Count, Read: Succeed* (DENI, 2011) state that the Education and Library Boards, working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools in the case of Catholic maintained schools, and later the ESA, will:

1. support schools in preparing their School Development Plan, drawing on benchmarking data and providing guidance;
2. monitor the quality of each School Development Plan and provide feedback to the school;
3. assess the appropriateness of the school's annual literacy and numeracy targets;
4. monitor each school's achievement in literacy and numeracy;
5. challenge (where necessary) any grant-aided schools on their plans, targets or outcomes. (DENI 2011, paragraph 3.5).

### ***Responsibilities and roles in external school evaluation***

The legal framework for school inspection is set out in the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, which grants the Department of Education inspection powers. Within the Department of Education, external school evaluation is carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The ETI's mission is "promoting improvement in the interest of all learners" (ETI, 2012a). Its work consists of:

1. providing an unbiased, independent, professional assessment of the quality of learning and teaching, including the standards achieved by learners;
2. identifying and reporting on educational developments;
3. commenting on the influence and outcomes of the policies of the three departments (Department of Education, Department for Employment and Learning and Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure) within the education, training and youth sectors;
4. publishing reports on individual organisations, and summary reports on aspects of the quality of educational, training and youth sectors in Northern Ireland.

Tasks 1 and 4 make up the heart of external school evaluation and will be discussed below. Tasks 2 and 3 show the bridging function that the ETI has between schools and policy. On the one hand, they hold schools accountable for results attained. On the other hand, they can judge the outcomes of departmental policies on the basis of information acquired within the schools themselves. The ETI can also identify more generally factors within the school system that explain differences in educational quality, which can

provide important information for system improvement. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 6.

### ***Responsibility for school principal appraisal***

School principal appraisal is undertaken within the Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme (PRSD) (see Chapter 4 for an overview) and is the responsibility of the Board of Governors. Together with the principal, the BoG establishes a set of objectives at the beginning of the appraisal cycle for the year ahead. It reflects on possible outcomes and agrees how best to maintain progress. The objectives need to be related to three key areas: (i) leadership and management; (ii) pupil and curriculum development; and (iii) the personal and professional development of the principal. The objectives also need to reflect the School Development Plan. During the review year, related evidence is collected and the progress towards the objectives is assessed in a final review discussion that results in a Review Statement (DENI, 2013).

### ***Articulation between school evaluation and teacher appraisal***

Teacher appraisal should form an integral part of the school development planning process (see also Chapter 4). The School Development Plan should provide an evaluation of the professional development for staff and there is an expectation that this links to the PRSD scheme. The Board of Governors has a legal responsibility to ensure that the professional development and performance of teachers employed within their schools is reviewed annually in accordance with this Scheme and within the context of the School Development Plan. Employing Authorities have a statutory duty to promote the effective management of schools.

Although the ETI evaluates the quality of school development planning, it does not evaluate or access the results of the PRSD.

### ***Indicators and tools used in school self-evaluation***

The *Every School a Good School* policy (DENI, 2009) specifies areas to be addressed in school self-evaluation and the regulations for school development planning were revised accordingly in 2010. Along with a financial assessment and an assessment of school progress against specified targets, schools must present a summary and evaluation of the school's strategies for:<sup>5</sup>

- a) learning, teaching, assessment, and the raising of standards of attainment among all pupils, in particular in communication, using mathematics and using Information and Communications Technologies (ICT);
- b) providing for the special, additional or other individual educational needs of pupils;
- c) promoting the health and well-being, child protection, attendance, good behaviour and discipline of pupils;
- d) providing for the professional development of staff;
- e) managing the attendance and promoting the health and well-being of staff;

- f) promoting links with the parents of pupils at the school and the local community, including other schools, the business community and voluntary and statutory bodies;
- g) promoting the effective use of ICT, including its use to support learning and teaching, continuing professional development and school leadership and management.

Schools are expected to use performance and other data in making these evaluations. However, schools are free to choose their approach to self-evaluation and official policy encourages creativity. The Department of Education’s guidance for school development planning offers a set of characteristics in four broad areas for self-evaluation: child centred provision; effective leadership; high quality teaching and learning; and the school connected to its community<sup>6</sup>. It also includes an annex providing references to different self-evaluation approaches and tools, as well as an annex with the school evaluation judgements (performance descriptors) used by the ETI in external evaluation. The guidance for school self-evaluation was developed collaboratively by a small working group of representatives from school principals, Education and Library Boards, CCMS, C2k and the Department of Education including the ETI.

There are a number of centrally developed supporting tools offered to schools. The ETI has developed supporting self-evaluation tools that mirror the key questions and quality indicators used in external school evaluation (see Box 5.3). A major supporting tool for self-evaluation is the ETI series *Together Towards Improvement* (ETI, 2013). This series of documents presents different sets of quality indicators which have been developed to support primary schools, post-primary schools and schools offering special educational programmes. The ETI has also developed evaluation materials for specific subjects, as well as specific pre-inspection material for short inspections in primary schools<sup>7</sup>.

To help support schools in their statutory self-evaluation, the Department of Education provides a tailored set of benchmark data to each school (see Box 5.2). These are also sent directly to the Board of Governors. An important support tool for schools that was developed by the five ELBs is Classroom 2000 (C2k). C2k is a project that provides the infrastructure and services to support the enhanced use of ICT in schools in Northern Ireland. The Department of Education sends the benchmarking data to schools using C2k.<sup>8</sup> As part of the C2k service, each school has access to a School Information Management System, including an Assessment Manager software.

#### **Box 5.2 Benchmarking data provided to schools by the Department of Education**

The Department of Education provides each school with a set of benchmarking data that can support self-evaluation activities. Data are compiled from the Annual school census (Census), the School Leavers Survey (SLS), the Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER), data collected by the CCEA and the Education and Library Boards (ELB), and the Teacher Payroll. A series of indicators are presented with the school result, plus averages for Northern Ireland and in the case of post-primary schools, averages for grammar schools and non-selective post-primary schools (“non-grammar”). For example, benchmarks provided to post-primary schools include (not exhaustively):

- percentage of students staying on (Year 12 to Year 13 / Year 13 to Year 14) (Census)

### **Box 5.2 Benchmarking data provided to schools by the Department of Education** *(continued)*

- pupil attendance (average rate for Years 8 to 12) (Census)
- school leavers achievement by gender (male/female), free school meal entitlement (FSME/non-FSME) and Special Educational Needs status (SEN Stages 1-5/non-SEN) (SLS)
- percentage of school leavers by destination (employment / further education / higher education / training / unemployed / unknown) (SLS)
- percentage of Year 12 pupils achieving different qualification benchmarks (GCSE or equivalent – 5 / 7 / including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics) (SAER)
- percentage of pupils in final year of an A level or equivalent course of study achieving qualification benchmarks (3+ A level A\*-C / 2+ A level A\*-E) (SAER)
- percentage of pupils achieving KS3 English and mathematics (Level 5 or above / Level 6 or above) (CCEA)
- percentage of pupils suspended (Years 8 to 12) (ELB)
- days lost per teacher due to sickness (for all schools except voluntary grammar schools) (Payroll)
- pupil teacher ratio (Payroll)

The data set also includes a series of graphs, presenting anonymised scatter plots of school averages for each post-primary school, with the specified school highlighted (Y axis percentage of pupils achieving specified qualification; X axis percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals).

### ***Indicators and procedures used in external school evaluation***

#### ***Different types of external school evaluation (inspection)***

At time of the OECD review, there were two main forms of inspection in the primary sector: focused and short. A focused inspection (typically five days) is a full inspection of achievements and standards, quality of provision for learning and leadership and management and usually includes a pre-inspection visit. A short inspection (typically two days) inspects the same domain; however, it contains a stronger element of self-evaluation and is conducted in small primary schools or in those deemed to be low risk. A short inspection may not include a pre-inspection visit. This reflects a risk-based approach. The number of inspectors depends on the number of teachers in a school. Subsequent to the OECD review visit, there is just one approach to primary school inspection with the differentiation being between low risk/small schools (2 days) and higher risk/larger schools (5 days).

In the post-primary sector, standard inspections (typically five days) are performed of achievements and standards, quality of provision for learning, and leadership and management. They typically include a pre-inspection visit. Two or three subject departments are inspected and the inspection team includes subject specialists accordingly. There is no equivalent of a short inspection at the post-primary level. Subsequent to the OECD review visit, the post-primary model of inspection has been



revised with a stronger focus on the whole school rather than on individual departments. This was introduced in September 2013.

### *Indicators and performance evidence used in external school evaluation*

Box 5.3 presents an overview of the key question and quality indicators used by the ETI in external school evaluation. These are also promoted in school self-evaluation via tools developed by the ETI to support schools (see above).

#### **Box 5.3 Indicators used in key areas of external school evaluation**

There are three main inspection domains: achievement and standards; the quality of provision for learning; and leadership and management. Each of these domains is broken down into key questions and quality indicators. For each indicator, an evaluation is made using one of six evaluative descriptors: Outstanding, Very good, Good, Satisfactory, Inadequate, Unsatisfactory.

An important domain is assessing achievement and standards. The Key Question here is: how well do learners develop and achieve? The more detailed questions are:

- Achievement: how far do learners achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?
- Standards: how far do learners acquire and develop the dispositions, skills and capabilities for life-long learning and contribute to (or lay the foundations for their eventual contribution to) the community and the economy?
- Progression: how far do learners demonstrate progression within the school, building on their prior achievements, and preparing appropriately for the next phase of their learning?
- Fulfilling potential: how well do individual learners, at all levels of ability, surmount the barriers they may have to learning and achieve their potential?

To evaluate this, the ETI has at least three sets of quantitative data available:

1. pupil results on assessments developed by teachers (in post-primary education: teacher-developed tests for Cross-Curricular Skills);
2. pupil results on commercial tests chosen by schools to match their teaching and learning approach;
3. benchmarking data provided by the Department of Education (pupil performance at end of Key Stages, and on the GCSE and A-levels) categorised into bands of schools relating to the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In addition to quantitative data, the ETI collects evidence (through direct observation, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work) relating to a range of qualitative indicators which include, but are not limited to: the quality of the pupils' engagement in and response in lessons; the range, extent and quality of the pupil's written work; the development of the pupils as young adults, including their skills and dispositions, thinking skills and personal capabilities; and their demonstration of leadership skills in both the formal and informal aspects of their learning and experiences.

### *Determining the overall effectiveness of schools and need for follow up*

The ETI evaluates the “overall effectiveness” of a school, drawing on its evaluation of the school in the three domains (achievements and standards, learning and teaching;



and/or leadership and management). The ETI does not use a scoring system to evaluate a school's overall effectiveness. Rather, each inspection team reaches a professional consensus taking account of all available evidence, including its direct evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, in the context of its knowledge of the school. There are some procedures specified for deciding the actions following a school inspection, if follow up is required. The ETI only follows up schools in which it has identified a number of areas for improvement. These can be identified in any of the main inspection domains when provision is evaluated as "satisfactory", "inadequate" or "unsatisfactory". The more significant the identified areas for improvement, the sooner the ETI will return to monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing these (18-24 months for "satisfactory" and 12-18 months for "unsatisfactory" or "inadequate"). Within that period, there will be one or more interim follow-up visits and the first of, at most, two follow-up inspections. If the ETI evaluates a school's safeguarding arrangements as unsatisfactory, it will re-inspect these within six weeks.

### *Accounting for school context in school inspection*

The school context is an important part of school inspection. All individual school inspection reports include a descriptive overview of the school context. To evaluate the standard of pupil achievement in a school, the ETI uses a combination of benchmarked data and professional judgement to take account of the school's context.

In primary education, the inspection team examines the statutory assessment at the end of KS1 and KS2 benchmarked against all primary schools in Northern Ireland and also against schools in similar circumstances. During inspections, pupil achievement is evaluated via: lesson observations; conversations with pupils; an inspection of children's written work to note progress and challenges; and a verification of the assessment procedures. This is complemented with the ETI's knowledge of what is achievable in similar circumstances. With this combination of benchmarked data and professional judgement, the ETI team will consider and agree on the level of pupil achievements and standards at the school.

In post-primary education, the same evaluative procedure is followed. The ETI pays attention to the history of the school and especially to the nature of the intake to the school on a range of measures and to any change in school intake over time. There is also a professional judgement of the school's value-added by accounting for pupils' level of cognitive ability at intake (as indicated by the standards achieved at the end of KS2, together with any other assessment information schools may have, including from standardised tests) when examining their progress in achievements at the end of Years 10, 12 and 14, for schools offering post-16 programmes. When public examination results are compared they are compared to the average results for schools with a similar intake based on pupil entitlement to free school meals, as calculated by the Department of Education's Statistics and Research Team.

### *Frequency of inspection*

Until September 2010, the ETI aimed to inspect each school at least once every seven years with more frequent inspection of a school being undertaken where it was deemed necessary. From 2010, the ETI is introducing a more proportionate and risk-based inspection strategy whereby the need for an inspection is identified by information from school performance indicators, risk factors (including the length of time since the last formal inspection), and from ongoing monitoring of schools by the District Inspectors.

For schools entering the Formal Intervention Process and/or receiving follow-up Inspections, more frequent visits are planned (see above).

### ***Capacity for external school evaluation***

The number of inspectors working for the ETI in 2011/12 was 62. This includes a system of District Inspectors (DI). The DI visits schools within a particular region independent from the formal inspection process. In this way they build local knowledge, keep abreast of school developments and are a key asset in implementing the new risk assessment model. For formal inspections, the composition of inspection teams varies depending on the sector, school size and focus of inspection:

- In primary education, an inspection team consists of a Reporting Inspector (RI), Deputy RI and other team members depending on the size of the school. Sometimes the District Inspector fulfils one of these roles. Depending on the number of teachers at the school, more inspectors are added, and if possible Associate Assessors.
- In post-primary inspections, the RI is usually supported by the deputy RI and together they explore issues associated with leadership and management and whole-school standards and outcomes. Two additional members of the team focus on cross cutting themes such as pastoral care and safeguarding, the provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and careers education advice, information and guidance. Two or three subject departments are also inspected in detail by subject specialists. The DI may fulfil one of these roles. An example of the inspection of mathematics can be found in the ETI report (2010) *Follow-up to Better Mathematics*. Subsequent to the OECD review visit, deployment now varies due to a greater focus on whole school evaluation.

Since 2004, the ETI's inspection teams have been complemented with principals or vice-principals who are released by their schools. These are known as "Associate Assessors" (AAs). In 2011/12 a new cohort of 100 AAs was trained. Each AA participates, as a full team member, in a small number of inspections annually, normally not more than two per year.

### ***Reporting and use of results***

#### *School evaluation results*

All inspection reports on individual schools, including from follow-up inspections, are published on the ETI website. An oral report is given at the end of the inspection and the school receives a draft of the written report for fact checking. The inspection report is published within six weeks of the inspection.

#### *Comparative school performance measures*

The Statistics and Research Team within the Department of Education produces school performance measures for post-primary schools on the basis of the data it receives from schools as part of the annual data collections (see Chapter 6). Schools use the C2k platform to report these results. The major comparative school performance measures are student qualifications at the age of 16 on General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) or equivalent qualifications; and at the typical age of 18 on General Certificate of Education Advanced level (A Levels) or equivalent qualifications. Such qualifications

are recognised throughout the United Kingdom within the national qualifications framework and have currency for pupils in terms of access to further and higher education and/or the labour market.

The Department of Education uses these measures to promote school improvement. For example, the *Count, Read: Succeed* (DENI, 2011) strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy includes targets for the percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs with grades A\* to C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to publishing system level performance data<sup>10</sup> with presentations of trends and breakdowns by gender, school type (grammar vs. non-selective post-primary schools) and pupil entitlement to free school meals (see Chapter 6), the Department of Education publishes individual school results on the Schools+ database. Users can find information for an individual school, including performance measures (key stage results and/or GCSE, A level or equivalent qualifications, as appropriate) as well as contextual information such as student enrolment, number of pupils with special educational needs, number of full time equivalents of teachers, religion and ethnicity of pupils, and finance.<sup>11</sup>

### *Unofficial school league tables*

Although the Department of Education sets benchmarks for school performance, the official policy is not to publish “league tables” showing school average performance on comparable student performance measures. The official position is that these do not provide a valid basis for comparing performance between schools as they take no account of school intake or any other factors that may affect school performance. However, the United Kingdom’s Freedom of Information Act means that the public has the right to ask for centrally collected and held data. Accordingly, the press can request data from the Department of Education and typically produce league tables from these data. For example, the Belfast Telegraph publishes league tables including average results for all post-primary schools and the average for Northern Ireland<sup>12</sup>. The table also specifies whether a school is academically selective or not (“grammar” or “non-grammar”).

## Strengths

### ***Official policy supports and promotes effective self-evaluation***

The school development plan (SDP) has been a legal requirement since 1998. However, the revision in 2010 has strengthened the role for self-evaluation with clear specifications of the areas to be covered and an expectation that evaluation is underpinned by performance and other data. Among other things, this was based on evidence from school inspections that identified well developed self-evaluation as a strength in the school development planning process (DENI, 2010). The SDP is positioned as an action document. It is tied into annual action plans and concrete targets and there is an expectation that schools will adapt their SDP to incorporate any inspection findings within six months of the inspection taking place. The ETI expects the 2010 SDP requirements will contribute to schools further developing their self-evaluation capacity. In schools at the leading edge of self-evaluation practices, the SDP is a powerful instrument.

Schools should make a copy of the SDP available to parents, as well as submitting a copy to each member of the BoG and staff. Schools are encouraged to engage parents and

their local community in their improvement plans and the BoG has to document in its annual report the steps it has taken to develop links with the community (DENI, 2010). This seeks to strengthen horizontal accountability.

In addition, the approach to school self-evaluation is examined as part of the inspection process. Each individual school inspection report includes information and an evaluative judgement in three major areas. A review of randomly selected individual school inspection reports shows that “leadership and management” includes information on the school development planning process, the priorities set, whether and how criteria are set and measured, the use of data among school staff, and the quality of action planning. It also includes comments on the effectiveness of governance, including the challenge and support function played by the BoG. The Department of Education’s recent decision to send data packs directly to the BoG also aims to support the BoG challenge and support function as part of the school self-evaluation process.

Findings from the OECD review support a more prominent role for school self-evaluation and its strong potential for school improvement. In particular, the Department of Education’s approach to both clarify expectations of the self-evaluation role within the school development planning process, and to raise the role of self-evaluation activities and results in the external evaluation process is expected to promote a more effective self-evaluation culture in schools. The vast majority of OECD countries have legal requirements in place for schools to conduct self-evaluation, but these vary significantly in nature and may not explicitly mention self-evaluation, but rather be positioned within strategic or development planning cycles (OECD, 2013). However, the setting of strategic or development planning requirements may not be adequate to stimulate an effective self-evaluation culture in all schools and school capacity to undertake self-evaluation varies enormously within many OECD countries. Findings from an ongoing research project on approaches to external school evaluation in six European systems lend support to the Department of Education’s policy approach (Ehren et al., 2013): the processes stressed in external evaluation, such as school self-evaluation, transformational leadership and collaborative staff activities, are important and effective levers for school improvement actions; the expectations set in external school evaluation and stakeholder sensitivity to the results of external school evaluation are significantly related to schools improving their self-evaluation processes; and schools that are improving see systematic self-evaluation as a vital development strategy.

### ***The ETI’s tools can promote a common evaluation language and a more evaluative approach to self-evaluation***

On a continuing basis, schools are expected to undertake some form of self-evaluation on the quality of provision, standards and outcomes, and leadership and management. The ETI has developed a self-evaluation framework, *Together Towards Improvement* (TTI) (ETI, 2013), and subject specific support documentation. These include quality indicators for schools to use in self-evaluation and a clarification of the framework used in external school evaluation. This promotes a common language for school evaluation and a shared understanding of factors related to school quality. Both New Zealand (Nusche et al., 2012) and Scotland (OECD, 2013) attach a great deal of importance to ensuring that school self-evaluation and external school evaluation use the same language. Both systems provide schools with supporting self-evaluation tools that are built on the criteria used in the external school evaluation framework. In Scotland, these are widely used by schools, including most independent schools. Livingston and McCall (2005) argue that such an approach means “teachers are more likely to see

external inspection in a developmental perspective rather than a judgemental one”. In Northern Ireland, good use of the ETI developed or similar supporting tools is one aspect identified through school inspections as underpinning more effective school development planning processes (DENI, 2010). Fewer than 10% of respondents in an independent survey administered to schools that had been inspected in 2011/12 reported that they had not used TTI and 90% reported it is quite or very useful (ETI, 2012d).

Schools are familiar with the evaluation rating used by the ETI in external evaluation. These are, for example, included in an annex to the school development planning guidelines. At the time of the OECD review visit, for primary schools, the ETI provided a self-evaluation pro-forma that schools could complete before a short inspection. This school self-evaluation pro-forma aimed to help the school perform an internal audit and thus provide an interface for the school self-evaluation and the inspection visit to the school. The pro-forma sought the school’s evaluation, with supporting evidence, in the three key areas and related indicators in TTI. This may have prompted some schools to make use of more specific criteria in their self-evaluation activities.

### ***Well established and tailored support to schools to promote the use of data in self-evaluation activities***

A generally strong infrastructure of national or local support for self-evaluation as a process has been identified as an important element in ensuring effective self-evaluation practices (SICI, 2003). In Northern Ireland there is well-established support to schools to promote the use of data in self-evaluation activities.

All schools are provided with a centrally developed information management and analysis system (the School Information Management System, including the Assessment Manager facility, provided by C2k). Schools can use this software to store individual pupil results from an array of different assessments used at the school (see also Chapter 3). Schools can also use this in a more quantitative way to monitor progress at the school or class level against targets set in the school development plan. This is user friendly and a great support for school self-evaluation as it gives schools considerable flexibility in uploading all types of information from continuous assessments to summative assessments. Some schools make use of this analytical software to monitor outcomes and learning progress throughout the school, by uploading results from commercial tests that pupils sit upon entry to the school and at subsequent stages during their time in the school (see also Chapter 3). Further, schools can use this to generate information for the ETI and as such, it is a helpful intersection between schools and the ETI during school inspections.

For the past 10 years, schools have received a benchmarking and target setting data package from the Department of Education. This is in addition to the publication of a series of statistical bulletins during each school year presenting system-level aggregate benchmark statistics (see Chapter 6). The tailored data package allows the school to compare itself to average data for Northern Ireland, and to situate its performance on key indicators in relation to absolute performance levels for all schools, and schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. The Department of Education uses different bands on the FSME measure. More recently, the Department of Education decided to send out data packages directly to the BoG. This aims to further stimulate their role in self-evaluation activities and, where applicable, to support their responsibility in school principal appraisal.



### ***Many schools exhibit a high level and sophistication of self-evaluation activities***

The Chief Inspector's report 2010-2012 (ETI, 2012c) shows growth in overall effectiveness of schools over four years. The document is not specific about the interventions that led to this improvement, but it seems reasonable to attribute this success to a combination of the government's targets and programmes, as well as support and reporting activities by the ELBs, the Regional Training Unit (RTU), the ETI and the CCEA. In a survey on school leadership, the ETI concluded that self-evaluation activities play an important role in school leadership. The OECD review team learned of examples where schools tie their self-evaluation activities in with the School Development Plan and the PRSD procedures. Many targets are broken down into very concrete action plans, at the level of course content (*e.g.* to be reviewed), assessments (*e.g.* to achieve targets) and pupils (*e.g.* to focus on specific groups of pupils). The ETI and the RTU have identified many schools with well-informed classroom observation arrangements linking into school self-evaluation processes<sup>13</sup>.

The ETI has worked with colleagues in the RTU, C2k and the ELB Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) to help develop school principals' capacity to make better use of school performance data (ETI, 2012b). The OECD review team has seen good examples of such data use by principals, heads of department and teachers. As noted above, schools in Northern Ireland benefit from good supporting tools to aid data use. Schools can use these to: inform decisions on where to intervene and provide extra support or stimulation to pupils; identify where there is a need to raise achievement expectations (to instill a culture that there is always room for improvement, *i.e.* "no satisfaction - Cs"<sup>14</sup>); and construct more sophisticated analytical measures to assess progress at the school level, *e.g.* measures of added value.

### ***External school evaluation is broad and based in quality assurance***

The ETI has a broad and legitimised inspection framework. The framework not only covers outputs and teaching and learning processes, but also the quality of provision for learning, pastoral care and leadership and management. These broad areas are supported by international research on the characteristics of effective schools (OECD, 2013). In particular, the focus on leadership and management is coherent with the heightened importance of self-evaluation and a move to a more proportionate external evaluation approach (OECD, 2013). The framework is published and promoted for use by schools via the *Together Towards Improvement* tools (ETI, 2013). This is important as a lack of clarity of the criteria used in external school evaluation can undermine the external school evaluation process (Faubert, 2009). During the OECD review, nobody questioned the legitimacy of the inspection framework. The framework is flexible and responsive to needs (*e.g.* responding to the current need to boost school leadership capacities).

There are established quality assurance procedures in external school evaluation. There is an annual evaluation exercise conducted by the Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA) to seek feedback from members of institutions that have been inspected during that year. The ETI has been awarded the Customer Service Excellence Standard for the last eight years. This independent evaluation is another way to heighten the legitimacy of the ETI (Faubert, 2009). It can also provide valuable information for improving the ETI's capacity to conduct objective and impactful inspections (OECD, 2013). The ETI sets high expectations for its services and has devised a code of good conduct for inspectors fitting its mission and vision.<sup>15</sup> This document also contains the

values that the ETI cherishes, the conduct that is expected from schools, and a description of the quality assurance procedures.

The ETI uses a combination of training and common guidelines to maximise coherence in judgement among different inspectors. Inspectors and Associate Assessors are trained in: information on the principles of inspection; the procedures used in inspections, including observing, evaluating and recording, recording and grading; and the protocols and processes of inspection<sup>16</sup>. All inspectors use the guidelines that underpin the indicators for subjects or for whole-school aspects to aid the process of inspection and to ensure consistency. These indicators are accompanied by features of what may be considered as good practice and are further illustrated with more detailed guidance. These guidance documents are reviewed and updated regularly through subject panels, staff information and staff development programmes. Common approaches for a number of important areas such as child protection, and standard conclusions must be used for all inspection activity (DENI, 2013).

### ***The principle of the use of evidence in school evaluation is well established***

School inspection makes use of first-hand evidence via the collection of information from different stakeholders, an examination of pupils' work, and direct observation of the teaching and learning process. The ETI conducts interviews and issues confidential questionnaires to parents, teachers and other school staff to seek their views on the school's quality. These multiple perspectives help to increase objectivity in evaluation results. To evaluate the achievement and standards at the school, inspectors can draw on both standardised data and teacher professional assessments. Inspectors have access to publicly available performance data, like the Levels of Progression (LoP) at the Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (which are assessed by teachers) and the GCSE and A level qualification data (which are centrally set external assessments, typically with a major, if not 100%, component of external examination). Schools can also show inspectors assessment information held at the school level in the Assessment Manager. For primary schools, this may include results from the central computer-based assessments (NINA and NILA). However, the results are not benchmarked and are only made available to schools. This fits in with the student assessment policy to promote diagnostic and formative assessment. Also, many schools use commercial tests to provide baseline measures and assessment of pupil progress through the school years (see Chapter 3). Schools can use the Assessment Manager for data analysis in their self-evaluation and inspectors are able to observe to what extent and how schools do this. Finally, there is a clear expectation that school self-evaluation is evidence based: the regulations on the School Development Plan specify that schools should use performance and other data when evaluating the effectiveness of their strategies in key areas.

### ***The ETI has mechanisms to build on and improve its working knowledge of schools***

The ETI accesses schools on a regular basis and has mechanisms in place to build on and strengthen its working knowledge of what goes on in schools. This mirrors the situation in most countries with school inspectorates: inspectors can access all school types on a regular basis and can make evaluative comparisons based on a common inspection framework. During inspections, the ETI has access to school developed assessment and evaluation information and can make sophisticated use of this evidence. The ETI also has a mechanism to learn from school leadership and senior educators. The OECD review team highlights the engagement of “Associate Assessors” (AAs) to join



school inspection teams as an excellent mechanism to bring in up-to-date experience from schools (Box 5.4). AAs are senior staff from schools, normally principals, vice principals or senior teachers. This works as a mutually beneficial professional development exercise: it brings up-to-date practical knowledge from the field into the ETI and also serves as useful training in evaluation techniques for participating AAs. During specific professional development days, the ETI shows AAs how to undertake classroom observation and what to look for in evidence (ETI, n.d.).

The ETI uses a system of District Inspectors that ensures a more regular contact with schools independent from the formal inspection cycle. This system appears to be appreciated by schools and can provide timely qualitative feedback on potential quality concerns. As such, the District Inspector system is a useful tool to assess risks to school quality.

#### **Box 5.4 Recruiting senior educators to join external school evaluation teams**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) recruits “associate assessors” from among senior staff in schools (e.g. school principals, vice principals or senior teachers) to participate in the external evaluation of individual schools. The ETI recruits associate assessors via public advertisement and an interview process. Selected individuals join a pool of associate assessors and can be invited to join an external school evaluation team on an individual school inspection. Normally an individual will not be involved in more than two external school evaluations each year. Associate assessors receive training from the ETI and are introduced to the procedures and performance indicators used in external school evaluation.

This strategy has two objectives: first, it is hoped that the experience of involvement in assessing quality in another educational establishment will help to develop the individual’s capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve the provision in his/her own school; second, the presence in the team of someone coming directly from the school context adds a dimension which can help to strengthen the ETI’s awareness of the current perspective of schools.

#### ***Classroom observation is a core part of school evaluation***

The observation of the quality of learning and teaching is an important part of the external school evaluation process. The ETI conducts classroom observations in all types of school inspections, including the follow-up inspections. This signals the importance of classroom observation in evaluation activities and is promoted more widely among school principals via their participation in the inspection process as associate assessors (see Box 5.4), who receive specific training in classroom observation techniques. The analysis of a random selection of inspection reports on individual schools show comments on the school’s monitoring and evaluation processes, including classroom observation, as part of the inspection of “Leadership and management”. Inspections also generate feedback on the quality of teaching and learning more generally. This underlines and promotes the importance of classroom observation as part of school self-evaluation activities. Although the ETI does not verify the results or processes of the school’s PRSD scheme, these are expected to be linked to school development planning processes and include the observation of teaching as part of the monitoring phase (see Chapter 4).

#### ***External school evaluation emphasises the school improvement function***

The Department of Education emphasises that improvement belongs to the school, as reflected in the key departmental policy for school improvement (ESaGS). The ETI

mission statement is “Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners”. The OECD review team learned that the ETI makes it clear to AAs that inspection is about helping schools on their journey to improvement. Formal school inspections identify areas for improvement and it is expected that schools address these. Inspection reports on individual schools include reference to areas for improvement in the conclusion to the report. Analysis of a random selection of inspection reports shows that this reporting has become more explicit and detailed since 2012.

Inspections generate feedback for improving the teaching and learning process. During formal inspections, inspectors give oral feedback to teachers whose lessons have been observed, and individual school inspection reports at the post-primary level may include annexed reports on special areas of focus, *e.g.* the English Department, History Department, etc. (Although with the revised model of post-primary inspection, individual subject departments will no longer be inspected). Inspectors also give oral reports to school leadership on the results of surveys administered to parents, teachers and other staff. The District Inspectors can monitor and comment on the quality of the school’s self-evaluation process, which can provide timely feedback for improvement.

The ESaGS policy has introduced a Formal Intervention Process as part of external school evaluation.<sup>17</sup> Recognising that schools are responsible for their improvement, follow up is based on the School Development Plan and the areas for improvement identified at the original inspection (DENI, 2009). The ETI has an improvement conversation with the school based on this. There is evidence that this follow-up mechanism is making a difference as the majority of primary schools entering the Formal Intervention Process are improving, although there is less improvement seen in post-primary schools (see Chapter 1). The OECD review revealed examples of schools that had demonstrated improvement as a result and that had recognised the process – although difficult and clearly potentially damaging for the school’s reputation – as one of professional development and improvement for the school.

The OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education have identified the use of a follow-up mechanism in external school evaluation as a way to improve the impact of external school evaluation (OECD, 2013). Several systems have recently introduced a policy to better target school evaluation to schools with identified need of improvement. There is evidence in Korea and the Netherlands that such targeted focus and/or follow up is an effective way of improving the impact of external evaluation and both systems have seen improvements in many of the targeted schools (OECD, 2013).

### ***Alignment between the instruments for school self-evaluation and external school evaluation***

A key recommendation from the OECD review is to align external school evaluation with school self-evaluation (OECD, 2013). From an instrumental perspective, the procedures used in self-evaluation and external school evaluation are well aligned in Northern Ireland. School evaluation policies promote a systematic linkage between the instruments for external evaluation and self-evaluation. Although there are subtle substantive differences, procedures are broadly coherent because they have been developed in reference to each other. A key instrument promoting alignment is the benchmarking data prepared by the Department of Education. Individual and tailored data sets are sent to each school and can be used in self-evaluation. They are also shared with the ETI as an important evidence base for external evaluation. The ETI has developed self-evaluation tools that correspond to the inspection framework and can be used by

schools. Regardless of the chosen tools for self-evaluation, during the external school evaluation process the ETI examines the school development planning process, including the school's action plan and the school's self-evaluation process. In this way, the key instruments for school self-evaluation feed into school inspection.

## Challenges

### *Variability in self-evaluation capacity among school leadership and the BoG*

The Department of Education's ESaGS policy recognises that the school and its BoG are accountable for the standard of pupil achievement at the school (DENI, 2009). The legal responsibility for the School Development Plan ultimately lies with the BoG, although this is a group of volunteers and there is no guarantee that the members have evaluation expertise. It is expected that the BoG plays the role of critical friend to the school. Typically, the responsibility for conducting and leading the self-evaluation process is delegated to the school principal.

Evidence from external school evaluations indicates that the capacity for school self-evaluation varies among schools. Schools may have varying structures in place to support self-evaluation activities, including some with clear roles and responsibilities among staff and others where this remains among the school leadership. The ETI points to capacity concerns among school principals (and also Boards of Governors) and that school self-evaluation is often not conducted in the most effective way. The ETI has recommended that schools develop more concise and incisive self-evaluation reports (ETI, 2012c). School reports on their results and progress towards targets set in the School Development Plan can be very broad, containing lots of information and several action plans, including new action plans following evaluation. Most reports do not show at a glance what the status of a school is and where it stands in relation to its SDP targets. In addition, the fact that the Board of Governors comprises a group of volunteers poses a challenge for the ETI, with a need to strike a careful balance in "inspecting" the BoG's role in self-evaluation.

For many years, the ELBs have delivered training in self-evaluation approaches to school principals and BoGs. The impact of such training has not been evaluated, but the most recent Chief Inspector's Report (2010-12) highlighted that the quality of leadership and management is still not good enough in 39% of post-primary schools, 22% of primary schools and 30% of pre-school settings (ETI, 2012c). It is also evident, based on the ETI's reports extending back at least ten years that shortcomings in leadership have been remarkably persistent. In a special report on school principal's leadership capacity, a relationship has been sought between school leadership quality as measured through the TTI quality indicators and school principal qualifications acquired through training. The conclusion was that none of the training methods clearly contributed to better school leadership. Therefore, there needs to be a stronger focus on school principals and the leadership team being equipped with the skills to address significant underachievement in a school. There is a clear call for better leadership of self-evaluation processes, and: "The development of the inherent capacity for leadership within the school workforce requires the development of broader leadership capabilities including a robust, 'no excuses' approach to self-evaluation for improvement." (ETI, 2013).

### *Implementing a new inspection approach and clarifying different roles for inspectors*

School inspection in Northern Ireland is going through a significant transition period. The established approach to school inspection has been to conduct quite intense and comprehensive evaluations at each inspected school. In schools with highly developed self-evaluation activities, this is inefficient as it doubles up on internal evaluation processes. The OECD review team gained the impression that the established approach and inspection cycle was not tenable. In this context, it is understandable that the ETI is starting to implement a risk-based approach to planning its resources for annual school inspections. However, the introduction of such an approach is not without challenges.

In 2010, the ETI introduced a risk-based model of inspection for schools. The planned reduction in the percentage of schools inspected in regular inspection activities, excluding follow-up inspections (FUI) is shown in Table 5.1. (The annual business plan for 2013/14 is not yet available, so data are presented for 2011/12 and 2012/13). The idea is to target 40% of regular inspection activity at schools considered to be at higher risk than others. The OECD review team notes the potential tension on the ETI's capacity to conduct inspections in schools, given its other inspection responsibilities and the potential for increased inspection demands in early childhood and other institutions.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 5.1 Number of inspections conducted (2011/12) and planned (2012/13)**

Sector	Inspections completed in 2011/12	FUI completed over past 24 months (2011/12)	Total inspections completed in 2011/12, including FUI	Total number of schools (2011/12)	Number of planned inspections 2012/13	Number of planned FUI 2012/13	% of schools inspected in 2011/12, excluding FUI	% of planned inspections in 2012/13, excluding FUI
Preprimary	89	20	109	478	105	11	18.6%	22.0%
Primary	128	36	164	854	117	27	15.0%	13.7%
Post-primary	29	12	41	216	26	18	13.4%	12.0%
Other	25	15	40	--	82	14	--	--
<i>Total:</i>	271	83	350	--	330	70	--	--

*Source:* ETI (2012b), *Inspection Leading to Improvement: Business Year 2010-2011*, ETI, Bangor.

During the OECD review, some stakeholders noted that the frequency of formal school inspections (before the introduction of the new risk-based approach) had been quite low. The planned regular inspections in 2012/13 (14% of primary schools and 12% of post-primary schools) indicates a regular cycle in which each school is visited once every seven years (Table 5.1). In the case of a long period without an external school evaluation, it can be argued that schools have no vision of what is expected of them, and that the accountability culture is not adequate. The OECD review team learned that some schools would prefer a more regular visit from the ETI in order to provide more timely feedback on potential areas of improvement. The rationale being that the longer processes at the school level go on in an inefficient way, the more challenging and difficult it is for schools to address these; and that this may avoid overly negative evaluations from the ETI that could potentially damage the school's reputation. Although formal school

inspections are supplemented by regular visits from the District Inspector, these appear to be low profile and there may be confusion as to how visits from a DI differ to that of inspectors during a formal inspection, especially when these include classroom observations. There is a risk that this confusion may grow as the risk-based approach is introduced. The DI can be a key resource for the ETI to keep in contact with schools and to assess risks among schools in the district.

Demands on the ETI to conduct survey inspections to provide information at the system level may also place tension on resources for the regular inspection cycle.

### ***Mitigating school and educator sensitivities regarding the Formal Intervention Process***

It is clear that the Formal Intervention Process is stimulating improvement in many of the schools entering the process, which should mean that children experience important improvements in their schooling. However, the identification of schools in need of improvement is a difficult and delicate process. During the public consultation on ESaGS, some respondents raised concerns that there was “too much focus on measurement, labelling and ultimate threat of closure” (p.68, ESaGS) and the OECD review team heard some stakeholders raise similar concerns during the review, especially around the nature of communicating with schools and fears of media reports on schools during this process.

The OECD review team’s impression was that much of these concerns related to a lack of adequate support offered to schools, as the ESA has yet to be established, but the ELBs’ CASS support capacity had been significantly reduced (i.e. a delay in implementing the support function). The outlined policy for formal intervention envisages a key role for the proposed ESA (DENI, 2009, Annex C): “ESA and school governors and management develop and implement actions to effect improvement”. At the time of the OECD review visit, it was unclear what form future support services would take as the Curriculum Advisory Support Services (CASS) of the five Education and Library Boards had been significantly reduced over recent years in the build-up to establishing the proposed Education and Skills Authority (ESA).

With the publication of the ESaGS policy ensuring an important level of transparency in the new procedures, the OECD review team gained the impression that the Department of Education could further clarify concrete details of how the follow-up inspections within the formal intervention process take place at the school level. It can be expected that this is a particularly challenging time for a school and that clarity of procedures is of crucial importance in communicating with the school staff, students, their parents and the wider school community. For example, how should the school leadership discuss results with each of these important stakeholders? Such concerns can add to potentially high stress levels for school principals and their staff.

### ***A need to further develop the ETI’s capacity for risk-based analysis***

School inspection makes good use of data and professional judgement. Currently, the ETI receives data from the C2k system and from other parts of the Department of Education. Summative student assessment data are available at the end of each key stage. KS 1, 2 and 3: teacher assessments of pupils against the Levels of progression; KS4: the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and equivalent qualifications; post-16 non-compulsory provision: the GCE Advanced level (A levels) and equivalent qualifications. However, the ETI does not conduct original calculations and with this model it is restricted in its ability to move fully to a risk-based assessment system. The



ETI does not have an established data analysis function. Building capacity to perform this function would increase even further the ETI's credibility by demonstrating that the analysis of data is important. As indicated above, the District Inspectors can feed back information on potential risks to school quality; the challenge is finding a way to feed DI information more systematically into the ETI's risk assessment processes.

### *Accounting for school context when evaluating performance*

The OECD review team notes that the Department of Education has various challenges in reporting on the role of school context in evaluating school performance. The Department of Education publishes performance information for individual schools in the Schools+ database. Users accessing this website can read the caution that the information contained in the tables does not provide a valid basis for comparing performance between schools, since it does not account for school intake or any other factors that may affect pupil performance. Indeed, performance tables based solely on “raw” student test results essentially measure the quality of the school intake rather than the teaching in the school (Willms, 1997; Hoyle and Robinson, 2003 in Rosenkvist, 2010) and are poor measures of school performance (OECD, 2008). While the caveat on the Schools+ Database is helpful, this approach demands a high level of expertise and judgement in comparing schools that are more or less similar.

At the same time, the press publishes unofficial school league tables and this accentuates the “market” aspect in post-primary education by influencing how parents choose their child's school. Newspapers aim to present information on the quality of individual schools in a transparent fashion, typically by showing all schools ranked from “high” to “low” on a particular indicator. The major example found by the OECD review team is the league table published by the Belfast Telegraph, using the government's benchmark of five GCSEs (including equivalents) including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics at grades A\* to C. When releasing results to the media, the Department of Education includes interpretational caveats. In the case of the Belfast Telegraph article these are reported, but remain rather abstract to the reader.<sup>19</sup> This may lead to misinterpretation of school performance rankings that are damaging to equity and create incentives for schools not to accept pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic background with a less academic profile or with special educational needs (Faubert, 2009). In this context, concerns on the lack of a transparent and common contextual value-added measure for Northern Ireland have been flagged in the ESaGS policy (DENI, 2009).<sup>20</sup>

However, this also poses a challenge for school inspection. While the ETI accounts for school context in evaluating a school, the lack of common objective measures heightens demands on professional judgement. The availability of information to judge “value added” will vary from school to school. While there is a high degree of transparency in individual school inspection reports on the school context, it is less clear how the ETI accounts for school context in making judgements across schools and sectors. Analysis of a random selection of individual school inspection reports shows that the ETI has tried to emphasise school context in more explicit and consistent ways:

- Since 2011 these have included benchmark information on achievement in “similar schools” at the post-primary level. Some inspection reports include the definition for similar schools as those in the same free school meal entitlement category, as defined by the Department of Education. The majority of reports analysed include a table of achievement presenting the school's results and

including rows of information for similar schools with a comparative descriptor, i.e. “in line with average”, “above average” etc. A minority presented the actual average achievement results for similar schools. Only a few of the random sample specified which free school meal entitlement category the school belonged to.

- It is of note that from 2013, individual school inspection reports at the post-primary level include much more detailed information on school context, including on achievement at intake for Year 8 pupils (% with Level 5 and above in English; % with Level 5 and above in mathematics; % with Level 4 and above in English; % with Level 4 and above in mathematics). Some of these also include information on special educational needs, if relevant.
- Reports at the primary level include short descriptive paragraphs on the school context. Evaluative text on achievements and standards includes reference to how the key stage assessments compare to the average in all primary schools, but statistical tables in the annex do not include comparative average figures for achievement or for proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals or with special educational needs.

At the same time, the Schools+ Database presents information on examination achievements for individual schools, including benchmarks for selective or non-selective schools (grammar average and non-grammar average, respectively), but not for “similar schools” as measured by pupil entitlement to free school meals.

## Policy options

In general, school evaluation is a well-developed component of the Evaluation and Assessment framework in Northern Ireland. Building on these existing strengths and the identified challenges, the OECD review team suggests a few refinements. These policy options seek to increase alignment and to strengthen the implementation of the core school improvement policy:

- keep the focus on improvement and go further in linking school inspection with self-evaluation capacity;
- ensure a healthy balance between external challenge and support to schools;
- identify best aspects of existing training for school leadership and upscale;
- promote the use of professional standards in school principal appraisal;
- develop guidance materials and specific training for Boards of Governors;
- promote the importance of plurality of perspectives in school self-evaluation;
- strengthen capacity for risk-based assessment within the ETI;
- further clarify the role of school context in evaluating school performance.

### ***Keep the focus on improvement and go further in linking school inspection with self-evaluation capacity***

A major recommendation from the OECD reviews of evaluation and assessment in education is to adapt external school evaluation to reflect the maturity of the school evaluation culture. The OECD recognises that different systems are at different starting points and that moving to a differentiated external school evaluation approach requires a



high level of intelligence about school characteristics and performance. The OECD recommends that systems only move to such an approach once the evaluation culture is consolidated, evaluation capacity in schools is satisfactory, and data gathering and analysis within the school evaluation framework is established (OECD, 2013). Northern Ireland is a system that meets such requirements: there are well-established systems for data collection that can feed into school evaluation at both the central and school levels; many schools exhibit a high level and sophistication of self-evaluation activities; the ETI has helped to build school leadership capacity in classroom observation and self-evaluation activities via its engagement of associate assessors; and as part of the inspection process the ETI directly assesses a school's self-evaluation processes and how these are used to manage and improve school quality. Therefore, there is a good evidence base for introducing a more proportionate approach to school inspections.

Many OECD systems have recently introduced or are moving to a more proportionate approach to external school evaluation. This often is in tandem with a more prominent role for school self-evaluation in the external evaluation process and aims to take into consideration the “health” of each school (a risk assessment). As in Northern Ireland, New Zealand is a system that emphasises the school improvement function within external school evaluation. It recognises the importance of school self-evaluation capacity in bringing about and sustaining school improvement and the school's self-evaluation capacity (self-review) is a core factor in determining the length of the external school evaluation cycle, i.e. the length of time between external reviews to a specific school: four to five years for schools with strong performance and a school-wide culture of rigorous critical reflection and self-review that is contributing to sustaining this performance and continuous improvement; every three years for schools performing well and showing evidence of critical reflection and established processes for conducting and using self-review (the majority of schools); and an ongoing review process over a one to two year period for schools experiencing difficulty. Like the Formal Intervention Process in Northern Ireland, this aims to develop school capacity for self-review. The ongoing review period may be shortened if schools show evidence of self-review practices that are helping to lift student achievement. Among the OECD review systems, New Zealand comes closest to a collaborative school evaluation model (Box 5.5). Most European systems have some mix of a parallel model (where the school has its own system of self-evaluation and the inspectorate uses a different system) and a sequential model (where inspectorates follow on from the school's self-evaluation) (OECD, 2013). Feedback from schools in New Zealand indicates that they perceive external evaluation as a way to validate and where necessary improve their own evaluation and development processes (Wylie, 2009).

### **Box 5.5 New Zealand: School evaluation with a focus on improvement and collaboration**

In New Zealand, external review is designed as a cycle, a recurrent process of visits and revisits to schools to assure quality, to sustain improvement and to intervene where necessary to address weaknesses and support improvement strategies. External review has elements of a collaborative school evaluation model, incorporating at the same time a sequential model where schools conduct their own internal review followed by a visit of the external team from the Education Review Office (ERO).

New Zealand's approach is collaborative in the sense that the ERO and schools attempt to work together to agree on a rounded picture of the school in which there is mutual recognition of its strengths and consensus on areas for development. "Building a picture of the school", according to ERO staff, relies on an integration of school self-review and external review, taking the most useful aspects from both. The choice of success criteria, indicators and evaluative questions, provide the framework and tools for the creation of a collaborative portrait.

Its collaborative intent is exemplified in the various steps of the review cycle. The first step is for the ERO team to meet with the Board of Trustees and the senior leadership team to design and agree on the shape of what will take place during the visit. After the review there is a joint discussion with the aim of reaching agreement on findings. This strives to engage a genuine dialogue around the school review report, its accuracy and recommendations and is, apparently, generally successful in achieving that aim.

Essential to any collaborative model is a high level of trust on both sides. In New Zealand, there is clear evidence of goodwill on both sides and that the quality assurance model is seen by all as work in progress. This evaluation model is generally well regarded because it is seen as low in threat, does not provoke high anxiety, and is formative in intent. The outcomes of school reviews are widely deemed as both credible and useful for school development.

ERO works on the principle that schools' own self-review should be so embedded in its daily practice that the visit of an external body is neither disruptive nor unwelcome. The apparent receptivity of schools to external review does suggest that the earlier apprehension of "inspection" has been removed or at least attenuated. The generally positive response to reviews by school staff and teacher organisations may be explained by its non-threatening nature, its positive focus on good practice, its receptivity to the school's own efforts at improvement and its primarily formative character. Taken together, these factors predispose schools to take on board ERO's suggestions for change.

*Source:* Nusche, D., et al. (2012), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264116917-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264116917-en)

In Northern Ireland, the initial approach to introducing a more proportionate model of school inspection has been for the ETI to develop specific self-evaluation reporting tools. There are specific proforma developed for reporting the results of self-evaluation activities for regular inspections in primary and post-primary schools. Similarly, schools that enter the Formal Intervention Process are required to produce specific self-evaluation forms. This attempts to promote the importance of school self-evaluation as part of the school improvement process. It is important that the ETI evaluates the use of these specific forms and gathers feedback from schools on their experience in using such specific reporting tools. Findings from the OECD reviews of evaluation and assessment in education raise a note of caution on requiring schools to produce specific reports as part of self-evaluation, as it may hinder the development function of school self-

evaluation (OECD, 2013). This would support the decision subsequent to the OECD review visit to accept a school's own self-evaluation and not to require the completion of a pro forma.

Information from individual school inspections and also from the less formal visits from District Inspectors can help to document school's level of self-evaluation capacity, and this can be a key criterion as part of the risk assessment by the ETI. In this way, the ETI can officially recognise a school's capacity to assure its quality and undertake actions for improvement. In schools with ETI-recognised capacity for self-evaluation, the results and reports coming from school self-evaluation can substitute the ETI inspection process. This would aim to avoid a duplication of evaluation activities and the products of the school's self-evaluation (whatever the approach taken) would feed into the inspection process. A more serious validation of the school's self-evaluation results can lead to a reduction in the first-hand data collection from the ETI, notably via classroom observations.

An additional key criterion in the risk assessment can be the school's capacity to undertake end of key stage student assessment. This will be a way to better align the student assessment and school evaluation policies. The current moderation procedure managed by the CCEA can be used as a basis to accredit schools that have proven their capacity to undertake end of key stage assessment against the Levels of Progression (see Chapters 3 and 6). In the Netherlands, a similar accreditation system existed in vocational education and training. The quality of examinations offered is part of the inspection framework for vocational education and training. Up until recently, the examination quality was assured by an examinations accreditation body, but this has merged with the Dutch Inspectorate of Education. There may be room to extend the CCEA training in moderation procedures to members of the school leadership team to build capacity to assure the overall quality of student assessment in their school.

### ***Ensure a healthy balance between external challenge and support to schools***

The OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education have highlighted the importance of ensuring a healthy balance between external challenge and support to schools. In Northern Ireland, both challenge and support functions are long established and the key school improvement policy envisages a balance in these functions, including support to the BoG in their ability to challenge and support their schools. While the Department of Education has the ability to challenge schools that are in most need of improvement through the Formal Intervention Process, at the time of the OECD review, the support function was in a state of flux with the winding down of the CASS support services to schools and the fact that the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) had yet to be established.

The ETI carries out the challenge function and this avoids any potential confusion of the ETI's role. This is not to say that the ETI does not contribute to school improvement as external school evaluation stimulates schools to improve and to seek support where necessary, and there is evidence of improvement in many schools that have entered the Formal Intervention Process. External school evaluation allows the identification and dissemination of good practice throughout the school system, which can also feed into policy improvements at the system level (see Chapter 6).

Experiences in other OECD systems indicate that the identification of areas for improvement is not enough and underscore the importance of building school capacity to undertake improvement actions. Emerging results from research in six European systems

with school inspectorates points to the fact that a school's acceptance of feedback from external school evaluation does not necessarily lead to improvement actions (Ehren et al., 2013). Possible interpretations of this finding are that schools either resist recommendations from external evaluation or lack capacity to act on them. Evidence from the School Improvement Group in Ireland (established in 2008 to follow up schools identified during inspections as experiencing significant difficulty) indicates that schools differ in their response to targeted follow up and improvement is a lengthy process: a third have successfully exited the process; a third are showing significant improvements; and the remainder have persistent concerns or have recently entered the process (Irish Department for Education and Skills, 2012). Although a very different context to Northern Ireland, there is evidence from the United States that many schools identified as underperforming within test-based accountability systems fail to make significant improvement and that there has been insufficient attention paid to resourcing effective support services (OECD, 2013). In Canada, the implementation of school improvement policies has been particularly successful in Newfoundland and Labrador. Senior department officials attribute the effective implementation to the support system and capacity building available to schools (Fournier and Mildon, forthcoming; Sheppard, 1995).

The challenge from the ETI needs to be effectively balanced with an adequate offer of support to schools. An efficiency review identified significant differences in the relative value attributed by ELBs to CASS, as judged by the amount of core funding they allocated to these services (DENI and DFPNI, 2011). The proposed ESA will play a key role here and it represents a significant opportunity to harmonise and strengthen the support offered to schools by drawing on the extensive experience in the existing support bodies and identifying their most effective practices. Importantly, the ESA support should help the BoGs to effectively carry out their challenge and support functions.

Striking the right balance between the challenge and support function is not easy. Other OECD systems have introduced a certain amount of “external pressure” to push some schools to undertake improvement actions. The Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands offer examples of OECD systems that have done this via targeted school inspection. For example, in the Netherlands, a school with three consecutive years of insufficient student achievement levels is given the status of a “very weak school”. In 2011, the period for schools to exit from the status “very weak school” was lowered from three to two years and there are plans to further reduce this to one year (Dutch Ministry of Education and Science, 2011 and 2013). Although such policies aim to avoid the unacceptable situation where children experience inadequate schooling for a number of years, the introduction of targeted interventions in certain schools brings with it the risks of stigma and reputation damage to schools. Importantly, both systems have implemented policy measures to ensure the support function. These seek to promote alignment between the challenge and support functions. At the same time there is recognition of the need to improve the quality of the support offered (Box 5.6).

### **Box 5.6 Challenge and support in the Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands**

#### **Linking support to the school inspection process**

In the Flemish Community of Belgium (Shewbridge et al, 2011) and the Netherlands (Scheerens et al, 2012), the principle of “freedom of education” means a high degree of autonomy for schools. However, the school evaluation policies targeting schools with serious quality concerns include measures to raise the pressure on these schools to seek support for school improvement.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, this balance is conceived as a “quality triangle”: schools are legally responsible for their quality; Pedagogical Advisory Services offer support for school improvement (support services are offered by different umbrella organisations each representing a number of schools and governing boards associated along denominational or other lines); the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training sets student attainment standards and the Flemish Inspectorate of Education monitors school quality and signals schools with quality concerns (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010). If the Flemish Inspectorate of Education judges that a school needs assistance to improve, the school is obliged to use external support from the relevant Pedagogical Advisory Service. At the other end of the spectrum, schools receiving a positive recommendation from the Flemish Inspectorate of Education are judged to be of sufficient quality and to have the necessary capacity to monitor and further improve their quality. It is of note that the Pedagogical Advisory Services are not unequivocally in agreement with the policy on mandatory support for schools receiving a negative recommendation from the Flemish Inspectorate of Education. An argument against it is that some schools would be obliged to leave their own path of development in favour of the quality aspects within the inspection framework.

In the Netherlands, all very weak schools seek support from a “Flying Brigade” organised within the PO-Council (the council for schools in primary education).<sup>1</sup> A school board with a very weak school can seek the (free) support of a group of advisors with an extensive amount of experience in counselling very weak schools. The focus of the advice is the indicators on which the Dutch Inspectorate of Education has judged the school to be insufficient and the support offer is tailor-made. However, a good degree of alignment is assured by established co-operation between the inspectorate and the taskforce that coordinates the Flying Brigade.

#### **Reviewing the quality and nature of the support offer**

Of equal importance, there is a more general offer of support to all schools both to prevent any deterioration in school quality and to promote further improvement and innovation. In the Netherlands, this support has been offered since the 1970s. Educational support was essentially organised along denominational lines. Since 2006, primary schools receive a lump sum containing a certain amount of funding for training and support. This means that schools are free to engage support from any supplier. Currently, schools can choose from denominational suppliers, private training companies and importantly, from the PO-Council which offers several lines of support (*e.g.* reading and arithmetic, running a governing board, avoiding “weak school” status, etc.). There have also been efforts to better tailor support to schools. In 2008 it was concluded that while there may be much support available to schools, it may not necessarily be founded on an empirical body of knowledge about what works in education (Scheerens et al, 2012). The 2008 Parliamentary Review of Educational Policy in the Netherlands<sup>2</sup> showed, that government decisions on innovations in education were not sufficiently informed by empirical knowledge.

### **Box 5.6 Challenge and support in the Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands (continued)**

As such, in addition to fundamental research and policy-based research, research grants are also available for practice-based research (Satijn, 2012). This is one way to involve schools, training and support suppliers and research parties (universities, research organisations) in joint projects to deliver both the kind of support a school or group of schools wants, and to build knowledge of whether this type of support or approach really works.

1. For further information: [www.poraad.nl/content/vliegende-brigade](http://www.poraad.nl/content/vliegende-brigade)

2. For further information:

[web.archive.org/web/20080405202650/http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerleden/commissies/TCO/sub/index.jsp](http://web.archive.org/web/20080405202650/http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerleden/commissies/TCO/sub/index.jsp)

### ***Identify best aspects of existing training for school leadership and upscale***

With school self-evaluation at the core of school improvement, there are ever pressing needs to ensure adequate self-evaluation capacity among school leadership. The OECD review has revealed excellent examples of professional development for school leadership in Northern Ireland, notably the ETI's Associate Assessor programme that has been described as “the best professional development available” for principals and vice principals. There have also been concerted efforts to strengthen school principal training provision, although a recent evaluation indicates that some improvements could still be made. The ETI recommended that all providers of school leadership training cooperate together to identify the best features of each programme, a view consistent with the current trend of sharing education (ETI, 2013). The OECD review team endorses this recommendation, which should also be a matter of priority in redesigning support services in the ESA. There is room for a more active collaboration of the ETI in redesigning these services by promoting its specific training offered to associate assessors, notably the techniques for classroom observation.

### ***Promote the use of professional standards in school principal appraisal***

The OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education have revealed that several systems that give prominence to the role of school leadership in school improvement have developed a set of professional standards for school leadership. This can bring the advantage of providing common reference criteria for all those undertaking the appraisal of school principals and other members of the leadership team. If well designed and implemented, professional standards for school leadership can help to clearly communicate realistic performance expectations for school leaders geared towards improving student outcomes (Pont et al., 2008). Only limited research has been undertaken on the ways in which the use of professional standards affects school leadership practices, school outcomes and school leader appraisal. While this highlights the importance of the capacity of those undertaking the appraisal, it does underline that professional standards can contribute to a fair, valid and reliable appraisal process (Kimball et al., 2009). If applied coherently, these ensure that all evaluators hold a shared conception of effective school leadership. A set of professional standards that clearly lay out what the best school leaders can achieve can help focus appraisal towards the



improvement of all school leaders, especially those that are already performing well, but could aim for excellence (Reeves, 2009).

In Northern Ireland, the Regional Training Unit developed a set of professional standards for school leaders in 2005 (RTU, 2005). However, similar to the OECD review team's findings for teacher appraisal (see Chapter 4), these do not appear to be used as a common reference for school leadership appraisal. The active use of school leader professional standards would be particularly helpful in the case of Northern Ireland where responsibility for school principal appraisal lies with the BoG. New Zealand is a system with a similar approach and in which external school review has revealed diversity in the capacity of the Boards of Trustees to support school evaluation (Nusche et al., 2012). The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the school sector developed an Educational Leadership Model in 2008 (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008). Since that time, there have been two further publications that draw on the latest research and best practice models for specific leadership roles. The Ministry pays attention to reporting different case studies to make the major aspects of the Educational Leadership Model ever more concrete for school leaders and other stakeholders.<sup>21</sup> Other public school systems in different parts of Australia and Canada have developed professional standards in collaboration with education departments and school leadership professional bodies (OECD, 2013).

### ***Develop guidance materials and specific training for Boards of Governors***

The Board of Governors plays a key role in school evaluation in Northern Ireland. As is the case in other OECD systems, it is a challenge to build evaluation capacity at this level. The OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education have revealed different approaches to stimulate the BoG role, including policies to send school inspection reports to school boards and not to schools (the Netherlands), and to appoint one member of the board as a training co-ordinator with a dedicated half hour at each meeting for a training session (Scotland). The Department of Education already supports the BoG in a number of ways. There are specific briefing documents prepared by the ETI for the BoG to prepare for school inspections. The BoG now also directly receives the central data held on schools. In this way, the BoG is aware of the information base available for both school self-evaluation and school inspections. It is envisaged within the ESaGS school improvement policy that the future ESA will support schools in their work on School Development Plans and will monitor the quality of these plans and the adequacy of the targets set by the school. In turn, the policy stipulates that schools and the BoG will be required to cooperate with the ESA on school improvement.

In going forward, the OECD review team underlines the importance of developing guidance materials and training for the BoG to support them in conducting their evaluation responsibilities. Already, the ETI individual inspection reports comment on the BoG under the evaluation of leadership and management. The ETI, therefore, has a body of knowledge to point to the BoG with effective evaluation models. These should feed into any guidance materials eventually developed by the ESA. A national programme of training for the BoG could help to build the necessary scaffolding for the BoG to challenge their school principals on the SDP and its targets. Given the voluntary nature of the BoG, there would need to be flexibility in when and how such training is offered. However, there is likely to be room to stimulate and engage professional exchanges among different BoG.



A central recommendation from the OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education is that systems promote the appraisal of school leaders' competencies for monitoring, evaluation and assessment (OECD, 2013). One critical aspect of the BoG's responsibilities is to ensure that the professional development and performance of teachers is reviewed annually in accordance with the PRSD and SDP. This gets right to the heart of the evaluation process and as such it is critical that the BoG are aware of the importance that the school principal and the leadership team conduct classroom observation and provide developmental feedback to teachers. Indeed, it is expected that in addition to a review discussion, the BoG conducts task and classroom observations as part of the annual appraisal of school principals. These areas, therefore, seem to be the priority in designing specific training and supporting materials for the BoG. Part of school leader appraisal in the Atlantic provinces in Canada includes the collection of stakeholder views on the school principal's performance. This can include interviews and/or feedback questionnaires administered to parents, teachers and students (OECD, 2013).

### ***Strengthen capacity for risk-based assessment within the ETI***

The ETI underlines the importance of using a strong evidence base in external school evaluation – and also promotes the use of evidence in school self-evaluation via its inspection of school monitoring and evaluation processes. The use of data does not replace professional judgement. On the contrary, professional judgement plays a key role in external school evaluation. However, the analysis of data in inspection activities, coupled with well documented procedures on decision rules for professional evaluation, are key ways to strengthen the standardisation of external school evaluation.

Key data on school context and performance are used in the inspection process and published in the individual school inspection reports. There is established statistical capacity within the Department of Education and this provides key benchmarking data for the ETI and schools. Other data may also be compiled by universities or research agencies and this can feed into the ETI's evidence base. In this way, the ETI benefits from statistical and research capacity elsewhere. It also gathers data first hand when conducting inspections at school, and this forms an important part of the evidence base.

Going forward, the OECD review team sees a need to build data analysis capacity within the ETI. The introduction of a new risk-based approach to inspections heightens this need. It is crucial that the ETI is able to direct the analyses and develop new indicators in key areas, including on student performance and school self-evaluation capacity. Without doubling up on current data collection processes, there is an argument for bringing together all different strands of data and research into a common knowledge base. This will bring evidence into close relation with the ETI's working processes and allow the development of an integrated body of knowledge on school quality. This can also inform more efficiently the ETI's risk assessment.

With a stronger analytical function, the ETI can better adapt to changing emphases in external school evaluation policy. Initially, there are two areas in rolling out the new inspection approach: heightening the objectivity in judging school self-evaluation capacity, and more effectively assessing and identifying risks to school quality. This is an ongoing process of evaluating, adjusting and refining the knowledge base and analytical procedures behind risk assessment. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education is also trying to meet these challenges. It aims to better standardise risk assessment by combining data analysis using a growing knowledge base on school quality with explicit procedures for

making evaluative judgements. Such analytical procedures are periodically reviewed and are currently being updated (see Box 5.7).

### **Box 5.7 Developing and updating analytical capacity for risk assessment in the Netherlands**

Risk analysis is split into two stages: primary detection and expert analysis. The primary detection phase comprises statistical analysis of all data to determine boundary values to discriminate between risk and no-risk (see Table 5.2). Means, standard deviations and percentiles are calculated for different indicators. This is the “mechanical” part of the analysis of possible risks. Data include: signals (complaints or questions from the public *e.g.* from parents, newspaper items, and observations made by inspectors during school visits); annual documents (annual accountability report, funding information, school guide); and student achievement (results of the standardised test at the end of primary education, results from school and national examinations in secondary education, value added calculations). Similar to the free school meal bands in Northern Ireland, student achievement data are classified into separate performance bands on the basis of level of disadvantage (mainly using parental educational level). In this way, the risk assessment takes account of school context. Where relevant, data are based on three year trends (see columns T-2, T-1 and T in Table 5.2). The primary statistical analysis helps to determine which school boards will need further attention in the second stage of risk assessment. As of 2013, the risk analysis has been extended to better meet the inspection approach and now includes data to assess governance, financial and quality risks. In turn, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education will perform more detailed analyses to determine: valid and meaningful boundary limits for indicators; the prospective power of indicators (to enable the inspectorate to identify potential risks, rather than just existing ones); and interrelationships between financial and quality indicators.

The expert analysis phase comprises expert interpretation of the broader picture of all risks within the remit of a certain school board. In this respect, the inspectorate’s “memory” (*i.e.* records of quality, financial and governance data), as well as its experience comes into play. A team of inspectors judges the risk profile using agreed and specified decision rules. In the past, an important indicator was the school board’s governance capacities and the inspection team had experience to judge the school board’s ability to address shortcomings. This judgement, next to objectively calculated risks, led to a decision on whether there would be further enquiry or not. Table 5.2 shows details of the new set of indicators used for risk analysis and includes the draft “signalling values”, that is, the agreed benchmarks used (sometimes tentatively) to signal a risk. Procedures for expert analysis are in the process of being updated.

Table 5.2. Pilot data sheet for primary risk detection in the Netherlands

Integrated Risk Analysis: Primary Education		Board number			Board name	
<i>Financial</i>		<i>T-2</i>	<i>T-1</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Signalling value (draft)</i>	<i>Yes/no risk</i>
F01	Profitability				Min 1 yr. => 0%	
F02	Solvency				>0,40	
F03	Liquidity				>1,5	
F04	Dependency on other funding/income				=<1SD+av.	
F05	Financial buffer				>0%	
F06	Multiannual budget					
F10	Resistance capital				>10%	
F12	Turnover (sales volume)				<=€100 000	
F16	Financial arrangement				No	
<i>Pupils</i>		<i>T-2</i>	<i>T-1</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Signal</i>	
F07	Trends in pupil intake				Not extreme	
F08	Trends in regional pupil population				Around average	
<i>Governance</i>		<i>T</i>			<i>Signal</i>	
B01	(Future) merger, transfer, break-up				No	
B02	Multisectoral?				No	
B03	Mean no. of students per school				>=100	
B04	% of small schools				<=30%	
B05	No. of schools				<=2SD+av.	
B06	No. of signals				None	
B07	Improvement period for shortcomings				None	
<i>Staff</i>		<i>T-2</i>	<i>T-1</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Signal</i>	
P01a	Cost of staff i.r.t. public funding				<=95%	
P02a	Cost of staff i.r.t. total benefits				<=90%	
P04	No. of pupils per teacher				<=1SD+av	
P05	Share of primary (teaching) staff				<1SD+av	
P06	Mean age teaching staff				<=1SD+av	
<i>Materials</i>		<i>T-2</i>	<i>T-1</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Signal</i>	
M01	Complete decentralisation					
M02a	Housing costs				<=10%	
M03a	Housing costs per pupil				<=1SD+av	
M04	Obsolescence inventory				>=30%	
<i>Quality</i>		<i>T</i>			<i>Signal</i>	
K01c	Student achievement				No risk	
K06a	Educational quality				<=5% special intervention	
K06c	No. of pupils in schools with shortcomings					
K08	No. of compliance shortcomings				None	
K10a	No. of schools with disadvantaged pupils				None	
K16	No. of schools with insufficient quality assurance				None	

### *Further clarify the role of school context in evaluating school performance*

The OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education identified different ways to address the concern about differences in school contextual characteristics. There is no perfect approach, but there are different approaches presenting different advantages.

In the simplest form, school performance measures may present actual student assessment or examination results, plus provide descriptive information on the school context, for example school-level information on the students that participated in the assessment or examination, *e.g.* their gender, socio-economic background, etc. Currently, the Schools+ Database presents school information in a set of distinct tables (address, enrolment, pupil, teacher, religion, ethnicity, key stage, finance). A simple improvement may be to present the key stage results together with details of number of pupils included and excluded in the measures and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, *i.e.* following the current reporting format of Examination achievements in the Schools+ Database. In both cases, it may be worth reporting further descriptive statistics, *e.g.* proportion of boys at the school, proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

Northern Ireland currently uses the free school meals entitlement measure as the major factor in accounting for school context during school inspections. Here, the OECD review team has identified simple ways to further clarify the procedures by: including clear information on which free school meal entitlement band the school is classified in, reporting more consistently the comparative performance information in school inspection reports, and updating information presented in the Schools+ Database to include comparative information on the free school meals entitlement measure. In going forward, the Department of Education should give consideration to how it can further strengthen reporting on equity, again by perhaps including comparative information on the proportion of boys and pupils with special educational needs at the school.

Some systems apply statistical adjustments to account for the school context's impact upon a specific set of student assessment or examination results, these are referred to as contextual attainment models (OECD, 2008). However, these do not take into consideration a student's prior attainment. It is important to be conceptually clear on this, as in several systems there is a misconception among stakeholders that such contextual adjustments are "value added models". Value added models compare student performance at a minimum of two different points in time and estimate the school's contribution to this (OECD, 2008). An example in Northern Ireland would be the comparison of pupil performance at end of Key Stage 1, with that at Key Stage 2, etc. Value added models may also account for school context and these are known as "contextual value added models".

Regarding adjustments to account for school context, this typically involves establishing a regression model to determine how different student characteristics and/or community factors relate to student achievement. For example: Sweden uses a weighted indicator on parents' education, the proportion of boys, the number of students born abroad, and the proportion of students born in Sweden but with both parents born abroad; and Australia uses parental education and occupation of individual students aggregated to the school level, and a set of school community factors (proportion of indigenous students, remoteness of the school and a measure of educational disadvantage for students with a language background other than English). In this way, Northern Ireland has a great deal of information available, including information on: school intake; enrolment; pupil attendance rates; proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals; proportion of pupils with special educational needs; number of newcomers; the size of the school and number of staff.

However, research has identified some concerns over the use of statistical models to adjust school performance measures (Rosenkvist, 2010). In a review of different statistical approaches for school performance measures, Masters (2012) concludes that

these will inevitably provide an imperfect picture of a school's effectiveness. One concern in more complicated statistical adjustment models is a level of obscurity that makes it difficult for users to meaningfully interpret results. Such complex models may be open to accusation of massaging the results to make these appear better (Grift, van de, 2009) or even to excuse low average performance (Figlio and Loeb, 2011) or to institutionalise low expectations (Hamilton and Koretz, 2002). One method to prevent these effects is to use a balanced set of indicators, for example, a combination of (relative) value added models with absolute achievement levels.

Such considerations are linked to system level reporting and necessitate careful research on the impact of different possible measures and/or adjustments. This is explored further in Chapter 6.

## Notes

- 1 Article 13(3) of the 1998 Education Order places a duty on Boards of Governors, through the scheme of management, to prepare, and periodically revise, a SDP. In doing so, Boards of Governors are required to consult the principal and consider any guidance provided by the Department, the Education and Library Boards and where applicable the Catholic maintained schools (CCMS), and also any inspection findings. The Education (School Development Planning) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 set out the detailed requirements relating to the preparation of SDPs and the matters they should include. The Regulations apply to all SDPs prepared after 24 January 2011. [www.deni.gov.uk/index/curriculum-and-learningt-new/standards-and-school-improvements/03-schools\\_school\\_improvement\\_programme-school\\_development\\_planning\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/curriculum-and-learningt-new/standards-and-school-improvements/03-schools_school_improvement_programme-school_development_planning_pg.htm) .
- 2 [www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/schedule/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/schedule/made)
- 3 [www.deni.gov.uk/sdp\\_guidance\\_2010\\_-\\_english\\_published\\_version\\_revised.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/sdp_guidance_2010_-_english_published_version_revised.pdf), p. 2
- 4 The context and climate, therefore, that underlay the discussions during the OECD review was one of uncertainty of what form the new ESA would take and to what extent there would be an adequate school support offer.
- 5 See Regulation 4, The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010: [www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/schedule/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/schedule/made)
- 6 [www.deni.gov.uk/sdp\\_guidance\\_2010\\_-\\_english\\_published\\_version\\_revised.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/sdp_guidance_2010_-_english_published_version_revised.pdf)
- 7 This is available at the following link: [www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-primary/short-inspection-of-primary-schools-self-evaluation-proforma.htm](http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-primary/short-inspection-of-primary-schools-self-evaluation-proforma.htm)
- 8 C2k is partly financed by the EU Building Sustainable Prosperity structural fund. For more information, see: [www.c2kni.org.uk/](http://www.c2kni.org.uk/)
- 9 Specifically, there are targets set for all pupils, as well as for three key sub-groups: boys; girls; and pupils entitled to free school meals. Further, pupils being educated in Irish medium schools must have five GCSEs graded A\* to C (or equivalent) in English, mathematics and Gaelge.
- 10 For more information see:  
[www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/32\\_statistical\\_publications-indexofstatisticalpublications\\_pg/32\\_statistical\\_publications\\_pressreleases\\_pg/statistics\\_and\\_research\\_-\\_national\\_statistics\\_school\\_performance.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/32_statistical_publications-indexofstatisticalpublications_pg/32_statistical_publications_pressreleases_pg/statistics_and_research_-_national_statistics_school_performance.htm)
- 11 The Schools+ Database, found at <http://apps.deni.gov.uk/appinstitutes/instmain.aspx>
- 12 [www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/grammar-schools-gcse-league-tables-for-northern-ireland-how-did-yours-fare-29180641.html](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/grammar-schools-gcse-league-tables-for-northern-ireland-how-did-yours-fare-29180641.html)
- 13 For more information see:  
[www.rtuni.org/core%20studies/prsd/page.php?page\\_id=60http://www.rtuni.org/core%20studies/prsd/page.php?page\\_id=104](http://www.rtuni.org/core%20studies/prsd/page.php?page_id=60http://www.rtuni.org/core%20studies/prsd/page.php?page_id=104)
- 14 An expression used in the Netherlands.

- 15 A Charter for inspection, [www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-about-inspection/a-charter-for-inspection-4.pdf](http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-about-inspection/a-charter-for-inspection-4.pdf)
- 16 [www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-documents-required-for-inspection/associate-assessor-leaflet.pdf](http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-documents-required-for-inspection/associate-assessor-leaflet.pdf)
- 17 Description of the Formal Intervention Process in Annex C of ESaGS: [www.deni.gov.uk/esags - a policy for school improvement april 2009.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/esags - a policy for school improvement april 2009.pdf).
- 18 However, these are beyond the scope of the OECD review.
- 19 . The Belfast Telegraph article comments on whether this is a real indicator of school quality and notes other factors to consider when interpreting the league table results, including the impact of academic selection by some post-primary schools, other aspects of pupil enrolment, attendance and funding structures. Also, it states that school inspection reports can give a better indication of a school’s achievements overall.
- 20 . “The absence of an agreed set of quantitative and contextual value-added measures that would allow more meaningful comparison of performance within, across and between schools is also a weakness in current policy that needs to be addressed. Along with this comes the challenge of explaining to parents, pupils and the wider public the purpose of such measures in a way that brings clarity and makes sure that value-added outcomes cannot be misinterpreted or manipulated inappropriately or distort the work of schools. It is also important to be clear that the development of such measures would not mean a return to published league tables.” (p.19, ESaGS).
- 21 . For example, see “Leadership qualities” at [www.educationalleaders.govt.nz](http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz).



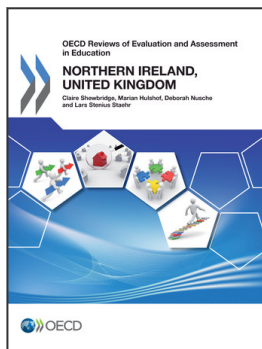
## *References*

- DENI (Department of Education, Northern Ireland) (2009), *Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement*, DENI, Bangor, [www.deni.gov.uk/esags\\_policy\\_for\\_school\\_improvement\\_-\\_final\\_version\\_05-05-2009.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/esags_policy_for_school_improvement_-_final_version_05-05-2009.pdf).
- DENI (2011), *Count Read: Succeed. A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy*. Department of Education Northern Ireland, Bangor, [www.deni.gov.uk/count\\_read\\_succeed\\_a\\_strategy\\_to\\_improve\\_outcomes\\_in\\_literacy\\_and\\_numeracy.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/count_read_succeed_a_strategy_to_improve_outcomes_in_literacy_and_numeracy.pdf).
- DENI (2010), *School Development Planning – Every School a Good School*, Department of Education Northern Ireland, Bangor, [www.deni.gov.uk/sdp\\_guidance\\_2010\\_-\\_english\\_published\\_version\\_revised.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/sdp_guidance_2010_-_english_published_version_revised.pdf).
- DENI (2013), *OECD Reviews on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for Northern Ireland*, Department of Education Northern Ireland, Bangor.
- DENI and DFPNI (Department of Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland) (2011), *DE & DFP Joint Efficiency Review: Stage One Report – March 2011*, DENI and DFPNI, Bangor, [www.deni.gov.uk/pedu-review-of-education-sector-stage-final-report-march-2011.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/pedu-review-of-education-sector-stage-final-report-march-2011.pdf).
- Dutch Ministry of Education and Science (2011), “Kamerbrief Aanpak Zeer Zwakke Scholen” (Letter to Parliament on Procedures for Very Weak Schools), Ministry of Education and Science, The Hague. [www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2011/02/10/aanpak-zeer-zwakke-scholen.html](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2011/02/10/aanpak-zeer-zwakke-scholen.html).
- Dutch Ministry of Education and Science (2013), “Wetsvoorstel Sluiting Zeer Zwakke Scholen na Een Jaar (Kamerbrief Aanpak Zeer Zwakke Scholen” (Start Legislation Process on Closing Very Weak Schools After One Year), Ministry of Education and Science, The Hague, [www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/wetsvoorstellen/2013/08/15/wet-sluiting-zwakke-scholen-na-1-jaar](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/wetsvoorstellen/2013/08/15/wet-sluiting-zwakke-scholen-na-1-jaar).
- Ehren, M.C.M., H. Altrichter, G. McNamara and J. O’Hara (submitted), “School inspections and school improvement: Testing assumptions on causal mechanisms”, *Oxford Review of Education*, Oxford.
- ETI (Education and Training Inspectorate ) (2000), *The Role of the Associate Assessor in Inspections*, ETI, Bangor, [www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-documents-required-for-inspection/associate-assessor-leaflet.pdf](http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-documents-required-for-inspection/associate-assessor-leaflet.pdf).
- ETI (2010), *Follow-up to Better Mathematics A Report on Post-Primary Mathematics Provision 2006-10*, ETI, Bangor.

- ETI (2012a), *Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners: A Charter for Inspection*, ETI, Bangor.
- ETI (2012b), *Inspection Leading to Improvement: Business Year 2010-2011*, ETI, Bangor.
- ETI (2012c), *Chief Inspector's report, 2010-2012*, ETI, Bangor.
- ETI (2012d), *Education and Training Inspectorate: Annual Business Report 2011-2012*, ETI, Bangor, [www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-about-the-education-and-training-inspectorate/annual-business-report-2011-2012.pdf](http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-about-the-education-and-training-inspectorate/annual-business-report-2011-2012.pdf).
- ETI (2013), *Preparing school principals to be effective leaders*, ETI, Bangor.
- Faubert, V. (2009), "School Evaluation: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 42, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/218816547156](https://doi.org/10.1787/218816547156)
- Figlio, D. and S. Loeb (2011), "School accountability", in E. Hanushek, S. Machin and L. Woessman (eds.), *Handbooks in Economics*, Vol. 3, North-Holland, The Netherlands, pp. 383-421.
- Flemish Ministry of Education and Training and the University of Antwerp Edubron Research Group (2010), *Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for the Flemish Community of Belgium*, Antwerp, [www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy)
- Fournier, G. and D. Mildon (forthcoming), *OECD Reviews on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for Canada*, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), Toronto.
- Grift, Wim van de (2009), "Reliability and validity in measuring the value added of schools", *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol. 20 (2), Routledge, Oxford, pp. 269–285.
- Hamilton, L. and D. Koretz (2002), "Tests and their use in test-based accountability systems", in L. Hamilton, B. Stecher and S. Klein (eds.), *Making Sense of Test-Based Accountability in Education*, RAND Publishing, Santa Monica.
- Hoyle, R. and J. Robinson (2003), "League Tables and School Effectiveness: A Mathematical Model", *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Biological Science*, Vol. 270, No. 1511, pp. 113-119.
- Irish Department for Education and Skills (2012), *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for Ireland*, Department for Education and Training, Dublin, [www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy).
- Kimball, S.M., A. Milanowski and S.A. McKinney (2009), "Assessing the promise of standards-based performance evaluation for principals: Results from a randomized trial", *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Taylor and Francis Group LLC, Kentucky, pp. 233-263.
- Livingston, K. and J. McCall (2005), "Evaluation: Judgmental or developmental?" *The European Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Routledge, Oxford.

- MacBeath, J. (n.d.), “School self-evaluation: What we are learning from other countries”, [www.teachers.org.uk/files/word/MacBeath-nutcountries.doc](http://www.teachers.org.uk/files/word/MacBeath-nutcountries.doc), accessed 1 September 2013.
- Masters, G.N. (2012), *Measuring and Rewarding School Improvement*, a discussion paper commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Canberra.
- Ministerial Advisory Group (2013), *Advancing Shared Education*, Ministerial Advisory Group, Belfast. [www.qub.ac.uk/mag](http://www.qub.ac.uk/mag)
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2008), *Kiwi Leadership for Principals – Principals as Educational Leaders*, Ministry of Education, Wellington, [www.educationallleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Key-leadership-documents/Kiwi-leadership-for-principals](http://www.educationallleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Key-leadership-documents/Kiwi-leadership-for-principals).
- Nusche, D., et al. (2012), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264116917-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264116917-en)
- OECD (2008), *Measuring Improvements in Learning Outcomes: Best Practices to Assess the Value-Added of Schools*, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264050259-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264050259-en)
- OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful?: Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV)*, PISA, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264091559-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264091559-en)
- OECD (2013), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264190658-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en)
- Pont, B., D. Nusche and H. Moorman (2008), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264044715-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264044715-en)
- Reeves, D.B. (2009), *Assessing Educational Leaders: Evaluating Performance for Improved Individual and Organizational Results*, 2nd Edition, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Rosenkvist, M. A. (2010), "Using Student Test Results for Accountability and Improvement: A Literature Review", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 54, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/5km4htwzvb30-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5km4htwzvb30-en)
- RTU (Regional Training Unit) (2005), National Standards for Headteachers Northern Ireland Edition, August 2005, [www.rtuni.org/uploads/docs/21672\\_National%20Standard.pdf](http://www.rtuni.org/uploads/docs/21672_National%20Standard.pdf)
- Satijn, D. (2012). *Improving the knowledge infrastructure for education: establishing a coordinating body*, Paper presented at the EIPPEE Conference 2012, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Hague, [www.eippee.eu/cms/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=tkXP41eWSj0%3d&tabid=3313](http://www.eippee.eu/cms/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=tkXP41eWSj0%3d&tabid=3313), accessed 1 September 2013.
- Scheerens, J., M. Ehren, P. Slegers and R. de Leeuw (2012), *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for the Netherlands*. University of Twente, the Netherlands, [www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy).

- Sheppard, B. (1995), *Implementing Change: A Success Story*, Morning Watch Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, [www.mun.ca/educ/faculty/mwatch/archives1.htm](http://www.mun.ca/educ/faculty/mwatch/archives1.htm).
- Shewbridge, C., et al. (2011), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: School Evaluation in the Flemish Community of Belgium 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing. doi: [10.1787/9789264116726-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264116726-en)
- SICI (The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) (2003), *Effective School Self-Evaluation (ESSE)*, SICI, Belfast.
- Petegem, Peter van., G. Devos, P. Mahieu, T. Dang Kim and V. Warmoes (2006), “Hoe sterk is mijn school? Het beleidsvoerend vermogen van vlaamse scholen” (How Strong is My School? The Policy-Making Capacities of Flemish schools), Wolters-Plantyn, Mechelen.
- Vlaamse overheid (2011), *Onderwijsspiegel schooljaar 2009-2010 – Verslag over de Toestand van het Onderwijs*, Vlaamse overheid, Brussels. [www.ond.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/Organisatie/publicaties.htm](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/Organisatie/publicaties.htm).
- Wylie, C. (2009), “Getting More from School Self-Management”, in J. Langley (ed.), *Tomorrow’s Schools, 20 Years On...*, Cognition Institute, Auckland.



**From:**

## **OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland, United Kingdom**

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264207707-en>

### **Please cite this chapter as:**

Shewbridge, Claire, *et al.* (2014), "School evaluation", in *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland, United Kingdom*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264207707-8-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any 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.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to [rights@oecd.org](mailto:rights@oecd.org). Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at [info@copyright.com](mailto:info@copyright.com) or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at [contact@cfcopies.com](mailto:contact@cfcopies.com).