



OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education

NEW ZEALAND

**Deborah Nusche, Dany Laveault, John MacBeath
and Paulo Santiago**



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

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John MacBeath and Paulo Santiago



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Foreword

This report for New Zealand forms part of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes (see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the Review is to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation frameworks that countries use with the objective of improving student outcomes. These include student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation.

New Zealand was one of the countries which opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. Members of the review team were Deborah Nusche (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Dany Laveault (Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa; Canada); John MacBeath (Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge; United Kingdom); and Paulo Santiago (OECD Secretariat). This publication is the report from the review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the evaluation and assessment framework in New Zealand, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: (1) Provide insights and advice to the New Zealand education authorities; (2) Help other OECD countries understand the New Zealand approach; and (3) Provide input for the final comparative report of the project.

New Zealand's involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Ms. Ro Parsons, Chief Education Advisor Schooling Policy/Best Evidence Synthesis Programme, New Zealand Ministry of Education.

An important part of New Zealand's involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on evaluation and assessment policy, published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education in 2011. The review team is very grateful to the authors of the CBR, and to all those who assisted them for providing an informative document. The CBR is an important output from the OECD activity in its own right as well as an important source for the review team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the New Zealand Country Background Report. The CBR follows guidelines prepared by the OECD Secretariat and provides extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to the national context, the organisation of the educational system, the main features of the evaluation and assessment framework and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and, for a more comprehensive view of evaluation and assessment in New Zealand, should be read in conjunction.

The review visit to New Zealand took place on 23-30 August 2010. The itinerary is provided in Annex B. The visit was designed by the OECD in collaboration with the New Zealand authorities. The biographies of the members of the review team are provided in Annex C.

During the review visit, the team held discussions with a wide range of national, regional and local authorities; officials from the Ministry of Education; relevant agencies outside the Ministry of Education which deal with evaluation and assessment issues; teacher and principal unions; parents' organisations; representatives of schools; students' organisations; and researchers with an interest in evaluation and assessment issues. The team also visited a range of schools, interacting with school management, teachers and students. The intention was to provide a broad cross-section of information and opinions on evaluation and assessment policies and how their effectiveness can be improved.

The review team wishes to record its grateful appreciation to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the review team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. Special words of appreciation are due to the National Co-ordinator, Ms. Ro Parsons, Chief Education Advisor Schooling Policy/Best Evidence Synthesis Programme at the New Zealand Ministry of Education, for sharing her expertise and responding to the many questions of the review team. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in New Zealand made our task as a review team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging.

The review team is also grateful to colleagues at the OECD, especially to Stefanie Dufaux for preparing the statistical annex to this Country Note (Annex D) and to Heike-Daniela Herzog for editorial support.

This report is organised in six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on the New Zealand school system, main trends and concerns, and recent developments. Chapter 2 looks at the overall evaluation and assessment framework and analyses how the different components of the framework play together and can be made more coherent to effectively improve student learning. Then Chapters 3 to 6 present each of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework – student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation – in more depth, presenting strengths, challenges and policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in New Zealand, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those we met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of New Zealand and fully understanding all the issues.

Of course, this report is the responsibility of the review team. While we benefited greatly from the New Zealand CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of New Zealand personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are our responsibility.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

asTTie	Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning
AtoL	Assess to Learn Programme
BES	Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme
CBR	Country Background Report
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ELL	English Language Learners
ERO	Education Review Office
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IEPs	Individual Education Programmes
LPDP	Literacy Professional Development Project
MNA	Managing National Assessment
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAGs	National Administration Guidelines
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NEGs	National Education Guidelines
NEMP	National Education Monitoring Project
NETs	National Evaluation Topics
NSN	National Student Number
NZC	The New Zealand Curriculum
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
NZTC	New Zealand Teachers Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTJ	Overall Teacher Judgement
PAT	Progressive Achievement Tests
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SMS	Student Management System
SOI	Statement of Intent
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TKI	<i>Te Kete Ipurangi</i> (The Knowledge Basket)

Glossary of Māori terms

<i>Ako</i>	Effective and reciprocal teaching and learning.
<i>Ākonga</i>	The term <i>ākonga</i> has been chosen to be inclusive of all learners in the full range of settings, from early childhood to secondary and beyond, where the Registered Teacher Criteria apply.
<i>He Toa Takitini</i>	The Education Review Office's Strategy and Information Plan to meet the commitment of the education sector to improve education outcomes for Māori.
<i>Iwi</i>	Descriptor for a network of people with shared genealogy/ancestry, culture and language/dialect (tribe).
<i>Ka Hikitia</i>	The Ministry of Education's Māori Education Strategy (Managing for Success 2008-2012).
<i>Kaupapa Kaitiaki</i>	Friend of the school. In Māori schools, this intermediary role assumes particular importance in liaising with the Education Review Office to ensure mutual understanding and inform development planning.
<i>Kohanga Reo</i>	Māori language learning settings for children of early childhood education age.
<i>Kura</i>	Māori language immersion schools. These include <i>Kura Kaupapa</i> , <i>Kura Tuakana</i> , <i>Kura Teina</i> , <i>Kura Tuatahi</i> , and <i>Kura Arongatahi</i> .
<i>Ngā Haeata Mātauranga</i>	Series of annual reports in which progress towards the achievement of government goals for the educational success of Māori learners is reported.
<i>Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori Pangarau</i>	Set of standards aligned to the curriculum for mathematics introduced in the Māori-medium sector for primary education (Years 1 to 8).
<i>Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori te Reo Matatini</i>	Set of standards aligned to the curriculum for reading, writing and oral Māori language introduced in the Māori-medium sector for primary education (Years 1 to 8).
<i>Te Aho Matua Kura Kaupapa Māori</i>	Māori education settings.
<i>Te Kete Ipurangi</i>	The Knowledge Basket (the Ministry of Education's bilingual education portal).
<i>Te Kura</i>	New name of The New Zealand Correspondence School.
<i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i>	The curriculum used in Māori-medium settings since 2011.
<i>Te Reo Māori</i>	The study of the Māori language, both oral and written.
<i>Te Reo me ona Tikanga</i>	Language and culture.
<i>Whānau</i>	Term used to describe a family unit linked by genealogy/ancestry, culture and language/dialect, and groups of people who share a common purpose.
<i>Wharekura</i>	Formal learning settings that operate through the medium of Māori language and customs, for Years 9-13 students (ages 12-18), within a Māori framework (Māori-medium secondary school).

Executive summary

Since the establishment of self-managing schools in 1989, New Zealand has one of the most devolved school systems in the world. Average student learning outcomes are very good by international comparison even though there are concerns about the proportion of students that are not performing well. The current priorities for the school sector are to lift student achievement in literacy and numeracy, enable all young people to achieve worthwhile qualifications and ensure that Māori students achieve education success “as Māori”. As part of the national strategy to achieve these goals, New Zealand has developed its own distinctive model of evaluation and assessment characterised by a high level of trust in schools and school professionals. There are no full-cohort national tests and teachers are given prime responsibility to assess their students’ learning. Teachers also have a good degree of ownership of their own appraisal and are involved in school self-review. In recent years, school self-review has become the centre piece of school evaluation while the Education Review Office provides an external validation of the process and focuses on building self-review capacity. The principle of evidence-based policy making is well established and there is a high degree of self-awareness at various levels of the education system. Building on recent reforms and developments already underway, this report suggests a range of policy options to ensure that the overall evaluation and assessment framework is coherent, efficient and responsive to the needs of New Zealand’s education system.

***Further develop and embed the National Standards within
New Zealand’s evaluation and assessment system***

National Standards were introduced in primary education in 2010 to provide clear expectations for student learning in mathematics, reading and writing and help teachers make and report overall teacher judgements (OTJs) based on a range of assessment evidence. In a context where there is a general consensus against national testing in primary education, the introduction of Standards is seen as an alternative way to make information about student learning more consistent and comparable. However, further developments are necessary to embed the Standards within the primary school system. These include (1) Ongoing investment in teacher professional development to build teachers’ capacity to assess students in relation to the National Standards; (2) Stronger support for systematic moderation processes to ensure that OTJs are reliable and nationally consistent; (3) Better articulation between the National Standards, the national curriculum and existing assessment tools; (4) Clearer statements regarding the kind of information that standards-based reporting can and cannot provide and the uses of reporting information that are considered appropriate; and (5) Further work to ensure that the Standards’ focus on literacy and numeracy does not marginalise other learning areas where measurement of performance and progress is more challenging.

Consolidate teaching standards and strengthen teacher appraisal processes

A framework of teaching standards is essential as a reference point for teacher appraisal. The current co-existence of two sets of teaching standards and the lack of clarity about their respective use call for their consolidation into a single set of standards providing a clear shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching. The consolidated standards should describe competencies for different career steps of teachers and should allow for teacher registration to be conceived as career-progression appraisal. Such appraisal is summative in nature and should include an element of externality such as an accredited external evaluator, be based on classroom observation and a range of information demonstrating teacher effectiveness, and take into consideration the teacher's own views. At the same time, regular teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes should be conceived as a largely school-based and formative process (developmental appraisal). To ensure that all teachers benefit from systematic developmental appraisal, it is important to build the capacity of school leaders or expert teachers to undertake specific appraisal functions within the school and to ensure that the process is validated externally, for example as part of Education Review Office (ERO) reviews.

Ensure that school planning and reporting is used effectively for evaluation and improvement

While schools are required to have both annual planning and reporting and self-review processes, the school annual reports do not appear to be well integrated into either school self-review or ERO's external review processes. Also, while annual reports are sent to the Ministry of Education for accountability purposes, the potential to use them for system monitoring and evaluation is not exploited. Given a significant level of dissatisfaction with annual reporting by schools, the nature and use of these reports should be revisited. There is a need to closely examine the relative costs and benefits of different forms of reporting and the form that teachers and school leaders would find most productive. If self-review and ERO reviews are both formative, the annual review should reflect ways in which they have contributed to professional development and school improvement. To optimise the use of annual reports for school improvement, they could be used by the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education to provide constructive feedback and engage with schools and Boards of Trustees to support school improvement work (see below).

Strengthen school collaboration and regionally-based support structures to spread and share effective practice

In the context of self-management, individual schools can be relatively isolated and have limited opportunities for collegial networking and peer learning. There are a range of policy options to strengthen the connectedness of schools and help spread and share effective evaluation and assessment practice. These include (1) Providing cluster funding for groups of schools to pool evaluative information and engage in collaborative analysis and interpretation of data; (2) Supporting the collaboration of schools with an external facilitator or “critical friend” such as a professional development provider; (3) Relying as much as possible on practitioners in the role of peer evaluators or participating in ERO review teams; and (4) Building further on recent developments to strengthen the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education and enhancing regionally based school support structures.

Reinforce professional learning opportunities for teachers, school leaders and trustees

While there has been strong focus on building evaluation and assessment competencies at the school level, further investment in professional development is necessary to ensure that practices are consistently effective across New Zealand. Teachers need to develop not only the capacity to use, interpret and follow up on results obtained from nationally provided assessment tools, but also to develop their own valid and reliable assessment tools, adapt assessment to diverse learner profiles and communicate and report assessment results effectively. Alongside general training in assessment literacy, teachers and school leaders also need to further develop skills to collect school-wide assessment data; disaggregate data for relevant sub-groups; and interpret and translate assessment information into improvement strategies. Central agencies could consider developing a unique set of teacher competencies in assessment to set clear targets for initial teacher education and continuing professional learning. Given the key role of school leaders in New Zealand’s devolved education system, there is also a need to firmly embed a focus on effective evaluation and assessment in the competency description, training, performance appraisal and support materials for school leaders. To ensure Boards of Trustees fully play their role in school evaluation and principal appraisal, it is also important to set apart resources to develop and sustain the evaluation capacities of trustees.

Ensure that evaluation and assessment respond to diverse learner needs

New Zealand’s approach to evaluation and assessment aims to respond to diverse learner needs and gives particular attention to groups for which there is evidence of system under-performance such as Māori and Pasifika. However, there is room to optimise assessment practice for different student groups, improve school processes to identify and respond to groups at risk of underperformance and strengthen the national information system regarding diverse groups of students. In addition to increasing the availability of assessment instruments in Māori, it is important to train teachers to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic aspects of learning and assessment. When developing consolidated teaching standards and strengthening teacher appraisal processes (see above), it is essential to keep a strong focus on the effectiveness of teachers in improving student learning outcomes for all students, particularly for Māori and Pasifika. School leadership training and capacity building for school self-review should include a strong focus on monitoring the participation and achievement of priority groups such as Māori, Pasifika, English language learners and students with special educational needs. For education system monitoring, it is important to obtain better data on Māori learning outcomes in primary education through the implementation of a revised version of the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) in Māori-medium settings. The Ministry should also consider gathering more information on students’ linguistic profiles.

Further strengthen consistency between different elements of evaluation and assessment

While the national evaluation and assessment agenda is well developed and solidly based on research evidence, a number of elements could be better integrated and aligned to form a coherent framework. As outlined above, this includes linkages between the National Standards, the national curriculum and student assessment, the coherence between two different sets of teaching standards, and the articulation of annual school reporting with school evaluation and education system monitoring. To optimise complementarity and prevent inconsistencies of evaluation practices at different levels of the system, the New Zealand authorities should consider developing an overall mapping or framework for the entire evaluation and assessment system. This should involve taking stock of existing research syntheses, position papers, standards and indicators and integrating them in a coherent and concise framework. The overarching goal would be to propose a higher level of integration and coherence of the different components of evaluation and assessment. The outcome of such a mapping process could be a concise document providing a framework for evaluation and assessment approaches at student, teacher, school and system level. This process should be used as an opportunity to identify missing links, determine priorities and develop a strategic plan for the further development of the framework.

Chapter 1

School education in New Zealand

New Zealand has one of the most devolved school systems in the world. The 1989 Education Act established self-managing schools as Crown entities and gave responsibility for the administration and management of schools to elected Boards of Trustees. Average student learning outcomes are very good by international comparison, even though there are concerns about the proportion of students that are not performing well. The current priorities for the school sector are to lift student achievement in literacy and numeracy, enable all young people to achieve worthwhile qualifications and ensure that Māori students achieve education success “as Māori”. Evaluation and assessment are a key element in national strategies towards achieving these goals. Nationally, clear goals and performance expectations are set via the revised National Curriculum, the National Standards, the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, the teacher standards and indicators for school reviews. This is coupled with a strong focus on developing capacity for evaluation and assessment at all levels of the system.

This chapter provides background information that will help readers not familiar with the New Zealand education system understand the context in which evaluation and assessment takes place. The chapter provides a brief overview of the national context and key features of the education system.

National context

Demographic context

New Zealand has a population of 4.3 million people distributed over its two main islands. 76% of the population live on the North Island and the remaining 24% are on the South Island (including the Chatham Islands and Stewart Island). The country is sparsely populated with less than 15 people per km². More than two-thirds of the population live within the 16 main urban areas.

New Zealand has a bicultural Māori and European heritage; both Māori and English are official languages. Immigration has accelerated in recent years and the country is rapidly becoming more ethnically and linguistically diverse. In 2009, 68% of the population identified as New Zealand European and 15% as Māori, while 9% of the population were of Asian origin and 7% were of Pacific Island origin (Pasifika). Population projections indicate that over half of the school-age population will identify with multiple and non-European ethnic heritages within the next five years. The increasing diversity of the student body creates new opportunities and challenges for the delivery of high quality education in New Zealand.

Political context

New Zealand is a Constitutional Monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. Since the 1930s, the National Party and the Labour Party have dominated political life in a traditionally two-party system. In 1996, the electoral system was changed to a mixed member proportional representation system, which has increased the representation of smaller parties in the Parliament and government. At the time of the OECD visit 2010, the government was a minority coalition led by the National Party. New Zealand is a unitary State where local government holds only limited powers.

A particularly important document influencing governance arrangements in New Zealand is the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 by the British Crown and Māori chiefs. It is a founding document of New Zealand, setting out the obligations of the Crown and of Māori. Over the past 20 years, the public sector has reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. In the education sector, this is reflected in the provision of Māori-medium education and, more broadly, the development of education pathways that support and encourage Māori language and culture.

Economic context

The economic situation in New Zealand has reversed rapidly over the last three years. While the country benefitted from the past decade of global growth, it is now strongly affected by the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. The country underwent major structural reforms in the 1980s and 90s moving from an economic policy relying

on government regulation, protection and subsidies towards a liberalised and deregulated approach. Since the mid-1990s until 2007, New Zealand's economy was on a strong upward course with an average 3.5% GDP growth per year. The long expansion was supported by major structural reforms during the 1980s and 90s, fiscal consolidation, rapid labour force growth (due to high net immigration), the expansion of export markets, booming commodity export prices and the availability of global capital (OECD, 2009). In 2008, the country entered a recession which was reinforced by the international financial crisis (OECD, 2009).

Main features of the school system

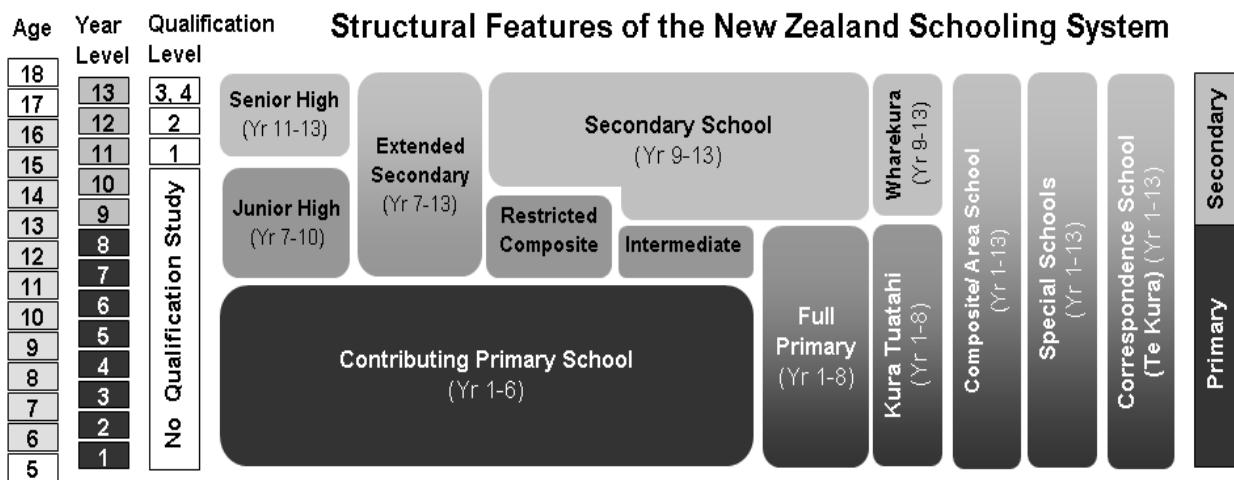
Structure

Levels of education

The New Zealand school system is organised in three levels and offers a range of different schooling options:

- **Early childhood education** (typical ages 0-5): Early childhood services are not provided or managed by the state. A range of different options, such as kindergartens, play centres and *kohanga reo* (Māori language learning settings) are available to children up to six years. In 2009, 59% of children aged 0-5 participated in early childhood education (ECE) and 95% of five-year-olds participated immediately prior to starting school.
- **Primary education** (Year levels 1-8; typical ages 5-13): Schooling is compulsory from age six, but most children start primary school at age five. Primary education lasts for eight years, with Years 7 and 8 mostly offered at “full” primary schools or separate intermediate schools.
- **Secondary education** (Year levels 9-13; typical ages 13-18): The most common form of secondary education covers five years (Year levels 9-13). But there are also secondary schools that cover Years 7-13 and senior high schools which provide only for the Years 11-13. Secondary schools deliver an integrated curriculum and do not distinguish between academic and vocational programmes. In the senior years of secondary education (Years 11-13) students can select from a range of courses including industry-based qualifications.

There are also two school forms that fall in between primary and secondary education: Composite schools provide education from Years 1-13 (mostly in rural areas) and junior high schools deliver education for Years 7-10. Figure 1.1 provides an overview of schooling options.

Figure 1.1 The New Zealand education system

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

Education settings

Semi-private and private schooling

While the vast majority (85%) of New Zealand students attend state schools, 11% of students attend state-integrated (semi-private) schools and 4% attend private schools. State-integrated schools are state schools that follow the national curriculum while retaining a “special” character. About two-thirds of the state-integrated schools are Catholic schools. 95% of the students in state-integrated schools must come from families that adhere to the special character (normally religious) of the school. Private schools usually offer either religious education or a particular education philosophy (such as Steiner or Montessori schools). It is not compulsory for private schools to follow the national curriculum.

Māori-medium education

The 1989 Education Act made provisions for Māori communities to set up and govern their own schools, which facilitated the establishment of a Māori-medium sector. About 3% of New Zealand students are enrolled in Māori-medium schooling. The Māori-medium sector provides a range of learning pathways from early childhood education through to university. The sector includes full immersion schools as well as immersion or bilingual units in English-medium schools. It aims to provide education in an environment where the values of Māori teaching and learning philosophies are promoted and Māori is used as the language of communication. Providers are often closely connected to a local Māori community or *iwi* (tribe).

Other education options

A number of Pasifika-medium education options (bilingual or immersion schools) are available in New Zealand. Less than 2 500 students (0.3%) were in Pasifika-medium schools in 2009.

It is possible for parents and guardians to educate their children at home. Almost 6 700 students (0.9%) were homeschooled in 2009. Homeschooling needs to be approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and must be of the same standard that children would receive at a registered school.

Distribution of responsibilities

New Zealand has one of the most devolved school systems in the world. As part of a major administrative restructuring, the 1988 Tomorrow's Schools reforms centralised policy decision making to the national level, eliminated the administrative structures for primary schools and devolved responsibility for the management of individual schools to elected Boards of Trustees.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for national education policy and provides most of the funding for state schools. It also develops the curriculum and assessment standards and sets minimum standards for becoming a teacher. Teacher and principal salaries are negotiated at the national level every three years with the respective unions. The Ministry is also in charge of overall system monitoring and has the power to intervene in failing schools. The Ministry of Education has 4 regional offices and 16 district offices that are supported by a number of local offices across New Zealand.

The Ministry is supported by three key agencies at the national level. The Education Review Office (ERO) is the main accountability agency responsible for evaluating and reporting on the quality of education, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) ensures that qualifications obtained in New Zealand are robust and credible and the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) provides professional leadership for effective teaching and teacher education.

The 1989 Education Act established self-managing schools as small Crown entities. Responsibility for the administration and management of each individual school was given to a Board of Trustees. The Boards typically consist of elected members from the school community, the principal, a staff representative and a student representative (in secondary schools). Boards of Trustees hold a wide range of responsibilities including strategic management, school self-review, appointment and employment of staff, finance, property, health and safety and compliance with legislation. Boards of Trustees have to deliver on government policies. They are accountable both to the government and to the local communities.

The school's management team is led by the school principal and is accountable to the Board. In smaller schools, management and educational leadership tend to be combined in the position of the principal. The 1989 Education Act defines the school principal as "professional leader" with three main functions: executive (implementing the Board's policy), instructional (leading the school's staff) and reporting (providing information on the school's achievement) (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007). A number of Board responsibilities, such as selecting and appointing teachers, are usually delegated to the principal.

Policy development

Policy development at the system level is characterised by a strong tradition of consultation with key agencies and stakeholders. Participation of stakeholders in policy development takes various forms such as working parties, advisory groups, organised consultation and pilot studies. This process is intended to ensure buy-in and a sense of ownership from those who will implement and manage the changes. The key groups that are consulted in matters concerning education policy include the School Trustees Association (NZSTA), the Council for Educational Research (NZCER), representatives of specific types of schools (such as the Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools [NZAIMS] and the Catholic Education Office [NZCEO]), the teacher unions, principals' associations, professional organisations, as well as business and cultural stakeholders.

Financing

Schools receive funding from the Ministry of Education in the form of teacher salaries and operational grants. Teacher salaries are negotiated at the national level between the Ministry of Education and the respective unions every three years. Operational funding is calculated on the basis of student numbers, year levels offered, socio-economic status of the community (based on a decile system from one to ten) and school location (degree of isolation). Boards of Trustees have full discretion on how to spend operational grants in line with their budget and plans. In addition, the government provides certain in-kind resourcing such as ICT support and broadband access. To complement government funding, schools usually also raise some funds locally (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010).

National Education Guidelines

The National Education Guidelines (NEGs) set the direction for schools. The NEGs include: a set of overarching goals; the national curriculum; National Standards; and a set of administrative guidelines (National Administration Guidelines [NAGs]). Schools are required to include the NEGs and NAGs in their charters and show how they will give effect to them.

Curriculum and Standards

The national curriculum

The national curriculum for New Zealand schools includes two aligned curriculum documents: *The New Zealand Curriculum* for Years 1-13 is used in English-medium settings since 2010 and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* is used in Māori-medium settings since 2011. Both documents set out the valued learning objectives and expected performance for each curriculum level. The two documents are not direct translations of each other. *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* was developed based on Māori principles and philosophies.

National Standards for primary education

For primary education (Years 1 to 8), there are two sets of standards that are aligned to the curriculum. National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were introduced in 2010 in English-medium schools. Parallelly, *Ngā Whanaketanga*

Rumaki Māori te Reo Matatini (reading, writing and oral Māori language) and *Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori Pangarau* (mathematics) were introduced in the Māori-medium sector. The National Standards set out clear expectations for student achievement and progress in the core subjects. They are supported by literacy and numeracy progressions for Years 1 to 10. Teachers are expected to assess student performance against the standards and report to parents regularly on their children's progress in relation to the standards. Boards of Trustees are required to set targets related to the National Standards in their charters. From 2012/13, schools will have to report on their students' results in relation to standards in their annual reports to the Ministry of Education (Chapter 3).

National Standards for secondary education

National Standards for secondary education are provided through the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), a register of all quality assured qualifications covering both secondary and tertiary education. The main qualification in secondary education is the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), in which students are assessed against a range of national standards specifying knowledge and skills. Years 11, 12, and 13 of upper secondary education typically correspond to NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3, but it is possible for students to take NCEA examinations earlier in their secondary schooling. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is responsible for ensuring the quality of assessments for qualification. Students gain NCEA by accumulating credits from different parts of the NZQF. Student achievement information from the NCEA is also fed back to individual schools for their self-review processes and collected nationally to analyse patterns of performance and inform policy development. The information is also published (Chapters 3 and 6).

Principles of equity and inclusion in education

New Zealand has a highly inclusive education system. All education in the state school sector is free of charge. The development of the education system has emphasised “the right of every student to expect a similar standard of education regardless of school location and size” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011). *The New Zealand Curriculum* states its commitment to strong equity principles, including (1) Ensuring high expectations for all students, (2) Respecting the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of New Zealand, and (3) Valuing cultural diversity and inclusion of all students in a non-sexist, non-racist and non-discriminatory way. The school system is comprehensive from primary through to upper secondary education and few distinctions are made between academic and vocational programmes in upper secondary schools.

Most special education students participate in regular school settings. The Education Act provides that state and integrated schools are obliged to enrol all students in their local area, regardless of their level of impairment or educational need. In 2009, only 0.4% of New Zealand students were enrolled in schools specialising in teaching students with certain types of disabilities. Schools enrolling students with moderate special needs are supported with targeted funding and access to specialists, while students with high needs receive additional individualised funding or support.

Education outcomes

According to results from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009, the performance of New Zealand students towards the end of compulsory education is significantly above the OECD average in all areas assessed (reading, mathematics and science). However, while on average New Zealand students are among the top performers in the world, the dispersion of achievement scores is particularly large. Among the high-achieving countries, New Zealand had the widest range of scores between the bottom five percent and the top five percent. Performance differences were most pronounced *within* schools rather than between schools. While some Māori and Pasifika students showed high performance, Māori and Pasifika students were over-represented at the lower end of the performance distribution. New Zealand's results in international student assessments have been relatively stable over the past decade showing consistently high average performance, coupled with a wide dispersion of achievement scores.

Main policy developments

The national agenda sets clear objectives and expectations for the education system. The key priorities for schooling outlined in the MoE's Statement of Intent (2010-2011) relate to lifting student achievement in literacy and numeracy, achieving worthwhile qualifications and ensuring that Māori students achieve education success "as Māori". The Country Background Report prepared by the Ministry of Education for this study specifies that current education priorities relate to reducing the achievement disparities within and across schools, particularly for Māori and Pasifika students, and improving education outcomes for all New Zealanders (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011). These objectives provide a clear focus for the education system to direct attention towards improving student learning outcomes, both with regard to overall performance and equity in outcomes of different student groups. Recent policy developments are expected to contribute to reaching these aims.

Implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum and consequent changes to NCEA

The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) was revised in 2007. From the beginning of 2010, all schools' curricula are expected to align with the new curriculum. The NZC sets out key competencies and achievement objectives rather than prescribing curriculum content. Within these national achievement objectives, it is the role of school Boards of Trustees, together with the principal and school staff, to develop and implement the school curriculum. While each school's curriculum is expected to encompass the principles, values and key competencies of the NZC, schools are given large freedom and flexibility to design teaching programmes that fit diverse learner needs. A stronger focus has been placed in recent years on basic skills in literacy and numeracy (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011).

The implementation of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2010) covering Years 1-13 also has implications for standards contributing to the NCEA in upper secondary education. As part of an ongoing programme to enhance the quality and credibility of the NCEA, the Ministry of Education and NZQA have engaged in a review of the standards. A key purpose of this standards review is to ensure that curriculum-based standards are aligned to *The New Zealand Curriculum*. The review also aims to address issues of

duplication, credit parity, consistency, fairness and coherence for all standards on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF). The standards aligned to the national curriculum are being rolled out progressively between 2010 and 2012. To ensure that the standards are used effectively, assessment materials and exemplars are being developed by the Ministry of Education.

Introduction of National Standards, but not national testing, in primary schools

National Standards were introduced in 2010 to complement the NZC and provide clear expectations as to what students should achieve in mathematics, reading and writing in different year levels. The Standards are essentially a set of learning progressions designed to help teachers make overall teacher judgements on student achievement and progress based on a range of assessment evidence. Unlike in many other countries, the National Standards are not assessed through full-cohort national assessments. Rather, the New Zealand strategy aims to build teacher capacity and provide teachers with an extensive test bank they can draw on to make their own professional judgements about student performance. In a context where there is a general consensus that national testing should be avoided in primary education, the introduction of National Standards is seen as an alternative way to make information about student progress more consistent and comparable. This is expected to avoid some of the potential negative consequences of high-stakes testing such as curriculum narrowing and teaching to the test.

Development of a Student Achievement Function within the Ministry of Education

The introduction of the new national curriculum and the National Standards is seen by the Ministry of Education as an opportunity to engage in closer collaboration with schools to work towards lifting student achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. While the curriculum sets achievement objectives and the National Standards provide schools with information on students needing additional support, the Ministry also aims to provide better support for schools in interpreting such information and providing targeted support to students. Developments are currently underway to set up a “Student Achievement Function” within the regions of the Ministry of Education to work directly with schools. The intention is to create a small central team and to appoint Student Achievement Advisors who are based in the regions and work directly with schools (New Zealand Ministry of Education website).

Youth Guarantee

Reducing the proportion of early school leavers also figures among the priorities of the New Zealand Government. In 2008, the Government launched the Youth Guarantee programme, an initiative to improve the educational achievements of 16- to 17-year-olds. The programme provides targeted students with opportunities to participate in a range of vocationally-oriented courses linked to 1-3 level qualifications of the NZQF. The courses offered through Youth Guarantee have a focus on literacy, language and numeracy embedded in the course content and provide students with knowledge and information on vocational pathways.

Implementation of Registered Teacher Criteria

There has also been a focus on developing and refining professional standards for the teaching profession, as a lever to guide and improve teaching practices. Registered Teacher Criteria were adopted in 2010 and will be progressively implemented in the period 2010-2013. They describe the criteria for quality teaching that all fully registered teachers should meet and serve to guide the learning of provisionally registered teachers. The Registered Teacher Criteria place a strong focus on student learning outcomes, including teachers' analysis and use of student assessment information and emphasise the bicultural context of New Zealand (Chapter 4).

An increased focus on building school capacity for self-review and improvement

Capacity building for school self-review has been promoted as an important way to raise student achievement. Since 2008, ERO has been conducting the Building Capacity in Evaluation Project, a process focused on building the capacity of ERO reviewers, Boards of Trustees and school leadership staff. The project focuses on understanding the importance of self-review for the external review process as well as building knowledge of assessment tools and processes. In 2009, ERO introduced a differentiated review approach where schools facing difficulties are visited more often than high performing schools, so as to best tailor external reviews to individual school needs. In addition, ERO is currently implementing a longitudinal review methodology to work more closely with schools facing difficulties (Chapter 5).

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Chapter 2

The evaluation and assessment framework

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

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

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

Context and features

Governance

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

Key components

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

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

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

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

Responsibilities for evaluation and assessment

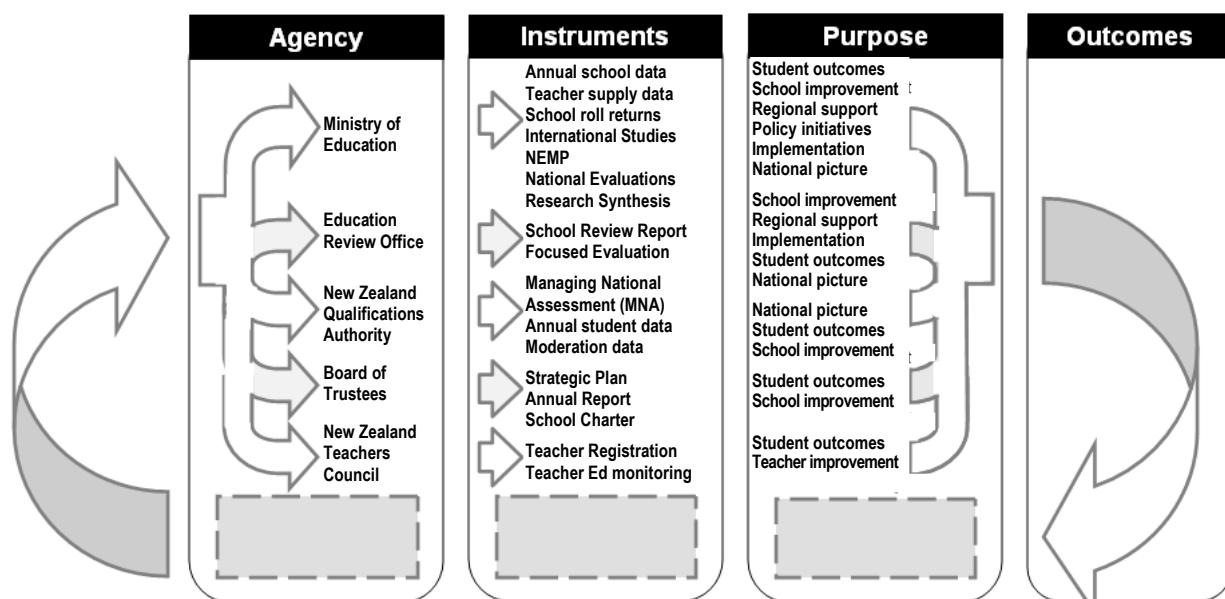
There are four government agencies with specified responsibilities in evaluation and assessment: the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the New Zealand Teachers Council. Each of these agencies has both accountability and improvement functions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

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

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

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

Figure 2.1 Key agencies and instruments involved in evaluation and assessment



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

Strengths

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

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

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

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

(New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010)

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

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning

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

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

Teacher professionalism is encouraged and supported

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

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

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

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

System evaluation monitors student outcomes while avoiding high-stakes testing

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

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

The improvement function of evaluation and assessment is strongly emphasised

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

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

Evaluation and assessment aim to respond to diverse learner needs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Challenges

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Alignment between teaching standards, registration processes and career structures*

Registered Teacher Criteria, which are the reference for registration processes, do not specify skills and competencies at different stages of the career in association with roles and responsibilities of teachers in schools (Chapter 4).

- *Alignment between teacher appraisal and school evaluation*

There is room to ensure school evaluation is more closely aligned to teacher appraisal or has an impact on the focus of teacher appraisal (Chapter 4).

- *Articulation of school leaders' appraisal and school review*

External school reviews evaluate the quality of school governance, leadership and management but seem disconnected from the annual principal appraisals conducted by school Boards of Trustees (Chapter 5).

- *Articulation of school planning and reporting with school evaluation*

While schools are required to have both planning and reporting and self-review processes, the two processes are not always aligned. Also, school annual reports are not well integrated in the external review process (Chapter 5).

- *Linkages between annual school reports and education system monitoring*

While annual reports are sent to the Ministry of Education for accountability purposes, the potential to use them for system monitoring and evaluation is not exploited (Chapter 6).

- *Linkages between National Standards and education system evaluation*

While National Standards are partly intended for system monitoring, further work is necessary to ensure that assessment practices and reporting against the Standards are nationally consistent (Chapter 6).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Difficulties in creating coherence of practices across the system

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

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

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

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

Policy recommendations

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

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

Further strengthen consistency between different components of evaluation and assessment

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

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

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

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

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

Consider establishing regional support structures to increase connectedness of schools

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

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

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

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

Continue to build school capacity in evaluation and assessment

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

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

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

Encourage systematic local approaches to evaluation and assessment

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

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

Notes

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

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Chapter 3

Student assessment

Schools in New Zealand use a variety of assessment approaches to measure students' progress and achievement in relation to the national curriculum. Assessment in New Zealand is focused less on summative "end point testing" and has a broad focus on improving both teaching and learning. There are no full-cohort national tests and teachers are given prime responsibility for assessing their students' learning based on a range of evidence. External reference points of expected performance are provided by national curriculum documents, literacy and numeracy progressions, the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and the recently introduced National Standards. A set of nationally validated assessment tools are at teachers' disposal to guide assessment practice, and professional learning opportunities are provided in initial and in-service training. However, teacher capacities in student assessment are still variable in primary schools and there are concerns regarding the design and implementation of National Standards. While there is a clear aim to make assessment practice as inclusive and personalised as possible, there is room to optimise assessment for diverse groups of students.

This chapter focuses on approaches to student assessment within New Zealand's evaluation and assessment framework. Student assessment refers to processes in which evidence of learning is collected in a planned and systematic way in order to make a judgement about student learning (EPPI, 2002). This chapter looks at both summative assessment (*assessment of learning*) and formative assessment (*assessment for learning*) of students.

Context and features

Overall framework for student assessment

The national curriculum and the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) provide a broad framework for student assessment in New Zealand.

The national curriculum sets out key competencies and achievement objectives, together with indicators of expected performance. For each curriculum learning area, achievement objectives are defined for eight overlapping levels of achievement covering Years 1-13. The curriculum allows for students in the same year to be performing at different curriculum levels. The underlying idea is that students advance to the next curriculum level when they have demonstrated competence at the current level, but schools are not required to report on student performance in relation to curriculum levels (Absolum *et al.*, 2009).

Additional signposts and expectations of performance are provided for the different stages of schooling. National Standards for primary education (Years 1-8) provide illustrations of expected student performance in reading, writing and mathematics and since 2010 schools have to report to parents on their children's achievement and progress in relation to standards. In addition, literacy and numeracy learning progressions are available for Years 1-10. In upper secondary schools (Years 11-13), standards for the senior secondary qualification (National Certificate of Educational Achievement, NCEA) specify expected learning outcomes and assessment criteria for a large range of different subjects.

The NAGs require schools to use a variety of assessment approaches to measure students' progress and achievement in relation to the national curriculum. Teachers are expected to form professional judgements on student performance based on a range of evidence on student learning. The NAGs also request that schools identify students, groups of students, and aspects of the curriculum that need particular attention and address these identified needs. Schools are obliged to report to students and their parents on the achievement of individual students.

Assessment in Years 1-10

Schools providing education for students in Years 1-10 have wide-reaching autonomy in designing their own assessment policies and practices. Within the regulatory framework described above, they have considerable scope to decide how to develop and implement student assessment.

There are no common national assessments for Years 1-10. All assessments (NEMP¹ and international assessments excluded) take place within the classroom and are conducted and marked by the students' own teachers. While schools are expected to

gather comprehensive information on student learning, they are free to decide on the particular assessment approaches and tools they use. A suite of nationally validated assessment tools is at teachers' disposal to support them in their assessment approaches.

Assessment has low stakes for students at this stage. The use of assessment results for academic selection (such as year repetition, streaming and tracking) is not encouraged in New Zealand. While schools have to “sum up” achievements at particular points in time to report to students and parents, New Zealand has a relatively low-key approach to such reporting, relying on detailed feedback rather than numerical marks and potential labelling of students. The national authorities do not prescribe a standardised format for reporting on student results. However, with the introduction of National Standards a new requirement was set up that schools enrolling students in Years 1-8 have to report to parents on their children’s progress and achievement against National Standards in plain language at least twice a year.²

In the junior years of secondary education (Years 9-10), some schools start using the standards contributing to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) originally designed for the senior years (Years 11-13) or they might use the grades provided in NCEA assessment (such as “achieved” / “not achieved”) to familiarise students with summative assessment language. While the use of standards contributing to NCEA is not required in Years 9-10, schools can start using them for students who are ready, or to accelerate high performing students.

Assessment in Years 11-13

In Years 11-13, student assessment is guided by the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), a register of all quality assured qualifications covering both secondary and tertiary education. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is responsible for ensuring the quality of assessments for qualification.

The main qualification in secondary education is the NCEA, in which students are assessed against a range of National Standards specifying knowledge and skills. Years 11, 12, and 13 of upper secondary education typically correspond to NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3, but it is possible for students to take NCEA assessments earlier in their secondary schooling.

Standards contributing to NCEA are listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards. The standards specify learning outcomes and assessment criteria. There are two types of standards: unit standards and achievement standards. Unit standards are vocationally-based and mostly used in workplace training and the tertiary sector. Achievement standards are academically-based and focused on the secondary school curriculum. The Directory of Assessment Standards contains over 26 000 unit standards and about 850 achievement standards. Schools can design and offer their own courses mixing unit standards and achievement standards.

Assessment for secondary qualification can involve both internal and external assessment approaches. All unit standards are internally assessed. In 2010, assessment of students was carried out using approximately one-third unit standards, one-third internally assessed achievement standards and one-third externally assessed achievement standards. External assessment is conducted by NZQA via national examinations (or by portfolio for certain subjects). Internal assessment is largely based on coursework and classroom-based assessment. An external moderation system is in place to ensure the dependability of internal assessments in Years 11-13.

Students are graded for their achievement on each standard. Four grade categories are available for achievement standards: Not Achieved, Achieved, Achieved with Merit and Achieved with Excellence. Most unit standards have only two grade categories (Not Achieved and Achieved) but there is current work on developing Merit and Excellence grades for some unit standards.

Assessment is used in a more summative way in upper secondary schools where student results on the NCEA are of interest to employers and tertiary education institutions. At the same time, the Ministry of Education emphasises that NCEA assessments also provide good opportunities for formative assessment as schools are able to reassess and resubmit assessments to maximise learner success. Approximately two thirds of reported student results contributing to NCEA are internally assessed, which also provides opportunities for teachers to use assessment to provide feedback and adapt teaching strategies. Students receive their marked externally assessed scripts back so there is opportunity to use these formatively in Years 11 and 12.

Strengths

Assessment is designed to improve learning

Assessment for learning, or formative assessment, is at the heart of New Zealand’s assessment strategy. In key documentation by the Ministry of Education, assessment is presented as an integral part of quality teaching and learning. As expressed in the Ministry of Education’s position paper, assessment in New Zealand is focused less on summative “end point testing” and has moved towards a broad focus on assessment as a means to improve both teaching and learning. Effective assessment is described as a circle of inquiry, decision making, adaptation and transformation. It should be “a process of learning, for learning” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010a). Whether assessment improves learning depends to a large extent on the quality of interactions between teachers and students. In this respect, New Zealand’s strong focus on the importance of helping all students achieve is a major strength.

New Zealand’s assessment strategy, in parallel with the education system of governance, is characterised by an important devolution of assessment, starting with the students themselves. It emphasises the development of the students’ own capacity to regulate their own learning through self-assessment. New Zealand’s assessment policy has focused on improving student learning by building students’ assessment ability through active involvement in assessment. Both the NCEA examination system and assessment practices at primary level are consistent with such a policy. In the schools visited by the OECD review team, there were already good indications that the policy is achieving its purpose and that students’ self-assessment and self-regulation of learning are widely implemented.

The focus on a rigorous monitoring of the impact of assessment on student learning has resulted in a series of optimisations where student assessment of learning is a part of teachers’ professional learning, which in turn makes teachers’ professional judgement increasingly suited to support students’ learning. This leads to a spiral of growth where teachers’ judgement is better informed by an increased capability of students to talk about their own learning. At the same time, students’ assessment capability is constantly improved through appropriate self-assessment strategies and teachers’ feedback. As a result, both teachers and students are able to engage in fruitful conversations leading to

greater self-confidence, meta-cognitive monitoring skills and self-regulation skills, sometime referred to “assessment as learning” (Earl, 2003).

Assessment is grounded in teacher professionalism and supported by professional development

New Zealand’s assessment approach is also based on a firm belief in teachers’ professionalism. Teachers are given prime responsibility as the principal assessors of student learning. The assessor’s competencies in interpreting data are central not only in making the right diagnosis, but also in making the right decisions (Barber, 2009; Heritage *et al.*, 2009). New Zealand’s school system emphasises the importance of overall teacher judgements and accordingly provides teachers with a range of assessment tools and opportunities to develop their professional learning about assessment.

Initial teacher education provides teachers with the assessment basics and most of teachers’ initial learning about assessment occurs in actual practice and after graduation through mentoring. New Zealand schools operate in a data rich environment and in a culture of assessment for learning. Newly employed teachers are thus rapidly involved in conversations with their colleagues about assessment through moderation activities and other professional activities associated with the school self-review and assessment of student learning.

Teachers’ professional development in assessment is a career-long learning experience that needs to be sustained. The Ministry’s strategy on teachers’ professional development is two-fold (Gilmore, 2008). Part of teachers’ professional development occurs continuously on site through teachers’ involvement in school activities where assessment plays an important role (Timperley *et al.*, 2007). As students develop their own assessment capacity, they may become an important source of feedback for teachers (Absolum, *et al.*, 2009). Part of the professional development occurs through teachers’ participation in national programmes. As teachers’ professional development is decided at the school level, teachers’ participation in national initiatives depends on school priorities and on the availability of resources.

Major professional development programmes initiated by the Ministry of Education have been evaluated in terms of their impact on student learning and the results seem promising (Box 3.1). Gilmore (2008) makes a distinction between professional development programmes in which assessment is “foregrounded” (*i.e.* it is the main focus of the programme) and those programmes where assessment is “backgrounded”, (*i.e.* the programme does not focus on assessment *per se*, but assessment is an integral part of the programme). Box 3.1 provides some examples.

In addition, teacher professional development related to effective assessment also occurs via their strong involvement in scoring student work for the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) and for the NCEA.

Box 3.1 Professional development related to student assessment

Assess to Learn (AtoL) is a whole-school professional development programme that has been offered to primary and secondary schools since 2002. Schools can apply for participation in the programme and typically participate for two years. The annual budget for AtoL is \$3.17 million annually and currently involves 155 schools. The programme intends to support teachers in choosing adequate assessment tools and analysing assessment information so as to further advance student learning. A 2008 evaluation of the AtoL programme reported a significant impact of the programme on teacher professional practice and important improvements in student learning, especially for students with initially low achievement levels. Monitoring data showed that schools participating in AtoL had achieved up to 4.5 times greater shifts in writing achievements in Years 4 to 9 than the nationally expected rate of progress.

The Literacy Professional Development Project (LPDP) was a six-year programme involving 323 schools and over 3 000 teachers. The programme provided whole-staff school-based literacy professional development running for over two years. It focused on improving student literacy achievement through an evidence-based inquiry model focused on quality teaching and development of professional learning communities. This was not a programme particularly focused on assessment, but collecting and interpreting data was a key component of it. The evaluation showed that schools participating in LPDP had significantly improved student progress and achievement in reading and writing, and especially so for the students most at risk of underachieving.

Sources: McDowall *et al.* (2007); Poskitt and Taylor (2008); Gilmore (2008); New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011).

Teachers' assessment practice is based on a variety of approaches and sophisticated tools

The importance of using multiple sources of evidence for effective assessment is emphasised at both primary and secondary levels. Schools are required to use a range of assessment practices to measure students' progress and achievement in relation to the national curriculum and standards. Thereby, they are encouraged to use a diversity of approaches in school-based assessment. The focus on broad assessment is further emphasised by the reliance of National Standards on overall teacher judgements (OTJ).

Schools are provided with a range of optional assessment tools to help teachers make balanced judgements on student performance. While there is no national compulsory programme of testing, apart from NCEA examinations, a range of tools are available to support teachers' assessment of students' learning. Some of these tools allow teachers to determine how their students' achievement compares to the national population of similar students. The assessment tools most frequently cited by the school professionals and stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team were Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle) and Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) (Box 3.2). The Education Review Office (ERO, 2007, p. 21) reports on the following tools as being the most frequently used:

asTTle; PATs; School Entry Assessments (SEA); six year nets; and assessments tasks from the numeracy projects. Schools also used a range of reading assessment tools. The most common were STAR (Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading); PROBE (Prose reading observation behaviour and evaluation of comprehension); PM (Price Milburn) Benchmarks; and the Burt Word Reading Test. Schools also used tests of spelling proficiency.

Box 3.2 Frequently used assessment tools in New Zealand schools

asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning) tests reading, writing and mathematics skills and is available in both English and *Te Reo Māori* from curriculum levels 2 to 5 (Years 5 to 10). The tool is provided to schools as a free CD-ROM. Teachers and schools select test content and difficulty in line with their teaching programmes. asTTle quickly analyses student performance, producing easy-to-understand colour graphs. The information gained from results allows teachers to identify individual and group strengths and weaknesses, gauge progress, monitor patterns and trends, and to compare these with national standards. The asTTle programme links teachers to an indexed online catalogue of classroom resources, allowing them to effectively plan subsequent learning steps. asTTle was developed for the Ministry of Education by the University of Auckland.

PATs (Progressive Achievement Tests) assess listening comprehension in Years 3 to 9 and reading vocabulary, reading comprehension and mathematics in Years 4 to 9. PATs are standardised multiple-choice tests that mark students on a scale. Teachers can mark the tests themselves using marking keys. There is also a marking website where teachers can access automated marking and analysis. Test scores allow for formative as well as summative reporting. PATs are owned and developed independently by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and can be purchased by individual schools to add to their assessment programmes.

Sources: New Zealand Ministry of Education website (www.minedu.govt.nz); New Zealand Council for Educational Research website (www.nzcer.org.nz).

Most of these tools cover literacy and numeracy. They are mostly used to report to parents or to provide solid evidence on school results. For some assessments, such as the School Entry Assessments, schools are also encouraged to aggregate the results of individual children and send them to the Ministry of Education, where they are collated in a database and analysed to provide a national picture (Dewar and Telford, 2003). In the context of National Standards, the Ministry of Education clarified that student outcomes as measured by the various assessment tools are only one aspect of overall teacher judgements. The results should be triangulated with observations of process and should also be used to engage students in in-depth learning conversations (Absolum *et al.*, 2009; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011).

As the available assessment tools relate to a narrow portion of the curriculum, they need to be used conjointly with other sources of evidence (Absolum *et al.*, 2009). There are fewer tools available for other curriculum areas beyond literacy and numeracy, with the notable exception of the tools developed as part of the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) (see Chapter 6). While NEMP is designed for system monitoring, examples of previous assessment tasks are available for teachers and may be used in the classroom. This can help teachers estimate how their own group of students compares to national assessment results.

National Standards respond to a specific need in primary education

In a context where there is a general consensus that numerical marks or scores should not be used to report achievement and that national testing should be avoided in primary education, the introduction of “standards” is seen as an alternative way to make information about student progress more consistent and more easily available. National Standards have been introduced in 2010 for reading, writing and mathematics in

Years 1-8. Their introduction is intended to provide more information on the learning progress that is required at each year level and to increase the reliability of OTJs by narrowing the possible range of interpretations of the national curriculum.

Heritage *et al.* (2009) have shown that teacher judgements may be reliable in diagnosing students' difficulties but that OTJs are much less dependable when teachers must agree on what should be done to remediate learning difficulties. To the extent that standards will provide teachers with adequate reference points to assess students' progress, they have the potential to provide some form of guidance and more reliability in teachers' interventions. As reported by Darling-Hammond and McCloskey (2008, p. 264), "higher-achieving countries [...] have a more thoughtful sequence of expectations based on developmental learning progressions within and across domains."

The introduction of standards-referenced assessment in primary schools has the potential to serve as a common reference for teachers and to ensure the monitoring of progress towards achieving national learning objectives. National Standards can help provide greater consistency of judgements across schools and they are also expected to play a role in supporting learning. Through an appropriate set of exemplars and criteria, they may provide teachers and students with a more accurate description of learning progressions and a better knowledge of what the next steps should be following a student's assessment. As signposts to pay attention to, standards may also play a role in more systematic early identification of students requiring additional support in reaching national learning goals.

As such, the introduction of standards is congruent with other initiatives implemented by the Ministry to address the issue that the curriculum objectives "do not provide a sufficiently clear basis for discriminating levels of achievement or judging learning progress" (Absolum *et al.*, 2009). As a common reference for primary teachers, along with learning progressions in reading, writing and mathematics, standards should help provide a better alignment to national objectives in literacy and numeracy. Although there may presently be difficulties related with the implementation of standards (more on this below), the reasons why they have been developed and the objectives they aim at are congruent with what is currently recognised as good practice.

There is a focus on inclusive assessment

Assessment plays a key role in identifying and responding to children's diverse educational needs. The National Administration Guidelines (NAG) 1.iii and 1.iv set out the obligation for schools to "identify students and groups of students (a) who are not achieving; (b) who are at risk of not achieving; (c) who have special needs [including gifted and talented students]..." and to "... develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of [these] students..." (TKI website). The national assessment approach underlines the importance of responding to individual learner needs and school community contexts, and much valuable work has been undertaken to develop assessment strategies to suit the needs of different learner groups.

Assessment in Māori-medium education

There is a clear focus on ensuring that assessment is used to promote student achievement in all settings, English-medium and Māori-medium. Since 2008, Māori assessment experts have been working on a framework for monitoring student outcomes of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (the curriculum used in Māori-medium settings since 2011).

This work has also contributed to the development of *Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori* (National Standards used in Māori-medium settings). The Ministry of Education is also continuing to work with these experts with a view to developing a national monitoring study in *te reo Māori*. The Ministry of Education recognises that further work is needed to support effective assessment practices Māori-medium settings through the development of dedicated assessment resources (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010a) (more on this below).

Assessment of students with special educational needs

The National Standards apply to all children in Years 1-8, including those with special educational needs. This has the advantage of ensuring that all children are being assessed in relation to the national framework provided by the national curriculum. According to the Ministry of Education, the focus of the Standards for children with special educational needs will be as much on individual progress as on achievement in relation to Standards. Stakeholders interviewed by the OECD team in a focus group meeting on special education welcomed the fact that students with special educational needs are assessed in relation to the national curriculum and National Standards alongside their peers.

Children with very significant learning disabilities are also supported through an Individual Education Programme (IEP). These children are likely to learn long-term within Level 1 of the national curriculum. According to the Ministry of Education, the IEP is “a living document” that should guide the education programme for an individual student for a defined period and be reviewed at least twice a year. The IEP should bring together the school, parents, student and possibly other agencies around the basic processes of assessing, objective setting, teaching, monitoring, evaluating, re-assessing and further planning to support the learning of the student (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010b). It should identify individual learning goals and define the time in which these goals should be achieved.

The Ministry of Education is supporting innovative approaches to assessment and reporting for diverse students and has launched a project on Assessment for Learners with Special Education Needs, which includes development of “narrative assessment” exemplars, guidance, and resources. Two key resource documents *Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers* and *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs* are available to support teachers in maximising learning opportunities and pathways for children with special educational needs within *The New Zealand Curriculum* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009).

Assessment of English language learners (ELL)

Where English language learning needs are identified, it is mandatory for state and state-integrated schools to make adequate and effective provision for learning success. Ministry funding is targeted to ELLs who have identified high language needs. Schools receiving this funding use it to provide English language acquisition support. To apply for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) funding, schools are required to assess ELL’s achievement in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English in relation to the national cohort. The funding criteria enable teachers to consider an ELL’s language acquisition across all curriculum learning areas. The *ESOL Progress and Assessment Guidelines* provide information to schools on the suitability of commonly used assessment tools for assessing ELLs. The *Guidelines* talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each assessment tool used to assess ELLs.

Most primary schools use Clay's Observation Survey³ to screen early language and literacy at age 6 to track progress in the first three years of primary school. While the survey does not assess English language *per se*, it does closely analyse student progress and can be helpful in highlighting issues in literacy learning including those of ELLs. The Ministry also developed the English Language Learning Progressions to support teachers to identify stages and patterns of progress in the language development of English language learners, develop next learning steps and monitor progress. Professional development is available to support teachers in using these progressions.

National Administration Guideline 2A requires schools to report to students and their parents on the student's progress and achievement in relation to National standards. Many ELLs will initially not meet the expectations of the National Standards. It is therefore recommended that schools also assess progress and achievement and report to parents in relation to the English Language Learning Progressions in order to show finer-grained progress and achievement. There is recognition that language difficulties may make progress challenging not only in reading and writing but also in mathematics, and teachers are expected to consider this when judging learner progress and achievement.

High quality assessment is well established in upper secondary education

There are several distinctive characteristics that make the NCEA assessments in upper secondary education particularly well-suited to the New Zealand context and coherent with its major assessment policies: (1) They allow for flexible and personalised assessment of individual students; (2) They have acquired a high level of reliability and credibility across the system; and (3) They foster the professionalism of teachers and school leaders.

NCEA assessments allow for a high level of flexibility

Schools make up their own courses selecting certain standards accordingly. The combination of unit standards (assessed by teachers and workplace assessors) and achievement standards (some internally assessed by teachers and others externally assessed by national examinations or portfolios) make it possible to break the boundaries between academic and vocational education.

Assessment processes are adapted as much as possible to individual student needs and there is a strong focus on transparency and quality feedback for students. First of all, students are assessed when ready. Although assessment for NCEA starts most often in Year 11 of schooling, students may undertake NCEA assessment earlier. Furthermore, students may also choose to be assessed at more than one level in relation to particular standards and/or subjects in a given year. The accumulation of standards and credits allows for individualised pathways, greater adaptability and flexibility. Credits may be acquired from different learning institutions or workplaces towards a single national qualification. Examination papers are also personalised and contain “booklets for all standards in each subject for which that student is entered” (NZQA, 2010; p. 48).

Finally, the internally assessed work, and uniquely, the externally assessed work are routinely sent back to students. Results reports provide an overview of the student's performance in each standard and a summary statement of overall performance in different standards for a subject and level. The results reports for internal assessment can contain individualised feedback for the examinee.

NCEA assessments are robust and credible

NCEA examinations have acquired a high level of credibility among students, teachers and parents thanks to a rigorous monitoring of all the steps involved in the examination, and because of the high validity and reliability of the results.

The reliability of NCEA assessments is achieved through a range of external quality assurance processes. Approximately one-third of standards contributing to NCEA are achievement standards which are externally assessed by the NZQA via end-of-year examinations or portfolios⁴. These external NCEA assessments are marked by contracted marking panels of educational professionals (mostly experienced teachers), overseen by national assessment facilitators. The facilitators have a teaching background in secondary education and strong assessment experience. In addition, the contracted markers receive particular professional development on assessment in their specialist subject and NCEA level. For external assessment, NZQA also publishes profiles of expected performances (statistical predictions) and monitors the actual spread of performances. If there are major discrepancies, there might be a revision of the standard or professional development for teachers. It might go as far as re-marking some of the papers.

The remaining achievement standards, as well as all the unit standards, are internally assessed by teachers using a range of assessment approaches. The quality of these internal assessments is supervised and monitored by the NZQA in several ways:

- NZQA has implemented Managing National Assessment (MNA), a whole-school process for quality assuring assessment for national qualifications. As part of MNA, the NZQA analyses each school's capacity to assess against standards contributing to NCEA. The results of this external checking procedure are reported by the NZQA in *Managing National Assessment* reports. These reports are publicly available and provide feedback to schools and accountability information to the general public on schools' assessment policies and practices.
- NZQA also directly checks the quality of internal assessment through a sampling approach. Schools are required to submit 10% of internally assessed student work for NZQA moderation to make sure the assessment is appropriately aligned with standards. The moderation process does not affect the grades assigned to assessment samples by teachers, but is intended to provide feedback to teachers and to inform future assessment policy development at the system level.
- If a school is underperforming, NZQA may put in place an action plan in relation to a subject or even withdraw consent to report on a particular subject.

NCEA assessments foster professionalism of teachers and school leaders

The NCEA also has a positive influence on teachers' professional learning and the improvement of school self-reviews. NZQA not only audits and monitors schools' assessment practices but also takes the role of a professional support organisation. To support NCEA assessment, NZQA runs subject-specific pages on their website and holds around 250 workshops each year to inform teachers across the country. Best practice workshops are organised especially for new and beginning teachers. Some of the best professional development occurs when teachers collaborate with experienced moderators and work directly on samples of student work. The Ministry of Education also offers ongoing professional development activities in this area.

About 20% of secondary teachers are used as markers for externally assessed standards. These teachers receive specific professional development for this role. NZQA shows markers examples of how the same standard was assessed in the previous year to make sure there is consistency of results across years.

NZQA has recently implemented a series of initiatives designed “to provide teachers with further guidance about school-based assessment practice” (NZQA, 2010; p. 58). These initiatives are designed to provide an increased level of professional support for making assessment decisions, especially at grade boundaries where they are most needed. Such professional development at the threshold level is highly commendable and should result in higher reliability of results at passing marks. NZQA reports on decision levels as well as overall reliability.

Finally, data is also fed back to schools to support internal discussion and improvements. Schools can analyse their results on each standard separately or they can use combined results to review how well its different departments are doing. National statistics published on the NZQA website allow schools to compare their outcomes against those of similar schools in terms of socio-economic status and other characteristics.

Impact of the NCEA system on outcomes

According to NZQA (2010), the standards-based NCEA system has led to important improvement in student learning outcomes and retention rates at the upper secondary level. The first NZQA report on national trends shows some evidence of progress in diminishing ethnically-based differences in attainment of NCEA levels. Such a result is not generalisable at all standards levels and seems to be limited to the lowest standards (Level 1). More data will be needed to ascertain sustainability and generalisation at all levels. However, there are some promising data trends. The decrease of the ethnically-based differences in attainment of NCEA Level 1 is attributable to a more pronounced increase in attainment of NCEA Level 1 for Māori and Pasifika than for European and Asian candidates. Differences in the attainment of Level 1 literacy related to socio-economic status have diminished substantially since the implementation of NCEA. Also, the differences between high- and medium-decile schools and between medium- and low-decile schools in numeracy have been sharply reduced for the 2004-2009 period.

Challenges

Teacher capacities in relation to assessment are still variable in primary schools

There are challenges in achieving reliable overall teacher judgements

Because student assessment plays such an important role at all levels of the education system, the need for the development of professional skills for teachers, school leaders and Board of Trustees members are large. According to a range of recent reports, such needs are only partially met and may account for some of the variations in student learning outcomes within and between schools (ERO, 2007; Absolum *et al.*, 2009). The challenges of reliably assessing students’ achievement are well described in the following excerpt from an ERO 2007 education evaluation report:

In many schools (over 40 percent), teachers were investing time and energy in assessment activities that did not result in useful information about students' achievement and progress. In most primary schools, teachers collected accurate and valid information on their students' achievement in English and mathematics, but fewer did so in other curriculum areas. The assessment information gathered by teachers in many secondary schools did not give comprehensive information on students' achievement in Years 9 or 10. Teachers were better informed about the achievement of students in Years 11 to 13 but, in many cases, the information gathered for these students did not give an accurate picture of student progress over time. (ERO, 2007, p. 1)

The challenges in achieving reliable overall teacher judgements seem to have been mostly alleviated at the upper secondary school level (Years 11 to 13) by the introduction of the NZQA framework for student assessment. At primary and lower secondary school level (Years 1-10), these challenges still persist. Some of the factors contributing to the lack of assessment reliability have been identified as follows:

- Primary schools vary greatly in the way they choose to deliver the curriculum, assess student results and report to parents. While this may allow schools to respond and adapt quickly to local priorities, it may also raise problems with consistency of assessment and grading among primary schools.
- Primary schools may overemphasise formative assessment to the detriment of an accurate account and summary reporting of student progress, which is required to support the full potential of formative assessment, especially when setting individual achievement targets.
- There may be an insufficient emphasis on evaluation and assessment skills for teachers. Graduating teacher standards do not extensively describe assessment competencies and there seems to be a lack of consensus on what expectations should be for teacher education in relation to those competencies.
- Resources for professional development are limited. There is a need for more efficient use of resources for professional learning on assessment and to find the right balance between different professional development strategies (Gilmore, 2008).

Variation in assessment skills may explain some of the concerns as to the inconsistencies of teachers' judgements in the absence of external moderation at the primary school level. A significant proportion of teachers are still at an early stage of developing their professional judgement in relation to National Standards. The voluntary nature of professional development activities and the limited available resources may account for a part of the variation reported by ERO in teachers' assessment capability (ERO, 2007). The variation in teachers' assessment capability may in turn account for some of the differences in students' learning, as shown by two studies from New Zealand (Poskitt and Taylor, 2008; Gilmore, 2008) and several others from other countries (Barber, 2009; Fullan, 2009).

The challenge seems especially important where professional development would be most useful, that is among low-decile schools. This has led ERO to recommend that actions be taken for “further investigation into the particular challenges facing low-decile schools in collecting and using assessment information” (ERO, 2007, p. 46).

There is a need for better and more systematic reporting

The awareness and skills of teachers and school leaders in reporting and communicating on student learning also require continued attention. Despite intensive communication between schools and parents, there seems to be a need to make reporting more systematic and clear, so that parents are better informed about their child’s progress. According to an ERO (2007) report, only half of 314 reviewed schools were reporting achievement information effectively to parents and the community, and few schools had effective systems for understanding and using information given by other education providers such as early childhood education teachers or other schools.

Good reporting is essential to ensure parents can support their children’s learning and to focus all available resources, at home and at school, on essential targets (Guskey and Marzano, 2001). That is why reporting must be clear and easy to understand. This is especially important in the early years of education when it is possible for teachers and parents to have the greatest impact on a child’s learning. Good reporting is also essential when a child moves from one school to another, whether this occurs while in primary schools or at the time of school transition from the primary to the secondary levels.

Concerns regarding the implementation of National Standards

The National Standards were developed to respond to some of the challenges outlined above. They are intended to provide reference points for schools to be used in conjunction with their own assessment practices so as to support them in making reliable judgements on student learning. Schools are also required to ensure adequate reporting to parents on their children’s achievement and progress in relation to the standards at least twice a year.

While the purpose of improving assessment and reporting practice is broadly shared across the education system, several stakeholder groups interviewed by the OECD review team voiced concern about the pace of implementation of the National Standards. Some also expressed doubts about whether the standards would adequately serve their purpose and solve the problems they have been intended for.

Schools’ preparedness to implement standards

At present, there seems to be insufficient ownership of National Standards by school professionals. Several stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team regretted that the introduction of National Standards had not followed the same collaborative process as the introduction of the national curriculum, the development of which was phased over several years integrally involving the profession. By contrast, the benchmarks for National Standards were developed rather rapidly in 2009 and were not tested empirically on actual student progressions over time (Wylie and Hodgen, 2010).

It would appear that part of the challenge in the implementation of standards is not only a result of its pace but also a function of schools’ preparedness. Teacher capacity still needs to be built in primary schools for standards-based reporting to be reliable. In

their current form, the data from National Standards reporting is unlikely to be consistent across schools. The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) 2010 survey of primary and intermediate schools points to variability in assessment and moderation practice across schools (Wylie and Hodgen, 2010). It will take time to develop the expertise and moderation arrangements necessary to make nationally comparable judgements based on the Standards.

In a 2010 report, ERO found that out of 228 schools reviewed, 19% were well prepared to work with the National Standards, 61% had preparation under way and the remaining 20% were not yet well prepared to work with the Standards (ERO, 2010b). For schools in which considerable work still needs to be done to improve student assessment practice, the implementation of standards will require much more time. Schools already struggling and schools which have not yet fully implemented the national curriculum face particular challenges.

Risks of narrowing the teaching and learning focus

There is also concern that the introduction of National Standards may interfere with the implementation of the revised national curriculum, which took full effect in 2010. Most principals responding to the 2010 NZCER survey indicated that their schools continued with developmental work on the curriculum but many expressed some tensions between the two processes, including having to cut back on some of the curriculum work or having less access to advisory support (Wylie and Hodgen, 2010).

While the national curriculum emphasises the development of broad competencies, the introduction of Standards increases the risk of a narrower focus on numeracy and literacy in primary schools. Such a trend already exists, as it is far more common for schools to identify low achievement in literacy and numeracy than in other areas (ERO, 2007). As standards are presently limited to these domains, their introduction may contribute to accentuating of such a trend.

While schools are not required to use the categories “at”, “above”, “below” and “well below” standard for their reporting to students and parents, a range of stakeholders expressed concern about an overemphasis on labelling students to the detriment of more nuanced and adequate feedback. There are also concerns about potential use of such reporting categories to create school comparisons or league tables based on student achievement against the National Standards.

Matching standards with existing assessment tools

The introduction of standards also brings a number of challenges for the school system to embed these within the existing procedures and tools for assessment. As a new piece that needs to be fitted into the primary education system, standards require mutual adjustments with other pieces. There seem to be some information gaps in matching the standards with already existing assessment tools and in interpreting and making judgements against the standards. Alignment of the standards with the learning progressions at secondary level and with NCEA revision of standards (in progress) also raises questions.

There is room to optimise assessment for diverse students

Assessment of students with special educational needs requires particular attention

Identifying students' level and type of educational needs is of key importance to respond adequately to these needs. ERO (2010a) reports concerns about the fact that the current framework to assess special needs and apply for funding for students with high needs appears to reward the quality of a funding application more than the actual level of the student's need. Parents of students with special educational needs interviewed by the OECD review team also reported concerns about schools' difficulties in filling funding application forms and receiving the adequate funding level for their children.

In a recent ERO review on *Including Students with High Needs*, ERO (2010a) indicates that assessment of students with special educational needs could be optimised across schools. Of 229 reviewed schools, approximately 50% had mostly inclusive practices, while 30% had some inclusive practices and 20% had only few inclusive practices. Regarding the challenges related to assessment, the report identifies the following:

- Among the schools generally showing inclusive practice, there was some concern about teachers at a secondary school having insufficient knowledge of formative assessment and/or differentiated teaching to specifically meet the needs of students.
- Among the schools with some inclusive practice, ERO found specific weaknesses including the absence of Individual Educational Programmes (see above) for students with high needs.
- Among the schools with few inclusive practices, weaknesses included poor assessment of student progress and achievements and insufficient monitoring of the teaching provided for students with high needs.

In the context of special education, there is a risk that curricula and assessment frameworks may define achievement and progress too narrowly to capture many valuable areas of learning of students with special educational needs. Teachers may not always have the awareness and competencies to ensure adequate and innovative assessment of students with diverse needs and to report accordingly to parents. One parent interviewed by the OECD review team mentioned that in a previous school her child had never received a report card or written information on achievement and progress. In the current school, the experience was much more positive, with school staff committed to working towards the highest possible learning outcomes with the child. While inclusive assessment practice exists in many schools, the key challenge appears to be to ensure that such good practice is developed consistently in all schools enrolling students with special educational needs.

Teachers need to adapt assessment to the needs of English language learners (ELL)

As New Zealand's demographics have changed and resulted in a diversification of its population, one cannot assume that the language of instruction is the first language spoken by students or the language spoken at home. That is the case not only for the children of migrant and refugee backgrounds, but also for some Māori students.

Communication and language proficiency are at the heart of good learning conversations around assessment results to inform teaching and learning responses. As language and learning are so much intertwined, it is of crucial importance for effective formative assessment that teachers can differentiate issues of learning difficulties from issues of language learning. That is especially relevant for ELL and language minority students with learning difficulties since “much of the formative work is interactionally realised through teacher-student talk” (Leung and Mohan, 2004, p. 336).

Attention to language aspects is also important for fairness in summative assessment. Assessment results may be biased if assessment tools measure language skills at the same time as they measure other subject matters. While reliability and validity of students’ assessment of learning are necessary conditions for any effective assessment system, one cannot assume that these conditions are met or transferable to all different subgroups of the population. Evidence of differential validity is required to determine whether separate test validities are needed for each group (Shultz and Whitney, 2005). That is why issues of translation and adaptation of assessment tools are so important in linguistically diverse classrooms. In a meeting between the OECD review team and a Pasifika Fono, participants voiced concerns about whether the main available assessment tools in New Zealand were adequate for ELL students. Adaptation of assessment instruments to reflect cultural and linguistic differences is not easily accomplished and does not necessarily lead to “metrical equivalence”, that is results expressed on the same scale and having equal values, even if some “conceptual equivalence” can be accomplished.

Co-operation on diagnostic language screening with the ECE sector could be strengthened

Early identification and interventions for students facing language challenges would increase the opportunities to enhance students’ early literacy and numeracy skills. While most primary schools use Marie Clay’s Observation Survey (see above) to screen early language and literacy at age 6, there appears to be room for further co-operation with the early childhood education (ECE) sector so as to optimise identification of and response to early language needs of children, especially for English language learners. As the first three years of primary education have a significant influence on a child’s capacity to master essential tools of learning such as literacy and numeracy, it is important that children in early childhood education settings are supported in developing the appropriate bases in the language of instruction. A recent ERO (2011) review indicates that there is a need to strengthen coherence of literacy learning practices in ECE and primary school.

Fewer tools are available for assessment in Māori-medium education

For Māori-medium education, the questions of reliability, validity and the cultural and linguistic equity issues related with assessment are important to ascertain that the Measurable Gains Framework indicators (see Chapter 6) are properly assessed. The availability of assessment tools for Māori-medium education is currently still limited. Many of the existing assessment tools were not designed for a Māori context, and only some have been adjusted. According to a school leader of a Māori-immersion school visited by the OECD review team, teachers need to be extremely resourceful in designing their own assessments. However, they often use assessment tools that are not valid as they were not designed for the particular purposes in which they are applied.

Staff from the Māori-medium school visited by the OECD review team also explained that while they did not find NCEA very sensitive to Māori contexts, there had been improvements in recent years. For example, the NCEA allows the design of assessments that recognise collective achievement through group performance assessments. NZQA also provides all the exam papers in Māori on request. However, there is a lack of qualified Māori markers. The exam papers are marked in English by the subject specialist teacher in consultation with a fluent Māori speaker.

It is essential to analyse and document the effectiveness of the development, translation and adaptation of assessment tools in Māori-medium education. Especially for high-stakes testing, it is important to review how assessment of learning meets the recommendations of the International Testing Commission on test translation and adaptation (Hambleton *et al.*, 2005).

As the assessment needs are not necessarily the same in English-medium and Māori contexts, it is also important to consider developing original assessment tools that fit particularly to Māori teaching and learning approaches (*e.g.* the focus on oral language), rather than just translating tools from the English-medium context.

The focus on assessment for learning is less pronounced in secondary education

In secondary education, the high stakes of NCEA examinations may have shifted the focus somewhat towards better summative assessment to the detriment of formative assessment. This has created an imbalance between the two functions of assessments. As a result, formative assessment strategies have been found wanting at the secondary level (ERO 2007, p. 2) in almost 60% of schools. Among the good quality assessment strategies that need to be used in secondary schools, ERO (2007, p. 44) identified the following: (1) Having rich conversations with students about their learning; (2) Ensuring students understood the purpose and success criteria of learning activities; (3) Giving students effective and useful feedback. Such strategies contributed the most to differentiate effective schools from less effective ones.

The AtoL professional development programme seems to have improved the situation at the participating secondary schools. It appears, however, that “further investigation and information is needed about the more complex processes involved with formative assessment and related professional learning in secondary schools” (Poskitt and Taylor, 2008, pp. 4-5).

Policy recommendations

The previous sections on the strengths of the New Zealand assessment framework and the most recent challenges it is confronted with, illustrate some of the tensions which will require increased attention in the next few years. Those tensions relate to the formative and summative functions of assessment as well as the optimal use of internally and externally designed assessment approaches. Teachers are at the centre of these tensions. Harris and Brown (2009, p. 365) have referred to this as “the particularly strong tension between what teachers feel is best for students versus what is deemed necessary for school accountability”.

These tensions may be constructive as long as they are kept in proper balance by the right policy decisions and lead to the best assessment practices. For instance, an imbalance may occur when teachers conceive of student accountability as irrelevant and

do not see it as associated with improvement (Harris and Brown, 2009). Overconfidence and/or overreliance on some assessment strategies may also be detrimental, such as when teachers rely too much on feedback and too little on measurement: “Feedback can only build on something; it is of little use when there is no initial learning or surface information” (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). That is especially relevant with special education children and language minority students whose learning is challenged by insufficient development in the language of instruction. In other instances, feedback which is overly reliant on extrinsic rewards, and largely oriented toward effort and motivation may be counter-productive as it is likely to reinforce performance goals rather than learning goals (Pryor and Torrance, 1998, p. 171).

Because there is a high degree of self-awareness at various levels of New Zealand’s education system, many of these tensions are already acknowledged in numerous scholarly publications by New Zealand researchers and in reports by governmental agencies such as NZQA and ERO. Some policy options are already being studied and in some cases, partially implemented. The purpose of this section is to reinforce those options which have the potential to make the assessment framework more balanced, coherent, efficient and responsive to the needs of the New Zealand educational system. The section proposes to:

- Continue to build and strengthen assessment capacity;
- Reinforce coherence and connectedness in the student assessment framework;
- Further develop and embed the National Standards within the New Zealand assessment system;
- Ensure equity in assessment.

Continue to build and strengthen assessment capacity

As the education system is highly devolved and relies on the assessment competencies of all its agents, it is of utmost importance to increase the assessment capability at all levels. Such capacity building must respond to the diverse needs of different stakeholders in the school system (trustees, parents, school principals, teachers and students).

For trustees, this means developing the capacity to understand, interpret and make decisions based on using student assessment reports. This capacity needs to be sustained after each election and on-going resources should be set apart to make sure trustees can play their role to its full extent.

For schools principals and teachers, it means developing the capacity to collect and report on student assessment to students, parents, *whānau* and trustees in effective ways without oversimplifying the complex issues involved in student learning. Exemplars of good practice in data analysis, reporting and communication should be provided nationally to make sure some minimal requirements are met.

School professionals also need to develop not only the capacity to use, interpret and follow up on results obtained from nationally provided assessment tools, but also to develop valid and reliable assessment tools which meet their own specific local needs, especially in subject matters other than literacy and numeracy or in areas where the school results are particularly problematic and where more information is needed on sub-groups of students.

Central agencies (Ministry of Education, University Faculties of Education, New Zealand Teacher Council) could consider developing a unique set of teachers' competencies in assessment, whether it has to do with assessment of student learning, teachers' self-assessment of their professional development needs or the aggregation and interpretation of school results. Such a list of teachers' competencies could be used to set clear targets for agreeing university programmes and country-wide graduating standards to be used by teacher educators. It could also be used to set priorities for mentoring beginning teachers and providing in-service teachers with continuous professional development.

National expertise in this area could also be further developed. The community of New Zealand experts in assessment is quite small in comparison to the national needs in assessment expertise. The New Zealand education system has reached a critical point in terms of developing its assessment capability. In parallel to the democratisation of a culture of assessment among schools, it has become increasingly important to invest in tertiary education and research to increase the number of experts capable to anticipate and respond to future needs, offering the best advice available from scientific knowledge and scholarly work. This has become increasingly important as New Zealand develops its own unique ways of carrying out student assessment and as it needs to do more research on its own system. References to international scholarly research may only partly inform the decisions that need to be made. The Assessment Academy of New Zealand has already identified a series of issues that would promote debate and discussion and where research projects are needed to inform future developments of the New Zealand assessment policy.

Reinforce coherence and connectedness in the student assessment framework

To be sustainable, assessment capacity building requires ongoing resources and raises issues as to what are the most efficient and optimal ways of using these resources. Such optimisation can be accomplished by avoiding duplications of services and by increasing interconnectedness. The New Zealand education system, while retaining the advantages of a highly devolved system, has succeeded in overcoming some of the challenges associated with it. It has maintained a good level of coherence which needs to be developed further. The successful implementation of the NCEA by the NZQA clearly illustrates the benefits in efficiency and in efficacy that can be obtained from the development of better interconnectedness.

Interconnections serve to increase the coherence of the assessment framework and to properly align efforts and resources on priorities. Two types of connections are required:

- **Horizontal connections.** In a highly devolved system, horizontal connections allow schools to share expertise among them thus reducing duplications and helping the dissemination of transfers of best practice.
- **Vertical connections.** Some local issues in students' achievement may be overwhelming for small schools. Issues such as special education, second language literacy and minority education issues require levels of expertise and the mustering of resources that are beyond the scope of a local school.

To keep pace with the most recent developments in student assessment, teaching and learning require improved information transfer at all levels. The ERO (2010b) report on standards implementation and the NZQA annual report on NCEA scholarship data and statistics (2010) are first steps but their impact is limited in terms of their capacity to document and communicate best practices most effectively and to identify potential solutions for schools. Heritage *et al.* (2009) have shown that while teachers' OTJs on

student learning difficulties may be quite dependable, it may be less so when decisions have to be made as to what should be done next. It is thus important that reports that identify challenges at the national level come with appropriate recommendations and share examples of existing best practices.

Further develop and embed the National Standards within the New Zealand assessment system

While many aspects of standards fit well with New Zealand’s assessment approach, their implementation is a matter of concern. ERO (2010b) found that many schools are not well prepared. According to the Scottish experience, merging practice, policy and research in a way that fosters participative change “suggests a far longer timeframe for change than recent policy innovations have allowed; a timeframe that will require political will to initiate and political courage to sustain” (Hayward *et al.*, 2004, p. 413). The following options may be considered to effect a softer implementation of standards over time:

- A better link needs to be established between standards and already existing assessment tools. Some of these tools need to be adapted to reflect standards. Such work is in progress.
- There is also a need to properly align primary school standards with those of secondary school even though they have different characteristics and intentions. Such an alignment will be necessary to improve transition between schools.
- More professional development is needed for teachers and school leaders, especially among those schools which are already challenged by the implementation of the curriculum. There is a demand for more information and clarification. Professional development on standards and on standards implementation at the local level should be tailored to school needs according to previous ERO reviews and self-reviews.
- ERO could also support standards implementation by systematically reviewing the robustness and dependability of school data in relation to the standards.
- There is also a need to strengthen moderation for assessment of standards. Moderation could be used both as a way to improve the dependability of teachers’ assessment of student learning and remediation strategies and as a professional learning opportunity. Moderation will also ensure that teachers retain ownership of assessment.
- Work on learning progressions should be sustained in subject matters other than literacy and numeracy.
- Policies should be developed to improve the way results from assessment against standards are reported and shared. Good reporting and communication strategies are necessary to develop interconnections among different levels of the school system and reach out to parents (Hattie, 2009). A policy that involves development of better communication through better reporting strategies and information sharing would likely increase the efficiency of the system and avoid duplications. For example, consideration could be given to introducing a more nuanced reporting system that describes different levels of achievement and progress, rather than just a cut-off point for determining whether students are above or below the standards.

Ensure equity in assessment

Ensure that assessment is relevant and responsive to students with special educational needs

Special education challenges many common assumptions about student assessment. The presence of students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms provides opportunities for teachers to be innovative and creative in the design of teaching and assessment approaches. The national curriculum, with its focus on inquiry teaching, provides an excellent basis for formative assessment and differentiated teaching approaches that can benefit students with a range of different educational needs. The Individual Education Programmes offer a framework to identify strengths and interests of students with special educational needs and set specific and manageable goals for development. The focus on narrative assessment, along with professional development offers, further supports teachers designing relevant assessment for students with special educational needs.

The key challenge is to ensure that rich assessment opportunities are systematically offered to all students with special educational needs regardless of where they go to school. There is evidence that there is still high variation in the quality of schools' inclusion. The ERO (2010a) review on *Including Students with High Needs* identifies a set of good practices related to the assessment of students with high needs such as:

- Good reporting and communication with parents, which helps support students both at home and at school. In inclusive schools, parents were included in the development of the IEP for their child and they also received less formal reports about their child's day to day progress.
- Good use of information on student achievement, interests, strengths, medical conditions, behaviour and parental expectations to inform the IEP given to individual students with high needs.
- SMART (specific, measurable, attributable, realistic and time-bound) objectives for the students' development, including academic, social and extra-curricular development.
- Inclusion of the student's voice where possible and a focus on identified strengths and interests of the students rather than just on areas of difficulties.
- School-wide systems to monitor the effectiveness of initiatives for all students with special educational needs. This helped schools review and improve their performance in this area.

Based on these findings, it is important that dimensions of inclusive assessment are further included and developed in both initial education and professional development for teachers. ERO (2010a) found that the quality of school leadership was fundamental to the quality of schools' inclusion. This emphasises the need of providing focused professional learning opportunities for school leaders regarding the assessment and teaching of students with special educational needs.

Develop adequate materials for Māori educational contexts

As discussed above, there is a need for a wider range of assessment tools for Māori-medium education. There are several options for doing this:

- One would consist in translating and adapting most existing tests which are publicly available. Translation and adaptation require a lot of care and resources and will not necessarily result in metrical equivalence. When such metrical equivalence is important and can be accomplished, test adaptation allows for intergroup comparisons on achievement levels.
- Another option would be to develop instruments in Māori language. Conceptual equivalence would be accomplished by having bilingual teachers and experts working together to moderate the test construction in each language. Assessment instruments developed in this context would have no metric equivalence and intergroup comparisons would not be possible. The main benefit of this procedure, however, would be to reduce the risk of any cultural or linguistic bias.
- A third option would be to find an intermediate solution between the two previous ones. It involves developing anchor points in assessment instruments developed in two different languages. For instance, there could be a core of items or activities that would be the same, except for translation and adaptation. These items or activities would serve to equate results on other parts of the instrument which have not been translated and which are unique to each language group.

Options 1 and 2 are the most frequently used, option 1 requiring translation and the application of strict guidelines on test adaptation and translation. The Educational Quality and Accountability Office of Ontario (EQAO), for example, has chosen option 2 and reports assessment results separately for French and English students. As results are not on the same scale, standard setting and reporting of results must be done separately⁵.

Support teachers in taking linguistic and cultural aspects into account

While an increase in the availability of assessment instruments in Māori is desirable, it will not completely address the issue of equity in assessment for learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This can only be accomplished by training teachers to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic aspects of learning:

The cultural and linguistic aspects of any assessment need to be carefully analysed and their implications understood. Only by doing this will actual skills and/or knowledge be assessed rather than the medium of instruction or the cultural understandings on which task interpretation depends. Teachers need to understand their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds before they can give feedback that will further learning, and to make sure that the cultures of all students are present in the contexts chosen for assessment purposes, just as for learning.
 (Absolum *et al.*, 2009, Section 3.2)

The learning goals for students who are ELLs should be the same as for their native English speaking peers. However, the nature and degree of scaffolding to support them to meet those outcomes needs to be differentiated. Likewise, assessment for learning needs to be cognisant of, and sensitive to, the diversity of languages, cultures and identities of ELLs. Broadfoot (1999, p. xii, in Kennedy *et al.*, 2008) underlines the need “to recognise

assessment as a social product in which the values and traditions of particular cultures and interests of specific groups within them combine to produce particular definitions of quality or merit.” Initial teacher training needs to include, as a minimum requirement, knowledge and understanding of additional language acquisition and the implication of this for assessment.

Schools should also be supported in making educational assessment more adapted to the cultural and linguistic diversity of New Zealand’s student population. To design adequate assessment and teaching strategies, it would be important that schools gather data on students’ linguistic profiles such as language(s) spoken at home, at school and outside of home and school. While schools are encouraged to collect such data, it is not clear to what extent this is done systematically across the country. Even though collecting data on students’ language competencies is complex and challenging, the national authorities should explore ways to help schools collect such data in a more systematic way. A national template could be used to assist schools in collecting essential information regarding student linguistic profiles (for more detail, please see Chapter 6).

Schools with diverse student populations should also focus particularly on developing student self-assessment and this dimension could be included in ERO reviews (Absolum *et al.*, 2009). Laveault and Miles (2006) have shown that students’ self-assessment capability may be used as a valid indicator of the equivalence of curriculum alignment in a public education system supporting two languages of instruction such as Ontario (Canada). Student self-assessment indicators have the potential to inform on the “conceptual equivalence”⁶ of the Māori- and English-medium curricula.

Ensure systematic early diagnosis of language proficiency

The most efficient and cost-effective educational strategies are those which can be implemented as early as possible in a child’s development. That is especially true of reading skills. That is why early assessment and the systematic early diagnosis of a child’s early language and literacy skills are so crucial. At present, several initiatives exist across New Zealand but they are not systematic and reaching out to all children. One policy option would be to make sure that all children can benefit – either at preschool or as early as possible in Years 1 to 3 – from an early diagnostic of their language and literacy skills. This is all the more important for children of identified “at-risk” populations such as language minority children.

Notes

1. The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) is a national monitoring survey that is conducted in a randomly selected sample of primary schools for system monitoring purposes. NEMP does not have direct consequences for students, teachers or schools. For more information, see Chapter 6.
2. From 2012, schools have to report to the Ministry of Education on the number of students “at, above, below and well below” the National Standards, but schools are not required to use these categories in their reporting to parents.
3. Clay’s *Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002) is a teacher-administered standardised assessment that provides a systematic way of capturing children’s early reading and writing behaviours.
4. Portfolios are used for NCEA assessment in four subjects: visual arts, graphics, technology and education for sustainability.
5. More information on EQAO testing in both English and French can be found on the EQAO website: www.eqao.com/Parents/FAQ.aspx?Lang=E&gr=036.
6. Conceptual equivalence means that curriculum alignment through rubrics up to the final assessment of students’ achievement is similar in both linguistic groups. Conceptual equivalence would not mean, however, that each curriculum is equally challenging.

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Chapter 4

Teacher appraisal

Teacher appraisal occurs in two specific instances: To gain or renew registration to teach, and as part of the employer's performance management processes for salary progression and professional learning. Teaching standards are well established, with the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) holding the lead role in defining standards for the profession. Beginning teachers are well supported and registration processes appear to be consolidated. Overall, teachers are seen as trusted professionals with a high degree of autonomy. However, regular teacher appraisal processes as part of performance management appears still variable across schools. The limited extent of input in teacher appraisal that is external to the school raises a number of challenges and the fact that there are two different sets of teaching standards risks sending conflicting messages about teaching. Certain elements of teacher appraisal could also be better aligned. For example, there is room to improve the links between teacher appraisal and professional development and between registration processes and teacher career structures.

This chapter looks at approaches to teacher appraisal within the New Zealand evaluation and assessment framework. Teacher appraisal refers to the evaluation of individual teachers to make a judgement about their performance. Teacher appraisal has typically two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve teachers' own practices by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it is aimed at ensuring that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function (Santiago and Benavides, 2009). An overview of the main features of the teaching profession in New Zealand is provided in Box 4.1.

Context and features

Teacher appraisal procedures

Teacher appraisal occurs in two specific instances:

- To gain or renew registration to teach in the New Zealand education system; and
- As part of the employer's performance management processes.

Teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes has two major purposes: *(i)* Attestation for salary progression; and *(ii)* Improvement linked to ongoing professional learning and development to improve teaching and learning.

Teacher Registration

Registration is a requirement for teachers to teach in New Zealand schools. NZTC is responsible for registering teachers as competent for practice.¹ The 1989 Education Act requires teachers to be “satisfactory” practitioners and to periodically provide evidence to the NZTC that they remain so. There are two levels of teaching registration: provisionally registered teacher and fully registered teacher.

Teachers become provisionally registered upon graduation from an accredited initial teacher education programme. In order to accredit their teacher education programmes, providers must demonstrate that the programmes align with the Graduating Teacher Standards, developed by NZTC and in place since 2008. Under new requirements, providers must also show how their assessment programmes provide evidence that individual graduates have met the Graduating Teacher Standards. When teachers have graduated from accredited initial teacher education programmes, they can apply to the NZTC for provisional registration and seek employment as a teacher. Provisionally registered teachers undertake an induction and mentoring programme for two years before they can apply for full registration. Assessment for full registration is undertaken against the Registered Teacher Criteria (see Table 4.1). These describe the criteria for quality teaching that are to be met by all fully registered teachers and guide the learning of provisionally registered teachers. The Registered Teacher Criteria were adopted in 2010 and will be progressively implemented in the period 2010–2013. They apply to all teachers, including those teaching in Māori-medium settings.

Table 4.1 Registered Teacher Criteria

Dimension	Criteria
	Fully registered teachers:
Professional relationships and professional values Fully registered teachers engage in appropriate professional relationships and demonstrate commitment to professional values.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish and maintain effective professional relationships focused on the learning and well-being of ākonga. 2. Demonstrate commitment to promoting the well-being of all ākonga. 3. Demonstrate commitment to bicultural partnership in New Zealand. 4. Demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional learning and development of personal professional practice. 5. Show leadership that contributes to effective teaching and learning.
Professional knowledge in practice Fully registered teachers make use of their professional knowledge and understanding to build a stimulating, challenging and supportive learning environment that promotes learning and success for all ākonga.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Conceptualise, plan and implement an appropriate learning programme. 7. Promote a collaborative, inclusive and supportive learning environment. 8. Demonstrate in practice their knowledge and understanding of how ākonga learn. 9. Respond effectively to the diverse language and cultural experiences, and the varied strengths, interests and needs of individuals and groups of ākonga. 10. Work effectively within the bicultural context of New Zealand. 11. Analyse and appropriately use assessment information, which has been gathered formally and informally. 12. Use critical inquiry and problem-solving effectively in their professional practice.

Note: The term *ākonga* has been chosen to be inclusive of all learners in the full range of settings, from early childhood to secondary and beyond, where the Registered Teacher Criteria apply.

Source: Reproduced from New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011). NZTC also specifies “key indicators” for each of the criteria – these are provided in Annex 6 of New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011).

The process of teacher registration is incorporated into the performance management systems operating in schools under the responsibility of Boards of Trustees and is in agreement with requirements set by NZTC. The latter include an induction and mentoring programme for teachers who are provisionally registered and procedures for ensuring that an accurate picture is maintained of how teachers continue to meet the criteria and indicators by which the NZTC deems a teacher “satisfactory”.

The recommendation to move to full registration is based on the professional judgement of the principal and the supervising teacher. At the conclusion of two years teaching the principal is required to attest that a Provisionally Registered Teacher has undertaken an induction and mentoring programme over a period of two years and has been satisfactorily assessed against the registration criteria.

After teachers have become fully registered, they must renew their registration every third year. The process essentially involves the principal certifying, on the basis of annual appraisals, that the teacher continues to meet the registered teacher criteria and that he or she completed satisfactory professional development activities.

Performance management

Teacher appraisal conducted as part of regular employer’s performance management processes varies considerably across schools. Boards of Trustees, as the employers, assume responsibility for the implementation of teacher performance management processes under the terms of public service legislation. The State Sector Act 1988 and the 1989 Education Act provide the legislative framework for schools’ role in performance

management. National Administration Guideline 3 (NAG 3) requires that schools: develop and implement personnel and industrial policies that promote high-levels of staff performance; and be a good employer and comply with the conditions contained in employment contracts applying to teaching and non teaching staff.

Mandatory requirements for the performance management systems in New Zealand schools are prescribed by the Secretary for Education in the *Guidelines on Performance Management Systems* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1997). These include principles that underpin teacher appraisal policies and processes,² specific features of the appraisal process and aspects which should be appraised.

Teacher appraisal as part of performance management is a mandatory process internal to the school completed at least once a year. Boards of Trustees have flexibility in designing performance appraisal systems appropriate to their school and community within the framework provided by the *Guidelines*. The primary focus in all instances is as a supportive and development process to assist teachers in their professional career development. Records relating to each appraisal are not maintained centrally.

Teacher appraisal procedures are generally managed within the school by the principal or his/her nominee (typically the teacher's line manager or supervisor). They must include the following elements: the identification of an appraiser and the development of a written statement of performance expectations, in consultation with each teacher; the identification and written specification of one or more development objectives to be achieved during the period for which the performance expectations apply; for each development objective, the identification and written specification of the assistance or support to be provided; observation of teaching (for those with teaching responsibilities) and self-appraisal by the teacher; an opportunity for the teacher to discuss his or her achievement of the performance expectations and the development objective(s) with the appraiser; and an appraisal report prepared and discussed in consultation with the teacher.

Boards of Trustees must ensure that the performance expectations for teachers relate to key responsibilities and performance areas such as:

- Teaching responsibilities (such as planning and preparation, teaching techniques, classroom management, classroom environment, curriculum knowledge, and student assessment);
- School-wide responsibilities (such as contribution to curriculum leadership, school-wide planning, school goals, the effective operation of the school as a whole, pastoral activities and student counselling, and community relationships); and
- Management responsibilities (such as planning, decision making, reporting, professional leadership, and resource management).

The performance criteria and reference standards used in teacher appraisal draw mostly on teaching standards specifically designed when performance management systems were introduced in schools, the so-called professional standards (embedded in the *Guidelines on Performance Management Systems* and the Primary and Secondary Teachers Collective Employment Contracts).³ These distinguish between primary and secondary teachers and are distinct from the Registered Teacher Criteria. As specified in the *Guidelines*, the professional teaching standards must be used in teacher appraisal as part of performance management as its purposes relate both to meeting on-going

registration requirements as well as to ongoing professional learning and development. Other reference documents typically include school plans.

The professional standards, which closely mirror the responsibilities/performance areas set out in the *Guidelines on Performance Management Systems*, describe three levels of teacher development:

- Beginning Classroom Teachers: provisionally registered teachers (teachers in the first two years of teaching);
- Fully Registered or Classroom Teachers (for primary and secondary teachers respectively): registered teachers who have generally been teaching for between three and five years (see in Table 4.2 the example of standards for Classroom Teacher); and
- Experienced Classroom Teachers: generally teachers who have had three successful attestations at the classroom-level.

Table 4.2 Secondary school teachers' professional standards at the level of classroom teacher

Dimension	Standard
	Classroom teachers:
Definition	...have taught for at least two years, have attained full registration and display a high level of competence in the performance of their day-to-day teaching responsibilities
Professional knowledge	...are competent in relevant curricula ...demonstrate a sound knowledge of current learning and assessment theory ...demonstrate a sound knowledge of current issues and initiatives in education, including Māori education
Professional development	...demonstrate a commitment to their own ongoing learning ...participate individually and collaboratively in professional development activities ...continue to develop understandings of the Treaty of Waitangi
Teaching techniques	...plan and use appropriate teaching programmes, strategies, learning activities and assessments demonstrate flexibility in a range of effective teaching techniques ...make use of appropriate technologies and resources ...impart subject content effectively ...evaluate and reflect on teaching techniques and strategies with a view to improvement
Student management	...manage student behaviour effectively establish constructive relationships with students ...be responsive to individual student needs ...develop and maintain a positive and safe physical and emotional environment ...create an environment which encourages respect and understanding ...maintain a purposeful working environment
Motivation of students	...engage student positively in learning ...establish expectations which value and promote learning
Te reo me ona Tikanga	...continue to develop understandings and skills in the appropriate usage and accurate pronunciation of te reo Māori ...demonstrate an understanding of basic Māori protocols when opportunities arise
Effective communication	...communicate clearly and effectively in either or both of the official languages of New Zealand ...provide appropriate feedback to students ...communicate effectively with families, whānau and caregivers ...share information with colleagues
Support for and co-operation with colleagues	...maintain effective working relationships with colleagues ...support and provide assistance to colleagues in improving teaching and learning
Contribution to wider school activities	...contribute positively to the life of the school and its community

Source: Annex 5 in New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011).

Other forms of feedback for teachers

The quality of teaching is also addressed by the Education Review Office (ERO) and through schools' self-reviews. In its external reviews, ERO focuses on school processes and how these contribute to school effectiveness. ERO targets six dimensions of effective practice, which include "effective teaching" (see Chapter 5). External reviews do not appraise individual teachers but do comment on teacher quality overall and specify areas that need attention. The on-site investigation includes meetings, interviews and conversations with teachers as well as classroom observations. ERO also looks at teacher appraisal and professional development plans within the context of school-wide planning and decision making. Through its National Evaluation Reports, ERO also looks at teaching-related aspects as with its reviews of "Managing Professional Learning and Development" in primary and secondary schools.

Boards of Trustees, together with school principals and teachers are also responsible for maintaining an ongoing programme of school self-review as part of the requirement of developing a strategic plan which documents how school policies, plans and programmes align with student learning objectives. It is expected that schools put in place development processes as part of systematic work on quality improvement, including the quality of the teaching and learning. This typically includes self-review of teaching practices within the school.

Competencies to assess and to use feedback

Principals play the key role in teacher appraisal for each of the processes of registration and performance management. In registration processes, NZTC provides resources and support measures to ensure that principals can undertake effective appraisals and that staff are supported/guided through the processes. In most schools, the principal is also responsible for the performance management of teachers, and may determine what training is offered to line managers/supervisors delegated to undertake the appraisals. Evaluators are typically experienced teachers and managers. Formal training in the performance management process is generally not required or given to evaluators. No formal evaluation of evaluators is undertaken.

Teachers are the recipients of teacher appraisal but are also actively involved in their own appraisal through the self-assessment of their practices for both registration and performance management. As teacher appraisal processes are school-based, there may be considerable variation in the levels of professional development provided to teachers to support their self-assessment and to help them benefit from feedback.

Using appraisal results

The appraisal of teachers against the Registered Teacher Criteria forms part of the teacher regulatory system to ensure teachers are qualified and competent to be admitted or to remain in the profession. Appraisal in the context of registration processes also serves to identify professional development needs to address particular teaching standards.

As part of performance management arrangements, professional development plans are identified to support the teacher's ongoing learning and development. Teachers receive feedback on their areas of strength as well as on areas where improvements are needed. If performance shortfalls are identified, then professional development opportunities are implemented to redress these. The other major objective of teacher appraisal as part of

performance management is attestation for the purposes of salary progression. Satisfactory teacher appraisal results lead to further progression up the salary scale.

Teacher appraisal also provides an opportunity to identify underperformance, as stipulated in the individual collective agreements. The provisions promote an approach where teachers are informed of any serious performance shortfalls as early as possible. An appropriate assistance and guidance programme must be put in place and a teacher is normally given ten school weeks to remedy matters of concern. At the end of this period, an assessment is made as to whether concerns have been resolved. If the problems causing concern have not been resolved by the end of this period, the teacher may be dismissed. If a teacher is dismissed or leaves a position while under competence review, this must be reported to NZTC which will then undertake a competency review of the teacher for registration purposes.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in New Zealand – Main features

Employment status

Teachers are salaried employees of schools' Boards of Trustees. However, salaries are defined at the central level following collective agreements with teacher unions. The Ministry of Education is responsible for setting minimum standards for being a teacher, and for negotiating and providing teacher salaries.

Prerequisites to become a teacher and teacher recruitment

To obtain employment as a teacher in New Zealand individuals must be registered (or temporarily authorised) by the NZTC which signals they will have a recognised teacher education qualification accredited by NZTC, or an equivalent foreign qualification. Other requirements for registration include good command of the English language and satisfactory results in a criminal history check. Teacher recruitment and appointments are typically the responsibility of school leaders and school Boards of Trustees and are undertaken in the context of open competitions.

Salary and career structure

In New Zealand career progression and salary are almost entirely dependent on length of service, qualifications and years of initial education. There is a single salary scale, incremental on the basis of tenure, whose top is reached after seven years. Teachers may earn more within their pay scale in specific instances. In primary education, teachers may earn more if they take on the roles of syndicate leader (leading teachers of a particular year group) or curriculum specialist. In secondary education, teachers may earn more if: they take on middle leadership roles such as dean or head of department; they teach the shortage subjects of maths, *te reo Māori*, technology or physics, where they get an extra amount in their second, third and fourth years of teaching. In both primary and secondary education, teaching graduates who choose to enter a school that is identified as one that is hard to staff, can receive an additional annual payment.

Professional development

Professional development for New Zealand teachers is expected to take place in connection to two key professional requirements. The first is the process of performance management which should lead to the preparation of a professional development plan as part of the annual performance review. The second relates to the expectation that teachers undertake professional development activities as part of the process to renew their teacher registration as stipulated by NZTC – and is also embedded as a key criterion in the teaching standards for registration.

Strengths

Teaching standards are well established

Teaching standards, a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do, have been established in New Zealand. They are of two distinct types. First, NZTC has developed teaching standards for the registration of teachers – the Registered Teacher Criteria – and for the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes – the Graduating Teacher Standards (which form the basis to provisionally register teachers). Second, the so-called professional standards embedded in the *Guidelines on Performance Management Systems* and the Primary and Secondary Teachers Collective Employment Contracts generally provide the reference for performance management processes and the basis for annual attestation for movement up the salary scale.

Teaching standards are a key element in any teacher appraisal system as they provide credible reference points for making judgements about teacher competence. They strengthen the capacity for educational authorities to effectively assess whether teacher performance meets the needs of school education and whether teachers have attained given levels of competence. They also offer the potential to frame and align the organisation of the key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher registration, professional development, career advancement and teacher appraisal. This reinforces the effective use of standards as a lever for the improvement of teaching practices. More challenging aspects to teaching standards in New Zealand include the existence of two distinct types of standards (registration/accreditation and professional standards) and their limited linkage to the career structure. This will be explored later in the report.

A strength in the system is the fact that a professional body for teachers, the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC), holds the leading role in defining standards for the profession, with the extensive involvement of the teaching profession, employers and teacher unions. NZTC provides teachers with professional autonomy, a degree of self-regulation and the right to have a say in the further development of their profession. However, its status as a Crown entity may lead teachers to perceive NZTC as a government body with potential detrimental effects on its credibility as a professional body. Positive features of the new Registered Teacher Criteria are the increased focus on student learning outcomes, including teachers' analysis and use of student assessment information, and the emphasis on the bicultural context of New Zealand.

Teacher registration processes are in place

Teacher registration processes are well established in New Zealand schools. Their main function is that of certifying teachers as competent for the profession mainly through the mandatory process of accessing or maintaining “Fully Registered” status. As such, these processes ensure that quality teaching criteria are met by all fully registered teachers and that provisionally registered teachers aspire to and work towards these criteria.

Registration processes constitute an important quality assurance mechanism to ensure that every school in New Zealand is staffed with teachers who meet agreed standards for teaching practice. At their initial level with the certification of initial teacher education

providers, they also provide a policy lever for setting entrance criteria for the teaching profession and, through the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes, strengthen the alignment between initial teacher education and the needs of schools. Granting full registration only after two years of teaching practice is appropriate given that even where there are reasonably high levels of confidence in the quality of initial teacher education, the nature of teaching means that many otherwise well-qualified candidates may struggle to adjust to the demands of the job.

The requirement of registration renewal has clear benefits. It provides incentives for teachers to update their knowledge and skills continuously and it potentially allows the school system to identify core areas in which teachers need to keep improving. Its link to professional development activities also provides the potential to guide the continuing development of practising teachers.

Teacher appraisal processes are commonplace in schools with a suitable focus on teacher development

Even if their application inevitably varies across schools, teacher appraisal as part of regular employer's performance management processes appears to be consolidated in New Zealand schools. In the schools it visited, the OECD review team perceived the teacher appraisal and development processes in place to be effectively used. There is little evidence available about the range of methods used in teacher appraisal in schools but, generally, classroom observation takes place, there are professional interactions between the teacher and school leadership, and there are opportunities for peer feedback.⁴ Procedures also typically involve self-assessment and interviews. Teacher appraisal is based on a trust model which seems to be well ingrained in the schools' culture. In its current form, it has essentially an improvement function with the emphasis on teachers' professional development. However, it also performs two additional functions: the identification of underperformance; and attestation for salary progression.

The focus on developmental teacher appraisal is a strength. It is intended to identify areas of improvement for individual teachers, and lead to the preparation of individual improvement plans (including professional development) which are supposed to take into account the overall school development plan. Performance management in New Zealand typically involves helping teachers learn about, reflect on, and improve their practice in the specific school context in which they teach.

Teachers are trusted professionals with a high degree of autonomy and are open to professional feedback

The OECD review team formed the view that New Zealand teachers are generally perceived as trusted professionals among the different stakeholders. This is reflected in the extensive professional autonomy from which they benefit in the exercise of their duties – also underpinned by the high levels of school autonomy which grant flexibility in approaches to teaching and promote innovative local practices. Teachers decide on the teaching content (as the national curriculum specifies expected learning outcomes rather than prescribed content to be taught), teaching materials and methods of instruction. Teachers are also seen as the main experts not only in instructing but also in assessing their students, so teachers feel the ownership of student assessment. Overall, teachers are given considerable scope to exercise their professionalism and benefit from high levels of trust among students, parents, and the communities in general.

There is a well established tradition of teamwork in New Zealand schools. One explanation for this is the high degree of teachers' autonomy and the need for teachers to contribute to the school's strategies to achieve student learning goals. Activities such as interpreting and adapting the curriculum to the local context, establishing student assessment methods and ensuring fairness in the grading through extensive moderation processes bring teachers together in activities which stimulate peer learning and increase co-operation within the school.

One of the consequences of being perceived as trusted professionals is that teachers in New Zealand are, apparently, eager and willing to receive feedback. Teachers interviewed by the OECD review team said that they appreciated the time the school principal took to provide them with feedback and in general found classroom visits, where they occurred, useful. Some teachers also said that they actively sought feedback from their students. In many cases, teachers were eager to have more opportunities to discuss their practice. The OECD review team saw examples of: teachers developing a research role alongside their teaching role; teachers engaging actively with new knowledge; and professional development focused on the evidence base for improved practice. Some schools encourage teachers to become more inquiring, reflective practitioners, and to do so in collaboration with colleagues.

The principle of associating good performance to career progression is in place

In addition to its developmental function, teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes also serves as an attestation for salary progression, *i.e.* the teacher being evaluated gains access to the next salary step only if his or her appraisal is deemed satisfactory. The principle of advancement in the salary scale on merit seems to the OECD review team to be entirely appropriate – this introduces an element of accountability or demonstration of satisfactory expertise. However, as addressed later in this chapter, while the principle of associating good performance to salary/career progression exists, it might not be currently used in an effective manner.

There is a good emphasis on supporting beginning teachers

As they enter the profession, beginning teachers undertake an induction and mentoring programme for two years before they become fully registered as teachers. Considerable resources are allocated to these programmes and the appraisal attached to the full registration process is considered an important milestone in a teacher's career. In recent years, NZTC has led the Mentor Teacher Development Project, a pilot programme focused on strengthening the induction and mentoring of provisionally registered teachers. The programme trains mentor teachers to observe teachers' practice, provide evidence-based feedback, facilitate professional learning conversations based on data from the teacher's practice and collect evidence for both formative and summative appraisals of the teacher. Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers are available on NZTC's website (NZTC, 2011).

Challenges

Regular teacher appraisal as part of performance management is variable across schools

There is an expectation in all New Zealand schools that teachers go through processes of regular performance appraisal – and the impression of the OECD review team is that to a great extent this expectation is indeed being met. But, inevitably, since Boards of Trustees have flexibility in the design of performance appraisal systems appropriate to their school and community, there is potential for wide variation in the quality of practice. The quality and extent of teacher appraisal depends considerably on the capacity of Boards of Trustees and school leaders which is very diverse across schools. There is little evidence about the quality and impact of teacher appraisal in New Zealand. Recent ERO National Evaluations indicate that the quality of the assessment of teachers through performance appraisal and the management of professional development in schools is variable (ERO, 2009a and 2009b). A key factor determining how well teacher professional learning and development is managed appears to be the quality of the principal's leadership and management. Another study by Sinnema (2005) found that in appraisal documents, discussions and goals, teacher appraisal gives limited attention to student learning.

As mentioned earlier, the review team saw examples of schools with comprehensive performance management processes, but there is no mechanism in New Zealand to ensure minimum standards for teacher appraisal in schools. Therefore there are no guarantees in New Zealand schools that every teacher receives proper professional feedback. This also means that in those schools where teacher appraisal processes are weak, it might be difficult to identify and address underperformance.

The two different sets of teaching standards risk sending conflicting messages about teaching

A problematic aspect is the co-existence of two different sets of teaching standards in the country – Registered Teacher Criteria, developed by NZTC, and the professional standards associated with the collective employment contracts (and with three levels of teacher development). This risks sending conflicting messages about what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at different stages of their careers. Furthermore, it risks weakening the alignment between initial teacher education, teacher registration, teacher appraisal, professional development, and career structure that common reference standards seek to achieve.

In schools, there is often a lack of clarity about what standards are used in performance management processes and what standards are guiding the professional development of teachers. In a number of instances during school visits, teachers could not specify to the OECD review team which standards were used in their appraisal. In a context of school-based teacher appraisal where the principal signs off attestations and assessments, either for moving to full registration, renewal of registration, attestation for salary increments or managing performance appraisal processes, in practice school management personnel “amalgamate” the Registered Teacher Criteria and professional standards. A study of provisionally registered teachers found that many were unclear about what standards their appraisals were based on as there were no external moderation procedures to monitor and assure quality (Cameron *et al.*, 2007).

The attestation process seems to serve a limited purpose

One specific function of teacher appraisal as part of performance management is attestation for salary progression. Satisfactory teacher appraisal results lead to further progression up the salary scale. In practice, as conveyed to the review team during the visit, practically all teachers progress up the salary scale each year and the attestation process does not function as a potential sanction for underperformance. The role of sanctioning underperformance is more adequately played by the registration process. It can also be added that the incentive of salary increments linked to performance review does not apply to a good proportion of teachers as they are already at the top of the incremental salary scale.

The extent of externality in teacher appraisal is limited

Teacher appraisal, in its different forms, is school-based and does not involve agents external to the school. Teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes is organised at the school level and involves essentially its management group. Registration processes to access “Fully Registered” status are again school-based, part of performance management processes and involve no external moderation.

The limited extent (or absence) of externality in teacher appraisal raises a number of challenges. Teachers are appraised according to local interpretations/judgements of teaching standards with risks of lack of coherence in the application of teaching standards. Teachers lack the opportunity to gain external or independent validation of their teaching competences. Teachers are also entirely dependent on local capacity and willingness to benefit from opportunities to improve their practice, see their professional development recognised and gain greater responsibility as they evolve in the profession. The involvement of some externality in teacher appraisal can provide an element of distance and rigour which can be particularly valuable in validating school-based approaches to teacher appraisal.

There is room to improve the links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development

The importance of teacher professional development is widely recognised in New Zealand. The OECD review team formed the view that the provision of professional development to individual teachers generally appears planned but that its links to teacher appraisal could be improved. School management of professional learning and development programmes varies across schools, depending in large part on school leadership. Recent ERO National Evaluations of professional learning and development in schools suggest deficits in linking teacher appraisal and professional development: of a sample group of 100 primary schools, just under a half of the principals considered teacher appraisals as a source of information when planning the school’s professional learning and development (ERO, 2009a); only 4 out of 44 secondary school principals noted that teacher appraisals were one of the three most important factors influencing their school’s decisions about professional learning and development (ERO, 2009b); and approximately 3% of teachers in the 44 surveyed secondary schools noted that appraisal comment or development goals were one of the three most important factors that influenced their professional development programme (ERO, 2009b).

However, it is intended that professional development needs are identified in performance management processes – each cycle of teacher appraisal includes the

identification and written specification of one or more development objectives to be achieved. Also, the aim is that professional development opportunities are offered to redress any shortfalls identified in teachers' performance. A clear link to professional development opportunities is necessary for teacher appraisal to improve teacher performance. Without a link to professional development opportunities, the appraisal process is not sufficient to improve teacher performance, and as a result, often becomes a meaningless exercise that encounters mistrust – or at best apathy – on the part of teachers being appraised (Danielson, 2001; Milanowski and Kimball, 2003; Margo *et al.*, 2008). There is also in some cases a lack of clarity about which reference standards are used in annual performance reviews – Registered Teacher Criteria or professional standards – to assess teaching performance and professional development needs (see more on this above).

There also seems to be some room to improve the links between strategies for professional development and school development. According to ERO (2009a), 38% of surveyed primary schools demonstrated the characteristics of high quality professional learning and development management, which involve, among other things, schools aligning their professional learning and development with well-informed school priorities (ERO, 2009a). In our view, school development could better explore its links to the appraisal of teaching practice. This is in part due to the limited time school principals have for pedagogical leadership and the limited extent to which professional development activities are linked to the results of teacher appraisal.

Career opportunities for effective teachers could be further developed

There does not seem to be a formalised career path for effective teachers, in particular distinct career stages whose access would depend on competencies gained and be associated with further responsibilities. The Registered Teacher Criteria which are the reference for registration processes do not specify skills and competencies at different stages of the career in association with roles and responsibilities of teachers in schools (as potentially reflected in the career structure). The role of team leader is not regarded as a major step in the career and no other steps exist. There are a number of opportunities for promotion, greater recognition and more responsibility, including roles such as syndicate leader or curriculum specialist in primary education and head of department in secondary education but these are not formally recognised as a career path. As noted by the Education Workforce Advisory Group "...traditional promotion opportunities within the education sector tend[ing] to lead to positions which involve increased levels of management or administration and lower levels of classroom teaching" (New Zealand Government, 2010).⁵ As a result, two major functions of teacher appraisal processes are undermined: (i) Granting effective teachers opportunities to diversify their careers in response to the roles and tasks performed in schools; and (ii) Providing a means to formally reward teachers for the gained competencies and skills to take on higher responsibilities. This is likely to undermine the potentially powerful links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

There are some challenges to the implementation of teacher registration processes

There are aspects in the implementation of teacher registration processes which deserve further policy attention. First, the level of externality or external moderation in registration processes might not be adequate – processes are school-based and the interpretation of standards is done at the local level with little moderation across schools.

There are few mechanisms to ensure that the standards that are used are applied rigorously, fairly and consistently across the profession. This is among the factors identified by the Education Workforce Advisory Group as possibly contributing to variability in the effectiveness of beginning teachers (New Zealand Government, 2010).⁶ It should be noted, however, that NZTC is pursuing plans to address this issue – with a fundamental focus on education and discussion among principals and others about what the standards mean and what evidence “counts”. Second, it appears that there is a somewhat light touch to the renewal of registration, embedded in the regular teacher appraisal as part of performance management and with some attention to participation in professional development activities.

Policy recommendations

In order to make teacher appraisal more effective in New Zealand, the OECD review team proposes the following approach:

- The consolidation of teaching standards into a single set of standards;
- The alignment of teaching standards with a competency-based career structure;
- Teacher registration conceived as career-progression appraisal;
- Developmental appraisal performed through teacher appraisal as part of performance management, internal to the school, for which the school principal would be held accountable;
- Links between developmental appraisal and appraisal for career progression.

The detailed suggestions are presented below (see Santiago and Benavides, 2009, for a detailed conceptual framework for teacher appraisal). The overall strategy would need to give due attention to the challenges facing the teaching workforce regarding Māori outcomes and Māori-medium education.

Consolidate teaching standards into a single set of standards

A framework of teaching standards is essential as a reference point for teacher appraisal. The current co-existence of two sets of teaching standards in the country as well as the little clarity about the respective use call for the consolidation into a single set of standards so there is a clear shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching. This is in line with the recommendation by the Education Workforce Advisory Group to set “clear standards against which effective, transparent and robust judgements of teacher capability and performance may be made” (New Zealand Government, 2010). The consolidated standards should draw mostly from the recently developed Registered Teacher Criteria which are based on the latest research on teacher effectiveness and give due importance to the links with the student learning objectives that schools are aiming to achieve. It would be important to keep a focus on improving student learning objectives for all students, particularly for groups where there is evidence of underperformance, such as Māori and Pasifika. This is in light of the fact that the disparities in student achievement in New Zealand are *within* rather than *between* schools.

Another adjustment is to ensure that the consolidated standards enable the description of competencies for different roles and career steps of teachers. This would not necessarily require different standards across stages of the teaching career but could

involve a single set of standards with registration criteria specific to distinct registration levels. This would recognise the variety of responsibilities in today's schools, the acquired knowledge, skill sets and expertise developed while on the job. Higher levels of registration would also have the distinct function of guiding teachers' improvement of skills and competencies and steering their aspirations to responsibilities. It is also important to ensure that the consolidated standards provide a common basis for the organisation of key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher registration (see below), teachers' professional development, career advancement and, of course, teacher appraisal. Clear, well-structured and widely supported teaching standards can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the various elements involved in developing teachers' knowledge and skills (OECD, 2005). Of critical importance in this regard is that the teaching profession should take the lead in developing and taking responsibility for the teaching standards, in particular through NZTC.

Align teaching standards with a competency-based career structure for teachers

An important policy objective should be to align expectations of skills and competencies at different stages of the career (as reflected in the consolidated standards) and the responsibilities of teachers in schools (as reflected in career structures). This would strengthen the incentive for teachers to improve their competencies, and reinforce the matching between teachers' levels of competence and the roles which need to be performed in schools to improve student learning. Such alignment can be achieved by developing teaching standards which allow the recognition of the different types and levels of expertise needed in schools (as suggested above); and ensuring levels of expertise match the key stages of the career structure. This recommendation gives support to the direction proposed by the Education Workforce Advisory Group: "Establishing a model that has clear standards for progression while allowing teachers to direct their own career paths..." (New Zealand Government, 2010).

The career structure for teachers should then match the different levels of expertise which can be recognised through an appraisal against the standards. Such alignment would reflect the principle of rewarding teachers for accomplishing higher levels of expertise through career advancement and would strengthen the linkages between roles and responsibilities in schools (as reflected in career structures) and the levels of expertise needed to perform them (as reflected by an appraisal against the teaching standards). This suggestion is in line with the recommendation by the Education Workforce Advisory Group for "increasing flexibility to support, recognise and reward teaching excellence and educational leadership" (New Zealand Government, 2010). Similarly the Advisory Group's vision for the teaching career entails that "career pathways of teachers will be varied with some moving on to leadership roles in schools while others choose to remain teaching predominantly in the classroom". A career structure for teachers reflecting different levels of expertise is also likely to enhance the links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

Conceive teacher registration as career progression appraisal

Alignment between teaching standards and the career structure for teachers would then allow teacher registration to be conceived as career progression appraisal. The latter would have as its main purposes holding teachers accountable for their practice, determining advancement in the career, and informing the professional development plan of the teacher. This approach would convey the message that reaching high standards of

performance is the main road to career advancement in the profession. Access to a promotion for fully registered teachers should be through a voluntary application process and teachers should be required to periodically renew their registration status when not applying to a promotion.

Appraisal for teacher registration is summative in nature and would need to ensure a consistent application of registration standards across schools and teachers. This suggests stronger levels of externality *vis-à-vis* the school than is currently the case. It could be a mostly school-based process led by the school principal (or another member of the management group) but it should include an element of externality such as an accredited external evaluator, typically a teacher from another school with expertise in the same area as the teacher being appraised. External evaluators would receive specific training for this function, in particular in standards-based methods for assessing evidence of teacher performance, and would need to be accredited by the relevant organisation (possibly NZTC). It would also be desirable to establish moderation processes to ensure consistency of school approaches to career-progression appraisal. The reference standards would be the teaching standards common across all schools but criteria to assess against the standards should account for the school's objectives and context. The main outcome would be the implications for career advancement but it would also inform the teacher's professional development plan.

Appraisal for career progression (or teacher registration) should be firmly rooted in classroom observation as most key aspects of teaching are made visible in the interaction of teachers with their students in the classroom. It should also include reference to a range of data required to demonstrate effective teaching such as teacher portfolios and evidence of student learning progress (see Santiago and Benavides, 2009), as well as other aspects of professionalism. Another important element is an opportunity for teachers to express their own views about their performance. Given the high stakes of career-progression appraisal, any decisions affecting the teacher should draw on several types of evidence, rely on multiple evaluators and should encompass the full scope of the teacher's work.

Processes to maintain a given registration status should also be strengthened. This could involve a mostly school-based appraisal of teachers' work based on classroom observation and presentation by the teacher of evidence of good performance. However, there should be an element of externality to registration renewal processes such as the external moderation of school approaches to it.

Career-progression appraisal is also the basis for recognition and celebration of a teacher's work. It provides opportunities to recognise and reward teaching competence and performance, which is essential to retaining effective teachers in schools as well as in making teaching an attractive career choice (OECD, 2005). It does not directly link appraisal results with teacher pay but, instead, to career progression (therefore establishing an indirect link with salaries). This is a desirable option as direct links between teacher performance and pay have produced mixed results, according to the research literature (Harvey-Beavis, 2003; OECD, 2005). This option supports the view of the Education Workforce Advisory Group that financial awards to individuals in the form of prizes "do not necessarily lift student achievement, nor do they necessarily disseminate good practice and a positive image of the profession more widely" (New Zealand Government, 2010). As such, appraisal for career progression (or teacher registration) would fulfil the function of recognising formally the knowledge, skills sets and experience acquired in the profession, which presupposes that teachers have access to the related professional development opportunities.

Perform developmental appraisal through teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes

Given that there are risks of bringing together both the accountability and improvement functions in a single teacher appraisal process (see Isoré, 2009), it is recommended that teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes is conceived as predominantly for improvement (developmental appraisal). It would retain its current character but school-based processes for developmental appraisal would need to be strengthened and validated externally.

This development appraisal would be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers, and the school principal. The reference standards would be the single teaching standards but with school-based indicators and criteria while taking into account the school objectives and activity plan. There should be particular attention to the objective of improving the learning of all students, particularly for groups identified as underperforming such as Māori and Pasifika. The main outcome would be feedback on the performance of the teacher which would lead to a plan for professional development. It should include self-appraisal, peer evaluation, classroom observation, and structured conversations and regular feedback by the school principal and experienced peers. The key aspect is that it should result on a meaningful report with recommendations for professional development.

In order to guarantee the systematic and coherent application of developmental appraisal across schools in New Zealand, it would be important to undertake the external validation of the respective school processes. An option is that school review processes performed by ERO, in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, include the review of the processes in place to organise developmental appraisal, holding the school's Board of Trustees accountable as necessary. This would ensure that minimum standards for developmental teacher appraisal are met and that every teacher receives proper professional feedback. An implication is that schools would need to document their processes for teacher development appraisal.

Developmental appraisal and career progression appraisal cannot be disconnected from each other. A possible link is that appraisal for teacher registration needs to take into account the qualitative assessments produced through developmental appraisal, including the recommendations made for areas of improvement. Also, in spite of its emphasis on teacher development, teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes should retain its function of identifying sustained underperformance with possible consequences for both the maintenance of teacher registration and eligibility to salary increment (as suggested above). Similarly, results of teacher registration appraisals should also inform the professional development of individual teachers. This also makes it clear that the focus of teacher appraisal (as part of performance management) on the improvement of teaching practices and the strengthened role of teacher registration processes in both determining career advancement and identifying underperformance would weaken the rationale to maintain the current attestation process.

Reinforce the linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development

There is room to reinforce the linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development. The schools that associate the identified individual needs with school priorities, and that also manage to develop the corresponding

professional development activities, are likely to perform well (Ofsted, 2006). A potential instrument is the external validation of school-based processes for developmental appraisal which can be used to encourage appropriate links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development. Such external validation should also ensure that professional development activities are guided by the teaching standards and informed by each school's context and needs. This also presupposes that the supply of professional development activities is well aligned with schools' needs and the skills and competencies reflected in the teaching standards.

Effective conduct of teacher appraisal and its contribution to school development will depend to a great extent on the pedagogical leadership of school principals. Other education systems have increasingly recognised the importance of school leadership in raising standards, as substantiated in an OECD report (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Principals are also more likely to provide informal continuing feedback to the teacher throughout the year and not only during the formal appraisal process. More generally, they are essential in ensuring that performance improvement is a strategic imperative, and help to make teacher appraisal an indispensable part of both teaching and school-wide policies (Heneman *et al.*, 2007; Robinson, 2007; Pont *et al.*, 2008). The OECD review team supports the conclusion of the Best Evidence Synthesis Programme for a need to develop the provision of opportunities for building the capability of school leaders in the effective implementation of teacher appraisal to improve the quality of professional practice and student outcomes.

Strengthen competencies for teacher appraisal

An area in which there needs to be particular care is that of the competencies for appraisal. Evaluators for teacher registration processes need to be trained to assess teachers against teaching standards with the limited evidence they gather and for the different levels of registration. This fits with current initiatives by NZTC on training and resource development in preparation for the implementation of the Registered Teacher Criteria, including the workshops being held throughout New Zealand promoting practices that enhance a common understanding of the standards. Evaluators should also be trained to provide constructive feedback to the teacher for further practice improvement.⁷ Also, substantial activities for professional development on how to best use appraisal processes should be offered to teachers. It is vitally important that teachers are provided with support to understand the appraisal procedures and to benefit from the outcomes of appraisal. It is also expected that appraisal and feedback gain in importance in programmes of initial teacher education, suggesting increasing an emphasis on these areas in the Graduating Teacher Standards.

Regarding developmental appraisal, there are advantages to having the principal and/or other teachers as the assessors given their familiarity with the context in which teachers work, their awareness of the school needs and their ability to provide quick and informed feedback to the teacher. However, it might prove difficult for principals to undertake the thorough assessment of each teacher in the school. In addition, most principals have no prior training in appraisal methods and might not have the content expertise relevant to the teaching areas of the teacher being evaluated. Hence, it might prove valuable to build capacity in appraisal methods at the school level by preparing members of the management group or leading/expert teachers to undertake specific appraisal functions within the school. This is in line with the approaches followed by ERO, whose programme of work focuses on increasing the evaluation capacity of the

schooling sector, and by NZTC, which contributes to building the capability in schools to implement appraisal effectively. In this context, NZTC’s pilot programme to strengthen the induction and mentoring of provisionally registered teachers should be supported.

Articulate school evaluation and teacher appraisal

Analysis from the Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS (OECD, 2009) suggests that school evaluations can be an essential component of an evaluative framework, fostering and potentially shaping teacher appraisal and feedback. Given that the systems of school evaluation and teacher appraisal and feedback have both the objectives of maintaining standards and improving student performance, there are likely to be great benefits from the synergies between school evaluation and teacher appraisal. To achieve the greatest impact, the focus of school evaluation should either be linked to or have an effect on the focus of teacher appraisal (OECD, 2009). This indicates that school evaluation should comprise the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. This is already the case to some extent in ERO’s school reviews through the choice of “effective teaching” as one of the six dimensions of effective practice, the comment on teacher quality overall in the school, classroom observations, and the dialogue with teachers. Also, as suggested above, school evaluation should comprise the external validation of the processes in place to organise developmental appraisal.

Notes

1. NZTC has regulatory and professional leadership functions in relation to teacher performance management, including: setting standards for entry to, and maintaining on-going membership of the profession; setting requirements for and approving initial teacher education programmes; issuing and renewing teacher's practising certificates; carrying out processes for dealing with issues of competence and discipline of teachers; and supporting the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of the standards and the commitments of the teaching profession, including the *Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers*.
2. The set of principles includes that the policies and procedures should be appropriate for teachers, the school and its community context; developed in a consultative manner; be open and transparent; have a professional development orientation; be timely and helpful to the individual teacher; and consider matters of confidentiality.
3. In 1999, as part of the Government's negotiation of the Primary and Secondary Teachers Collective Employment Contracts, these professional standards were included in the agreements to provide a basis for annual attestation for movement up the salary scale. As a consequence these standards have assumed greater importance because of their link to pay progression for teachers through the attestation process.
4. According to the PISA 2009 survey, the following proportion of New Zealand 15-year-old students are in schools where the principal reported that the following methods have been used in the previous year to monitor the practice of teachers at their school: (i) Teacher peer review (of lesson plans, assessment instruments, lessons): 88.2% (5th highest figure among OECD countries, against an average of 56.3%); (ii) Principal or senior staff observations of lessons: 95.1% (7th highest figure among OECD countries, against an average of 68.3%); and (iii) Tests of assessments of student achievement: 66.6% (14th highest figure among OECD countries, against an average of 58.3%) (see Annex D).
5. The Education Workforce Advisory Group was convened to provide different perspectives to the Minister of Education on teaching workforce issues, and more widely on policies for attracting and retaining quality teachers (New Zealand Government, 2010).
6. As noted by the Education Workforce Advisory Group, "Professional standards are not applied rigorously across teacher education and registration processes..." and "There is no external assessment or moderation of teachers against professional standards when they become registered teachers" (New Zealand Government, 2010).
7. For further details on the range of characteristics and competencies for evaluators see, for example, Santiago *et al.* (2009).

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Chapter 5

School evaluation

There are two main forms of school evaluation: Schools are required to conduct ongoing school self-review and external school reviews are conducted by the Education Review Office (ERO) on average every three years. The approach to school evaluation is collaborative, characterised by good levels of trust between schools and ERO. School self-review is at the heart of quality assurance and improvement processes. The basic premise is that schools are best placed to analyse their own contexts and that ERO can provide an external perspective to validate or challenge the schools' own findings. ERO's review approach is differentiated based on school needs, the composition of ERO teams is credible and review procedures are sensitive to cultural diversity. However, there are still tensions between the improvement and accountability functions of school evaluation. Schools' own annual reporting to the Ministry of Education does not seem well connected to other aspects of school evaluation. There is also an ongoing need to provide professional learning and support for teachers, school leaders and Boards of Trustees to conduct effective school self-review and use evaluative data effectively for improvement.

This chapter analyses approaches to school evaluation within New Zealand's evaluation and assessment framework. School evaluation refers to the evaluation of individual schools as organisations. This chapter covers both internal school evaluation (school self-review) and external school evaluation (such as ERO external reviews).

Context and features

How to evaluate and assure the quality of schools continues to exercise governments across the world. There is a longstanding debate internationally as to the most effective relationship between internal and external evaluation, with the focus of debate increasingly concerned with the balance between the autonomy and authority of the school's own self-evaluation and the power of an inspection, or review, body.

Integral to that debate is the focus of both internal and external review as improvement and/or accountability driven. Various models have been proposed or adopted internationally. There is the parallel model in which inspection runs alongside self-evaluation. In the sequential model self-evaluation is conducted by the school followed by inspection, while in the collaborative model the internal school team and the external team work together to design, plan and agree on the nature of the process (Alvik, 1996). New Zealand has some elements of both the sequential and collaborative models.

School self-review

The requirement for school self-review is established in the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), which set out that Boards of Trustees, together with the principal and teaching staff are responsible for: (1) Developing a strategic plan documenting their policies, plans and programmes to implement the National Education Guidelines; (2) Maintaining an ongoing programme of self-review; and (3) Reporting to students and parents on individual student achievement and to the school's community on the achievement of the whole and of specific student groups, including the achievement of Māori students (NAG 2).

School planning and reporting cycles

Since 2003, schools have been required to establish annual strategic planning and reporting cycles. In their annual school plans, Boards of Trustees, principals and senior management staff set goals related to student achievement, school performance and use of resources. The annual plans also determine priorities for action over the year. Schools can set their own targets in line with local needs and priorities and decide on the assessment methods they use to monitor progress. The approach is developmental, allowing schools to take responsibility for their own improvement strategies.

Schools are required to describe progress against their set targets in annual reports to their school community. Schools' annual reports are also reviewed by the Office of the Auditor-General who looks at the financial statement. The reports are then sent to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education along with the Auditor-General's report (Wylie, 2009). There is no standard format for reporting to the Ministry of Education.

Until 2011, schools were free to decide what data they include, and the reports were not intended to be directly comparable. However, changes have been made to NAG 2 so that, from 2012/13, schools will be required to report data on the number and proportions

of students at, above, below and well below the National Standards. The reports must also include information on school strengths and identified areas for improvement in relation to the Standards; the basis for identifying areas for improvement; and planned actions for lifting achievement. Schools are expected to use the findings of their annual report as a basis for setting improvement targets for the following year.

Procedures and tools for school self-review

While the methods and approaches used for self-review are not prescribed, the Education Review Office (ERO) has focused in recent years on providing support tools and training for schools to build their self-review capacities and use self-review for school improvement. ERO suggests a cyclical approach to school self-review consisting of five steps: (1) considering, (2) planning, (3) implementing, (4) monitoring and (5) informing. ERO also provides a framework of success indicators for school review. These are used by the ERO review teams for external review (more on this below) but schools can benefit from the evaluative questions, prompts and suggested sources of evidence to plan and implement their own self-review processes. Schools are also encouraged to use ERO's Self-Audit Checklist and Board Assurance Statement.

According to ERO (2010c) the school self-review process involves both regular reviews that are part of the schools' ongoing monitoring process and emergent reviews that need to be put in place as a response to unplanned events or new initiatives. The introduction of National Standards is one such development that requires schools to conduct an emergent review, analysing their effectiveness in using the standards and integrating them in their ways of working with the national curriculum. To encourage and support this process, the Ministry of Education has developed a suite of school self-review tools to help schools analyse their strengths and learning needs in relation to the National Standards.

Follow up to self-review

The quality of school self-review and strategic planning and reporting is evaluated by ERO as part of its reviews of individual schools. In schools where self-review is well established ERO validates the results of the process, whereas in schools where self-review is less well established, ERO's external review needs to investigate further (Salt, 2006). ERO has recently started to look at the quality of self-review as one of the criteria to decide how soon the next visit should be made to a school (more on this below).

External review by the Education Review Office

ERO is responsible for the external evaluation of school quality. The Chief Review Officer can initiate a review and reviewers have legal powers of entry and inspection. The Minister can also request ERO to administer a special review of a school when an issue in need of investigation arises.

ERO plays a role in facilitating both accountability and improvement of schools: it controls schools' compliance with statutory obligations and provides findings and recommendations for schools to improve the quality of education provided. According to the Ministry of Education, “since the establishment of the agency, the methodology has shifted from an accountability/compliance-oriented approach to an improvement-oriented approach” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 27).

Building external review on self-review

The current focus of ERO’s work is to ensure that school self-review and external review are complementary and mutually reinforcing processes. The basic premise is that schools are best placed to analyse their own contexts and that ERO can provide an external perspective to validate or challenge the schools’ own findings. Since 2008, ERO has been conducting the Building Capacity in Evaluation Project, a process focused on building the capacity of ERO reviewers, Boards of Trustees and school leadership staff. The project focuses on understanding the importance of self-review for the external review process as well as building knowledge of assessment tools and processes. ERO also continues to review national and international research and country practices on school self-review and systemic capacity building.

ERO’s differentiated review approach

In 2009, ERO introduced a differentiated approach to school reviews, where high performing schools are visited less frequently (within four to five years) than schools that are not performing well (within one to two years). On average, schools are reviewed every three years. This review approach differentiates between schools experiencing difficulties, schools performing well and high performing schools:

- For schools experiencing difficulty, ERO is currently introducing a longitudinal review methodology that aims at building capacity for self-review. The longitudinal review process runs over a period of one to two years and includes review and development planning as well as ongoing self- and external review. This is designed to help schools build their evaluative capacity to identify relevant priorities for improvement, plan and act strategically and report progress effectively. The schools participating in this process receive professional development and support funded by the Ministry of Education.
- Where schools are performing well, ERO’s approach is to provide regular external review that complements and builds on school self-review. Most schools that are performing well are reviewed on average every three years. ERO’s aim with these schools is to support them to further improve student learning and achievement and use external review to test, affirm, strengthen and broaden self-review.
- The schools with the strongest performance and self-review capacity are reviewed only every four to five years because it is expected that they will be able to sustain their performance and continue to improve on the basis of their self-review. These schools are currently also consulted to assist ERO in the design of an external review approach that can enhance their self-review and further support their development.

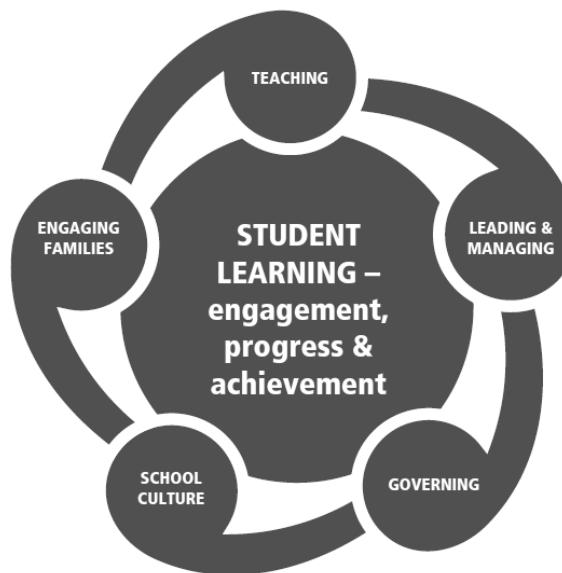
ERO’s differentiated approach recognises that while a school might perform well and promote high levels of student achievement, this is unlikely to be sustained in the longer term without effective self-review. It is expected that schools that establish high quality self-review have greater capacity to sustain high performance and are better placed to effectively respond to current and emergent issues. For this reason, even the highest performing school which is not good at self-review could be subject to further external intervention, as could a school exemplary in school self-review and strategic planning but which for various reasons, is not demonstrating high levels of value added.

Scope of ERO reviews

ERO's review approach is based on the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning – engagement, progress and achievement." The main focus of the reviews is on whether the school focuses on the learning and achievement of all students, especially those students who are struggling. ERO's review approach acknowledges that student achievement is a concept that must be interpreted more broadly than just the results from tests or examinations. This approach is aligned to the national curriculum's vision of "young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners." For this reason, ERO's reviews focus on how each school's curriculum either explicitly or implicitly defines achievement and the extent to which each school's definition adequately encompasses the vision, principles, values, key competencies and learning areas of the national curriculum.

ERO's conceptual framework is based on six dimensions of a successful school. Among the six dimensions, student learning (engagement, progress and achievement) is placed symbolically as the centre piece. The five contributory criteria are teaching, leadership, governance, school culture and engagement with parents, *whānau* and communities. All five aspects point inwards to the one overriding goal of student achievement. These six dimensions establish the frame for the six sets of evaluation indicators which provide a focus for both ERO and school self-review.

Figure 5.1 The Education Review Office's six dimensions of a successful school



Source: Reproduced from ERO (2010d).

External review procedures

The actual on-site reviews take several days and involve a range of approaches to gathering information: document and data analysis; meetings, interviews and conversations; and classroom observations. While standard procedures and indicators are well established¹, ERO also emphasises that reviewers should use their professional judgement in adapting the methodology and interpreting indicators in relation to local needs.

ERO uses opportunities to directly observe the relationships and interactions between students and teachers, the instructional strategies and the outcomes of student learning. These classroom observations focus on evaluating the quality of teaching rather than on an individual teacher's performance. ERO's approach is to set information obtained from classroom observations in the context of broader information from interviews and documentation. While teachers do not generally receive any individual feedback from ERO, schools as a whole receive feedback about the overall quality of teaching.

Indicators

A first set of indicators for school reviews was published in the early 2000s. According to ERO (2010d), these indicators were well received by reviewers, schools and the evaluation community. The expectation was that these indicators would be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect new research. In 2010, ERO published a draft of revised indicators that were developed in close collaboration between ERO staff and stakeholders. The indicator framework provides statements of what practice would look like in a high performing school. It is supported by evaluative prompts and suggested sources of evidence. The indicator framework serves to inform the judgements made by ERO reviewers about school performance as well as to assist in school self-reviews. It has been described as the “glue” that holds the system together by providing a common conceptual framework to underpin the relationship between ERO and schools. The indicators provide a common evaluation language and are intended as a starting point for dialogue and an impetus to dig deeper.

ERO review reports and follow-up

ERO reports are provided to the reviewed school's Board of Trustees and made available on ERO's website. The reports also inform schools when they can expect their next review. Schools are expected to integrate the combined results of their own self-review and of the ERO review into their long-term planning.

While the reports are not intended to be comparable or rank schools, the media may use findings for further analysis and publication, sometimes in an attempt to rate or rank schools (mostly for secondary schools based on examination results and value-added scales). ERO reports also play an important role in informing parents' choice of schools for their children. Given their public availability, ERO reports are considered by schools as “high stakes” evaluations (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011).

ERO reports also indicate whether the reviewed school functions satisfactorily or whether some intervention may be needed. If an intervention is deemed necessary, ERO makes a recommendation to the Ministry of Education, which will then decide on the form of follow-up. Interventions may range from requiring the Board of Trustees to seek support to dissolving the Board of Trustees and appointing a commissioner to be in charge of the school.

External reviews by other bodies

While ERO reviews are compulsory, some schools may choose to have additional voluntary external school reviews in line with their philosophy or religious orientation. For example, the Catholic sector has a specific evaluation approach where Catholic schools are reviewed every three years by the responsible Diocese.

In secondary schools, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) also plays a role in external school review. NZQA reviews school practices as part of its Managing National Assessments (MNA) process. This process intends to ensure the quality of school-based assessments for national qualifications in upper secondary schools. To this end, NZQA systematically reviews the capacity of schools to assess their students against standards contributing to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and publishes review reports for each school describing the assessment policies and practices in place (Chapter 4).

Strengths

The approach to school evaluation is collaborative

New Zealand has probably gone furthest among countries internationally towards a collaborative school evaluation model, incorporating at the same time a sequential process. In the sequential model, schools conduct their own internal review followed by a visit of the external team. New Zealand's approach is collaborative in the sense that both parties 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.

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. 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. This assumes particular importance in Māori-medium schools (more on this below).

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.

Self-review is at the heart of quality assurance and improvement

School self-review is at the core of the quality assurance and improvement process. In ERO’s guidance documents, school self-review is conceived of as a rigorous process in which schools systematically evaluate their practice, using indicators as a framework for inquiry and employing a repertoire of analytic and formative tools. It is expected that schools develop understanding of learning progressions, involve students in the assessment and self-regulation of their own learning and analyse assessment data targeted on underachievement.

On the schools’ side, there appears to be a commitment to build a data-driven evidence base and to engage in student surveys. A distinguishing feature of self-review, or self-evaluation, practices internationally is whether this is seen by school staff as an event or a habit (MacBeath and Dempster, 2008). ERO in New Zealand promotes self-review as something embedded in teachers’ thinking and practice. While this may be a challenging goal for many schools, at the leading edge there is evidence of schools in which dialogue around achievement data is ongoing and rooted in classroom practice.

ERO has been engaged over the last few years in advocating evidence-informed inquiry, helping schools to engage in that process, and advising on how to use assessment information for improvement and accountability purposes. Dissemination of good practice, reassuring school staff and equipping them with tools of self-evaluation is promoted through workshops. These can serve to demystify self-review and external review and clarify the links between them. Good practice case studies are used as a catalyst for discussion, as illustrations of what effective quality assurance can look like and how it can improve practice, rather than being seen as simply another ministerial demand. ERO’s definition of factors found in effective schools is also disseminated through a series of monographs, highlighting trends, providing commentary and analysis, and pointing to policy implications and system-wide improvements.

There is an emphasis on participatory approaches to school self-review, involving both teachers and students in the process. Students have a part to play in evaluating the quality of their school as well as contributing to external review. Including them in this way requires that they are party to the language of assessment and evaluation and that they have the confidence to articulate their views as well as their concerns. There is exemplary evidence from schools visited by the OECD review team that school leaders and teachers have taken this issue seriously and have equipped their students with the skills and vocabulary to talk to external visitors on achievement and quality issues. While this may only be practice at the leading edge rather than system wide, the potential for wider engagement is a clear strength.

There is focus on building educational leadership capacity

New Zealand’s focus on school self-review also requires strong school leadership competencies. The New Zealand Ministry of Education has invested considerably in developing school leadership competencies across the system. The framework Kiwi Leadership for Principals provides a research-based model reflecting the competencies required for effective educational leadership at school level, with a strong focus on educational leadership. Based on this vision, a formative survey tool – the Educational Leadership Practices survey – has recently been designed for principals to help them work with their staff to analyse how effective teachers perceive educational leadership to be in their school. The Ministry’s Professional Leadership Plan outlines a suite of

professional development opportunities for principals at different stages of their career, including offers for aspiring, first-time and experienced principals as well as for middle and senior leaders.

ERO’s review approach is tailored to the needs of individual schools

The review approach is differentiated based on school needs

In common with systems elsewhere which are moving toward proportional review (MacBeath, 2006), New Zealand’s differentiated review cycle is exemplary in taking account of the educational health of schools. Reviews may occur over the course of one to two years or every three or four to five years depending on a number of judgements about the school’s performance across the six dimensions of good practice (see above). A further critical judgement that ERO makes is whether the school has developed good quality and useful self-review across these dimensions. Serious concerns about the school’s performance in relation to self-review in one or more of these dimensions will result in an ongoing “longitudinal” review. ERO may also recommend external intervention. Unlike many other systems, review reports do not attach labels or numerical categories and there is no rhetoric of failing schools.

The one to two, three, and four to five year cycle of visits is proportionate to levels of concern. As the length of time between reviews is an indicator of a school’s internal capacity for improvement, the length of the cycle matters to schools. It is taken as a mark of confidence, as an indicator of public reputation and an endorsement of the school’s own sense of autonomy. A school in the three year cycle will, therefore, aspire to be revisited every four to five years, a confirmation of its quality and effectiveness. Decisions about timing are made by the review team in consultation with a Review Services Manager and the National Manager of Review Services.

ERO’s team composition is credible

The composition of the ERO team is seen by schools as having credibility and bringing a balance of expertise. The inclusion of principals in the teams enhances the balance and brings an important and grounded perspective to the work of the team. Review teams for Māori schools have their own distinctive make up and their own approach to the review process. ERO teams consist of between two and six reviewers (all with a wide range teaching and leadership backgrounds), placing a premium on involvement of parents and community. The phrase “we come as visitors” is a reminder that the team members are guests of the school and as such recognise the school’s ownership and authority.

Continuing peer review and moderation within ERO keeps the team relevant, open to critical feedback and self-improvement. Once a school report has been confirmed, ERO sends out a questionnaire in order to gauge the efficacy of its own review process. Collated centrally, these data provide feedback to local review teams. In addition, ERO uses its staff engagement survey as a measure of its organisational health, comparing its engagement score index to other public sector agencies. In 2008/09 ERO’s engagement index compared favourably with other government agencies (ERO Annual Report, 2009). These intelligence sources are all put to the service of building on current strengths, addressing weaknesses, and improving the nature of self-review.

Procedures are sensitive to cultural diversity

ERO has developed a Strategy and Information Plan called *He Toa Takitini: Outcomes for Māori* to meet the commitment of the education sector to improve education outcomes for Māori. The Strategy and Information Plan sets a programme of working initiatives to promote Māori input and uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. In Māori schools, the intermediary role of “friend of the school” (*Kaupapa Kaitiaki*) assumes particular importance in liaising with ERO to ensure mutual understanding and inform development planning.

ERO also has a separate Māori evaluation unit to undertake reviews of Māori-medium schools. For this purpose the Review Office has developed a Framework for Review and Evaluation in *Te Aho Matua Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Māori education settings). In addition, ERO employs Māori reviewers who work in the generalist teams as all schools are expected to cater appropriately to the needs of their Māori students.

While the composition of ERO teams does not yet match the ethnic profile of Māori and Pasifika schools reviewed, the last few years have seen progress towards that goal and there is evidence of sensitivity and openness to learning on the part of the Review Office. It remains a challenge for self-review, ERO and their inter-relationship. The upskilling of dedicated group of staff equipped to evaluate the quality of Māori immersion schools was identified by ERO as a critical issue, highlighting the need to equip team members to both support and challenge practice in a highly sensitive area.

There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement of the Education Review Office itself

ERO’s reputation is vital to its success. If school self-review is to be made to work in schools it has to be matched by continuous improvement within the Review Office itself. 2008/09 marked a significant change in the conduct of ERO in line with changing government priorities, in part dictated by fiscal stringencies, in part by a shift in strategic focus. Over the past year, a key development focus for ERO has been building capacity within the team of reviewers so as to strengthen their understanding of how internal and external review complement one another and how the results of school review can be used most productively to build capacity within and between schools. Internal peer review within ERO is constantly open to feedback from schools and is willing to change its approach in the light of evidence from school leaders, teachers and parents. A 2008/09 survey of schools reported a high degree of satisfaction with external review with over half of schools saying they had used the ERO report to identify improvement strategies and to monitor the implementation of the team’s recommendations.

Challenges***Tensions between the improvement and accountability functions of school evaluation***

Perceptions of the purposes of self-review and external review are not yet fully consistent across the system. This is not for want of dissemination of information, workshops and professional development activities but because systemic change takes time, particularly where there is a high degree of autonomy and where participation relies

on voluntarism and goodwill. Agreement as to what makes a good school may also be contested because school quality is context sensitive and open to debate.

The internal dynamics of self-review

Self-review has the merit of being immediate, responsive to the school's specific circumstances and “owned” by the school staff itself. At the same time, self-review which aims to provide accountability information is subject to inevitable tensions between rigour and depth on the one hand and a natural desire not to undermine the confidence of parents and superiors on the other (OECD, 2010). In any system, there is also a limiting effect arising from understandable reluctance on the part of those who are strongly committed to a particular strategy to recognise or accept negative evidence. Internal politics or power relationships within the school may influence the self-review process and the degree to which evaluation results are used to inform future developments (Santiago *et al.*, 2011).

ERO’s multiple accountabilities

Complementing self-review by external review adds an element of distance from the internal dynamics of the school and provides the kind of perspective and challenge to assumptions and interpretations which can lead to greater rigour in the process. It also provides support to assist schools in moving from their self-review process to improvement actions.

At the same time, there are inevitably issues to be confronted with regard to the status and multiple accountabilities of the external review body. As a government department, ERO has a compliance function as well as an improvement and accountability function. It is directly accountable to its own Minister and its reporting has several audiences – the government, the Ministry of Education, the general public and the people working in schools. ERO staff are quick to acknowledge the tensions between its multiple accountabilities and its improvement purpose. They recognise the challenges in keeping a watching brief on how these play out within a decentralised system which places high value on autonomy and diversity.

For example, an aspect of ERO’s accountability to government is the gathering of information on the implementation and efficacy of government policies in schools visited. What may become salient in a review will depend on, and reflect, the government’s current interests. Although schools have a responsibility as Crown Entities to deliver the education priorities of the government of the day, they may perceive an element of uncertainty about what will be focused on in a review, with respect to political and policy change. The most commonly expressed concern among teacher organisations and school staff is the potential introduction of high-stakes national testing and performance, or “league”, tables. While there are currently no plans for such a move, and resistance is expressed at every level within the system, this does not assuage a sense of disquiet as to global pressures.

Avoiding a narrow scope of evaluation

Even in strongly collaborative evaluation and accountability systems such as New Zealand’s, there is a risk of “noises” distorting the messages for schools (Nusche *et al.*, 2011a). For example, accountability based on the use of measurable indicators may

provide incentives for schools to focus their attention on what is easily measured, which may result in the neglect of areas where measurement is more difficult. So far, New Zealand has been quite successful at avoiding these kinds of distortion. The system promotes a broad interpretation of the curriculum encompassing all of the experiences, processes, interactions, and teaching and learning programmes that students encounter in the school environment. ERO’s approach to school evaluation emphasises the use of qualitative information, generated by school self-review and external review, to complement quantitative information provided by assessment results.

At the same time, a concern for the wide variance in the achievement of students in New Zealand has reinforced the drive for “evidence-based teaching” with primacy given to literacy and numeracy and targeting of students performing at the lowest literacy levels. There is a risk that this may narrow broader conceptions of student achievement, so marginalising less easily measureable learning gains. There is evidence that both primary and secondary schools face considerable challenges in measuring student achievement and progress in areas other than literacy and mathematics. In some of the schools reviewed by ERO (2007), student achievement information was collected on narrow aspects of course content and generated limited information regarding student achievement in the priority learning areas of the school.

Some schools struggle to collect and use assessment data effectively for improvement

Schools do not necessarily have internal capacity for analysis and use of data and staff may not have time and motivation to devote to gathering and scrutinising data. There are also challenges for schools to know what kinds of data are going to be most pertinent and of highest priority. In a 2007 review of 314 schools, ERO found that less than half of the schools (44%) used worthwhile assessment information to give an accurate picture of the achievement of students across the school (ERO, 2007). Slightly fewer schools (40%) were effectively using school-wide information to improve student achievement. ERO also found that many trustees, school leaders and teachers did not have the statistical know-how to analyse and interpret school-wide achievement information accurately.

In many of the schools reviewed by ERO (2007), the information gathered about students’ achievements were not used to identify groups of students who needed extra assistance. Some schools collected information that was too general and did not provide specific information about groups of students who were later found to be underachieving. There are particular concerns about limited monitoring of the participation and achievement of priority groups such as Māori, Pasifika and English language learners. In ERO’s 2007 review, only 17% of schools used assessment information to make decisions about the learning needs of Māori, and only 5% did this for English language learners. ERO (2010a) found that a range of schools lacked systems to monitor the inclusion of students with high needs and/or poorly monitored their progress and achievement.

In a 2010 review on Pasifika student achievement in 243 schools, ERO found that over half of the schools did not know if Pasifika students had improved in literacy and numeracy. Reasons for the limited monitoring of Pasifika students’ achievement included: difficulties for schools with very small number of Pacific students on the roll; little use of data before and after an initiative; and not collating data about individual students to identify trends and patterns (ERO, 2010b).

In the self-managing context, professional development providers of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) encourage schools to collect information about students' linguistic profiles on enrolment. With the introduction of National Standards (2010) all the initial training and support material encouraged schools to disaggregate data for English language learners and to track and monitor their progress and achievement. However, such information is not yet systematically collected by all schools.

There was also little focus on identifying students who might need extra challenge and extension programmes. While two-thirds of schools used assessment information to identify "at risk" groups, only some schools did so to identify gifted and talented students. In addition, while many schools implemented initiatives to meet the identified needs of students, few of them systematically reviewed the effectiveness of such initiatives.

School leadership needs stronger support for effective self-review

As discussed in Chapter 2, school leaders are pivotal in developing strong self-review and evaluation cultures at the school level. International comparisons show that, on average, New Zealand principals do more administration and provide less educational leadership than their international colleagues (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007). While much has been done to improve this through a range of initiatives such as the Kiwi Leadership Framework and Kiwi Leadership for Principals (see above), it is a long term process to create a different leadership and management mindset. As outlined in Chapter 2, individual schools in New Zealand can be quite isolated and may have limited opportunities for learning from effective practice in other schools around the country.

School leadership is critical in encouraging a more outward looking perspective among school staff. While there are "pockets of good practice", autonomy and competitiveness reduce incentives to collaborate with other schools, in the process diminishing a quality of capacity building which comes from learning with and from others. Evaluation of school leadership as an aspect of internal school review appears to be uneven.

The degree to which school leaders receive constructive support through appraisal processes is also variable across schools. There are two ways of appraising the performance of school leaders, which do not seem to be always well connected. Boards of Trustees are responsible for appraising the school principal annually. In addition, ERO reviews the quality of school governance, management and professional leadership as part of its regular external reviews of schools. However, the ERO reviews do not seem to be systematically informed of the outcome of Board's appraisal of the principal, and the quality criteria used are not necessarily the same.

Boards of Trustees members may conduct the appraisal themselves or may hire an external service provider to do it. The quality of principal appraisal is uneven depending very much on the capacity of the Board. According to the professional organisations of school principals, there is no robust system to guarantee that each principal will receive a quality appraisal process. Boards of Trustees members may simply not have the background and knowledge to provide professional advice to principals. According to some stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team, this system may encourage principals to be quite compliance driven, as Boards may end up focussing on property and finance issues much more than on the educational leadership of principals.

There are variations in Boards of Trustees' capacities to support school evaluation

School improvement is the core business of the school and of the Board of Trustees. Becoming a school on the four- to five-year cycle means that the ERO review team has no concerns, that there is a history of stable governance and management, that the Board and senior leaders understand and can articulate the relationship between external and internal evaluation and that there is appropriate documentation describing the school-wide self-review approach. This requires Boards not merely to be skilled in the gathering and analysis of evidence but able to demonstrate that it has used the results of self-review to inform its own decision making.

Boards need not simply understand the relationship of individual, class, group and school-wide target setting but to know how to integrate these using evidence-based critique and reflection in a way that challenges students, teachers and school leaders. This also has to be made transparent to, and accessible by, parents in a way that helps them make informed judgements as to their children's progress both in individual and normative terms.

Much is expected of a group of people many of whom have no background in education and perhaps little expertise in data analysis and in discriminating as to what kinds of data carry most weight. Where schools have co-opted someone with expertise in data analysis, it provides the Board with a salient strength, but should not preclude other Board members, including the principal, from taking a critical stance in relation to the nature and uses of data and associated target setting. Boards are provided with self-review tools to assist in self-review and strategic planning, but there is also a need to provide guidance, support and exemplification regarding where, how and when to use tools.

Schools' annual reporting is not well connected to other aspects of school evaluation

The annual report which schools use to review their own progress receives mixed endorsement among schools and other agencies. The process introduced in 2003 is seen by some as useful in bringing a range of data – financial, staffing, and attainment outcomes together in one document. However, it was apparent from the interviews of the OECD review team with stakeholders that it is widely believed that the process receives scant attention from the Ministry.

As in many other systems, the sharing of data happens mostly upwards from schools to the Ministry of Education, but little data is actually fed back to schools in a way to support them in their internal analysis and further planning. In a 2006 survey by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), less than 2% of primary principals and 6% of secondary principals indicated that feedback from the Ministry of Education was a source used to determine targets for the school (Hipkins *et al.*, 2007).

There is an apparent disconnect between schools' accountability to ERO, to the Ministry and to the Boards of Trustees. The ERO reviews focus on the schools' self-review, but they are not connected to the annual reporting processes. Boards of Trustees are responsible for the appraisal of principals, but the school's annual report is not systematically used in principal appraisal. There is certainly room for better alignment between these different components of school evaluation, accountability and improvement.

Policy recommendations

Maintain an emphasis on the improvement function of school evaluation

Self-improvement and external accountability are not natural bedfellows and few if any national systems have been able to find the perfect balance between the collaborative use of data for school improvement and the use of data for accountability or inter-school competitive purposes. The policy implications are to maintain and reinforce the improvement focus, through ERO and other avenues (teacher organisations for example) helping schools develop a strong sense of internal accountability through which it becomes easier for schools to have a credible story to tell to external bodies.

Continue to learn from national and international experience

As the cornerstone of a quality assurance system, self-review needs both consolidation and enhancing. This implies that there is, at policy level, a comprehensive picture of the state of the art, of leading-edge practice, of trailing-edge schools and “coasting” schools across the country. It begs answers to the questions: What are the key elements in schools with exemplary practice? By what processes have they got there? What are the principal impediments to practice in trailing-edge schools? Where are the sources of support currently and what further or alternative sources may be made available? How might leading-edge school staff be used as critical friends, mentors, workshop leaders, ERO team members?

ERO’s National Education Evaluation Reports (Chapter 6) regularly report on effective school practice in particular areas of schooling. They provide information and inspiration to all schools regarding the level of performance that can be achieved by the most successful schools in particular areas of practice. Going further, the education system could draw on the expertise of principals and school staff from leading-edge schools to engage them as change agents working with other schools to build good practice across the system. Box 5.1 provides an example from Hong Kong where much emphasis was put on learning from innovators and early adopters in the implementation of effective school evaluation.

A strength of the system is its keeping a watching brief on policy and practice internationally to learn from both successes and failures. Policy making also needs to pay attention to detrimental effects on the professional lives and morale of teachers when there is an overemphasis on summative attainment data used as leverage for competitive accountability. Resisting international pressures for the introduction of “league tables” is difficult for politicians but policy advisers’ counsel for politicians ought to be “watch, don’t copy” (see Hattie, 2009a).

Box 5.1 An example from Hong Kong: Embedding and enhancing self-evaluation

Hong Kong initiated its system of self-evaluation and external review a decade ago. It was accompanied from the start by a longitudinal external evaluation and consultancy. The development of school self-evaluation (SSE) and external school review (ESR) followed the well known pattern (Rogers, 1962) of innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. The key to the diffusion of innovation was to learn from the innovators and early adopters and from how the wave of change is enabled to move through the system. Drawing on the experience and expertise of the leading-edge schools, principals and school staff were engaged as ambassadors and as conference and workshop leaders, as members of external review teams and as foci for good practice case studies. The development of an on-line interactive resource gives schools access to review tools and to testimonies from students, parents, teachers and principals discussing challenges and achievements. A revised version in 2010 included a range of classroom lessons with accompanying observation and evaluation questions to illustrate how self-evaluation can be embedded in day-to-day practice.

Source: MacBeath (2009).

Ensure that self-review captures the breadth of the curriculum

Learning to measure what is valued should be modelled and promoted by the Ministry and ERO. As the National Standards are being fully implemented in schools, a key challenge lies in ensuring that the full scope of the curriculum is realised and that sufficient attention is given to raising learning outcomes across all the areas it covers. Ongoing support is needed to ensure that professionals have the capacity to conduct effective self-review covering the whole breadth of the curriculum. ERO's broad interpretation of the curriculum and focus on six dimensions of good practice requires strong evaluation capacities which many teachers and principals may not have through initial or in-service training. Credible evidence from classroom observation, for example, requires particular skills relating to observing and recording the essentials of teacher-pupil interaction and making judgements about the quality of teaching in the school overall (Santiago *et al.*, 2011). ERO has begun to work with schools towards effective self-review. The self-review workshops and more participatory nature of reviews introduced in 2010 are intended to allow reviewers to work with schools developing investigative questions for self-review. Such work needs to be continued and further enhanced so as to ensure more consistently effective self-review practice across New Zealand.

Build on the indicator framework to consolidate a common understanding of quality

The indicator framework plays a key role in ensuring that self-review and external review in New Zealand are well aligned, sharing the same criteria and the same language of quality. While there are in total 221 indicators, ERO is clear in its intention that the indicators are only examples based on current best practice and research, and not hard or definitive measures. In the self-review workshops and cluster workshops for schools with forthcoming reviews, ERO emphasises that schools can adapt, adjust, delete and amend indicators to suit their needs. In any evaluation system, however, there is a danger that too elaborate a protocol for self-review may be counter-productive and risks overwhelming schools with too much documentation and too many indicators. As ERO has done in the

past, it is important to continually review the indicator framework in close collaboration with schools and stakeholders so as to examine how indicators are currently viewed and used, what are seen as most powerful and productive elements, what issues it raises for effective self-review and how the framework might be simplified. Box 5.2 illustrates how Scotland has continuously reviewed and prioritised indicators over the past two decades.

Box 5.2 An example from Scotland: Policy and the parsimony principle

A lesson learned in international development of indicators is to observe the parsimony principle, in less technical language “keep it simple”. The development of indicators in Scotland began in the early 1990s influenced by international trends and by Scotland’s participation in OECD indicators networks. Over two decades there has been a continuing process of slimming down the number of indicators and reducing documentation. By 2010 the three large and very heavy loose-leaf binders produced in 1992 had been reduced to a small palm size booklet. This was a result of continuous feedback from the profession and a recognition of how leading-edge schools were successfully prioritising their use of indicators, reducing what was feasible and discriminating between the urgent and the important.

Source: Scottish Government (2011).

Continue to enhance school capacity in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data

Given that there are no mandatory national assessments in primary schools, there is a high need for professionals to be competent in designing assessment strategies and in gathering data that can inform school development. In this context, it is particularly important that teachers and school leaders not only have the capacity to interpret and follow up on the results of nationally validated assessment tools, but also that they are able to develop their own assessments to meet their local data needs. In particular, teachers in areas other than literacy and mathematics need to be resourceful in developing and applying assessments that provide valid and reliable information on student achievement and progress.

Alongside general training in assessment literacy (Chapter 3), effort should be directed towards increasing the skills of school staff in the use and interpretation of data for school improvement. Schools need to be further supported in their approaches to collecting school-wide data and in disaggregating data for relevant sub-groups including ethnic and language groups. More emphasis should also be placed on monitoring the effectiveness of school programmes, initiatives and teaching approaches for different sub-groups of students.

In part, this may involve providing additional national training resources designed to support good collection and use of data for school-wide purposes. Such resources could be made available through the Internet, but should also be disseminated through ERO workshops and targeted professional learning programmes, perhaps working with groups of similar schools or with universities and teacher education institutions, in order to ensure that training can be cascaded across the whole country. Embedding such support in initial teacher education, and particularly in training designed for senior staff and members of the school leadership team would also be a potentially effective way of building skills capacity (Nusche *et al.*, 2011b).

There is also a need to focus on helping schools interpret and translate evaluative information into action. School evaluation will not lead to improvements unless the information gathered is interpreted and translated into strategies for school development. While schools in New Zealand are already receiving high quality feedback information through their self-reviews and external reviews, further investment needs to be directed at strategies to ensure that professionals are able to use the feedback they receive effectively.

Strengthen school leadership training, support and appraisal

Strong school leadership capacity is key to effective school self-review and school improvement. While principals in New Zealand have traditionally had heavy administrative workloads, much emphasis has been put in recent years on strengthening leadership approaches with a focus on improving the core business of teaching and learning. There is a need to continue building the credibility and competencies of all school leaders with an educational focus so that they can lead effective self-review processes and operate effective feedback and coaching arrangements for their staff. Alongside extending access to professional development programmes for all those who exercise a leadership role, other elements of the national strategy might include broad dissemination to school leaders of the resources and support necessary for whole school self-review, including the direct evaluation of instructional practice and the strategic planning of teacher professional development.

Further enhancing the performance appraisal of school leadership is also important in providing leaders with external feedback, identifying areas of needed improvement and offering targeted support to improve practice. The national authorities, in collaboration with the School Trustees Association (NZSTA), could provide resources and training to Boards of Trustees on how to undertake effective performance review of school leaders against the professional standards for principals. ERO should also systematically consider documentation from principal appraisals in its reviews of schools and communicate clearly that the Board's appraisal of the principal is an important source of evidence for self-review, thereby enhancing the importance of the local appraisal process.

Engage practitioners as peer reviewers

Capacity for school evaluation and improvement could also be strengthened by involving practitioners integrally in the role of peer evaluators or participating in ERO review teams. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, for example, “collegial visits” have recently been introduced as a new form of external evaluation. In this approach, a team of teachers from one school performs a quality check in another school using a validated set of criteria. Prior to the visit, teachers receive training provided by an umbrella organisation of schools. Following the visit, the team prepares a report with concrete collegial advice. This report is in addition to regular inspections. The collegial visit has no formal status and the reviewed school decides autonomously on how to use the advice. Collegial visits are a popular function in the Flemish Community of Belgium and fit well to the education system’s emphasis on school autonomy. Emerging research points to positive effects of the visits on professional learning (Shewbridge *et al.*, 2011).

Another example was observed by an OECD review team visiting the Swedish city of Malmö, where school leaders participated in a municipal peer-evaluation scheme involving visits to each other’s schools to monitor and evaluate performance and provide professional advice (Nusche *et al.*, 2011a). In both examples, proactive support by a

higher level of the educational administration via training, resources or facilitation were instrumental to setting up these networking opportunities in school evaluation.

Provide support and training for trustees

Boards of Trustees play a key role in school evaluation. Whether they are called school boards, governors or trustees, their role in school management, evaluation and improvement is a perennial issue internationally. A national programme of training for trustees is a policy option that has been exercised in other countries. With the introduction of School Boards in Scotland for example, there was a policy of having one member of the board as a training co-ordinator and devoting a dedicated half hour at each meeting for a training session. Such a session for trustees could be demystifying data, making data more user-friendly and giving Boards confidence to hold “courageous conversations” with their principal. As mentioned above, there is also a particular need to enhance the support for Boards of Trustees in the area of principal appraisal.

Enhance the support structure around schools to support their self-review work

While self-review may suggest an internal self-sufficient process, there is strong evidence internationally as well as in New Zealand that schools benefit from the support and challenge of a critical friend. Working with an “experienced other”, such as a professional development provider or in-school leader of professional learning, is likely to result in deeper learning (Robinson *et al.*, 2009; Timperley *et al.*, 2007). At policy level, such arrangements may be either strongly encouraged or institutionalised as, for example, in England where there is a School Improvement Partner who meets with the headteacher two or three times a year to offer support particularly with interpretation and uses of data (Swaffield, 2009).

There is also much potential for schools to collaborate more and learn from each other in the process of evaluating and improving processes and outcomes. Providing funding for clusters of schools to work collaboratively would provide an incentive and stimulate collegial networking, peer exchange, sharing and critiquing of practice, fostering a sense of common direction. This would contribute to attenuating a form of autonomy which is inward looking and self-protective. A starting point could be with principals working together to identify common challenges, devising common strategies and approaches to peer evaluation. The process would benefit from the appointment of an external facilitator or critical friend chosen and agreed by the principals themselves.

Within such clusters of schools, professional learning communities of leaders and teachers from neighbouring schools could pool existing data from a range of schools and build a collective understanding of how to interpret such outcome data. Stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team supported such an approach to data analysis. Representatives from the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) – the country’s largest education union – suggested that such work could be monitored by an external facilitator (*e.g.* from the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education) while ensuring that school leaders have ownership of the data and engage in collective learning. The New Zealand Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools (NZAIMS) emphasised the importance of communities of practice able to debate what student outcome data actually mean for a particular community of schools. Hattie (2009b) suggests that consideration should be given to establishing Boards of Trustees that have responsibilities for a group of schools, consisting for example of a secondary school, some intermediates,

and contributing and full primary schools in a region. Such an approach would be particularly relevant to addressing transition issues and diverging evaluation and assessment approaches in primary and secondary education.

Revisit the nature and use of annual reporting

Given a significant level of dissatisfaction with annual reporting by schools, the nature and use of these reports should be revisited. There is a need to closely examine the relative costs and benefits of different forms of reporting and the form that teachers and school leaders would find most productive. If self-review and ERO reviews are both formative, the annual review should reflect ways in which they have contributed to professional development and school improvement. There is a need to bring clarity as to whose interests annual reports are designed to serve.

To optimise the use of the data brought together by schools in their annual reports, it would be important that the reports are not merely used as provider of data for higher levels of the educational administration, but that schools also receive useful feedback based on the information provided. There is a need to strengthen the alignment between school annual reporting and the external reviews by ERO. There are also possibilities for the Ministry of Education to use the reports as a basis for discussion with schools and Boards of Trustees (Chapter 6).

Notes

1. The Methodology is outlined in ERO’s *Framework for School Reviews* (ERO, 2010c) and ERO’s *Evaluation Indicators* documents (ERO, 2010d).

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Chapter 6

Education system evaluation

New Zealand has clear strategic objectives for education system performance, coupled with comprehensive frameworks for reporting on progress and performance. The principle of evidence-based policy making is well established in the education sector. Information about education system performance is collected through a range of tools including school roll returns and thematic reviews on particular schooling issues and priorities. The Education Review Office (ERO) publishes Education Evaluation Reports on national education issues that inform both policy and practice. Information on student learning outcomes in all curriculum areas is collected from the National Education Monitoring Project in primary education and from assessment for qualifications in secondary education. Training for assessors and a range of moderation mechanisms are in place to ensure the results are nationally consistent. The richness of data available in New Zealand is commendable even though some gaps remain in key measurement areas such as students' and teachers' linguistic backgrounds and national monitoring in Māori-medium education. The use of school reporting information could be further enhanced, and the introduction of National Standards raises additional questions about how this new reporting information will feed into system-level evaluation.

This chapter looks at system evaluation within the New Zealand evaluation and assessment framework. System evaluation refers to approaches to monitor and evaluate the performance of the education system as a whole. The main aims of system evaluation are to provide accountability information to the public and to improve educational processes and outcomes.

Context and features

Responsibility for national monitoring and reporting

The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Education Review Office (ERO) share responsibility for monitoring the performance of the New Zealand education system.

The Ministry is responsible for overall monitoring of the education system. This involves the collection of annual statistical data from schools, statistical analysis, data management and the development of education indicators and monitoring. The Ministry also evaluates and monitors the impact of education policy, either through its Regional Offices or contracts for services. The Ministry's role further includes building capacity for system evaluation, *i.e.* developing the capacity of different actors within the system to improve evaluation. As part of this role, it monitors the performance of the education Crown entities including the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), the New Zealand Teachers Council and Career Services.

The Ministry of Education is accountable to the Parliament. In addition, the Ministry's performance improvement actions are also monitored by the Treasury. The Treasury provides advice to the Ministry in ensuring value for money and providing better public services at lower cost. The State Services Commission (SSC) also plays an ongoing role in terms of advising policy for, and direction of, the state sector. SSC is responsible for the appointment and performance management of the Chief Executives of Government Departments and it has an evaluative role through ongoing contact with managers and chief executives in state agencies.

ERO is an independent evaluation agency. It holds responsibility for evaluating and reporting on the quality of education provided in early childhood services, *kura* and schools. ERO also reviews the implementation of national education policy and provides independent advice to the government on national education issues. The Education Act gives ERO's Chief Review Officer the right to initiate reviews, investigate, report and publish findings on the provision of education in New Zealand.

Major tools to measure performance of the education system

Participation in international student assessments

New Zealand has a well-established tradition of participating in international assessment studies that measure student achievement. Information on student reading literacy is collected for students in Year 4 (through the International Association for Educational Achievement [IEA]'s Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS]) and for 15-year-olds (via the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA]). Information on students' mathematics and science literacy is collected for students in Years 4 and 8 (via the IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and

Science Study [TIMSS]) and for 15-year-olds (via the OECD's PISA). New Zealand also participates in the IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) which assesses students in Year 8. Participation in such assessments provides benchmark information on the education system's performance and also allows monitoring of progress over time, for example via the trend data available for TIMSS from 1995 and PISA from 2000.

National assessments

The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP)

In primary schools, progress towards the achievement of national curriculum goals has been measured via the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) since 1995¹. NEMP is funded by the Ministry of Education and organised by the University of Otago. One of the strengths of this monitoring survey is its clarity of purpose: NEMP intends to provide a national picture of student learning outcomes at key stages (Years 4 and 8) rather than to report on individual students, teachers or schools. NEMP covers all curriculum areas in a four-year cycle (more on this below). About 3 000 students from 260 schools are selected randomly each year to take part in the assessments. The participation of selected schools is voluntary, but 98% do participate. According to the NEMP website, the purpose of the NEMP assessments is to identify and report trends in educational performance, to provide information for policy makers, curriculum specialists and educators for planning purposes and to inform the general public on trends in educational achievement. The approach to national monitoring is currently being redeveloped to take account of changes such as the introduction of the national curriculum and National Standards.

Student achievement information collected from national qualifications

Learning outcomes of the secondary education system are assessed and monitored through national qualifications by NZQA. The main national qualification in secondary education is the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Student achievement information from the NCEA is collected nationally to analyse patterns of performance and inform policy development. Students generally enter for NCEA in Years 11, 12 and 13, which typically correspond to NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3. For each of these NCEA levels, student achievement is monitored nationally in 96 recorded subject areas. National statistics from NCEAs are provided in an annual publication called *NCEA Statistics Annual Report on NCEA & New Zealand Scholarship Data & Statistics*. These reports include statistics on trends in the number of students achieving qualifications; results distributions for various student groupings; results relating to school curriculum learning areas and scholarship subjects.

Information collected from schools

For the purpose of system-level monitoring, student performance data is complemented by a wide range of demographic, administrative and contextual data. The Ministry of Education collects statistical snapshot data from schools twice a year. These data collections are called Roll Returns and bring together administrative information such as student age, year enrolment, ethnicity and language education. The information is compiled in *School Roll Summary* reports and is further analysed to develop *School Roll Forecasts*. Demographic and contextual information such as indicators on family and

communities are compiled from a range of sources including the New Zealand Census and the different education agency databases. There is also a strong focus on compiling information on aspects of student participation and engagement. Data on pass rates, truancy, suspensions and retention rates are collected from a combination of sources including the School Roll Return, ERO school reviews and NCEA data. The Ministry of Education publishes an annual statistical report on the education sector called *Education Statistics of New Zealand*, which brings together basic education statistics on the number and types of schools, student participation and performance.

In addition, national surveys of both the primary and the secondary sector are run at three-year intervals to provide a national picture of school processes and the impact of policy changes on schools. The national surveys are implemented by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and funded through its purchase agreement with the Ministry of Education. The surveys are sent to a random sample of schools and the responses are weighted so as to be representative of state and state-integrated schools across New Zealand. The questionnaires are completed by principals, teachers, trustees and parents. The surveys include a range of questions on issues such as school finance, strategic management, professional development and collaboration with communities. Each round of surveys also picks up particularly timely and relevant topics. For example, the 2010 survey in primary schools focused on the introduction of National Standards and the 2009 survey in secondary schools had a focus on the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA).

Thematic evaluations of different aspects of schooling

The Education Review Office (ERO) publishes between 12 and 20 National Education Evaluation Reports about New Zealand schooling each year. These reports gather evaluative evidence on specific education issues and serve to inform policy and practice. Past reports have covered a range of aspects of schooling such as the education of Māori and Pasifika students, special education, school curricula, pedagogy and assessment, school management and the education of diverse learners. The areas investigated in the National Education Evaluation Reports reflect the government's educational priorities as well as issues identified by those in the sector. ERO makes its final selection of which topics will be investigated in consultation with the Minister, the Ministry and, in some cases, other government agencies.

The Ministry and other government agencies use the National Education Evaluation Reports to establish priorities for the education sector and to develop New Zealand's educational policies. Schools use the reports to review and improve their management, organisation, teaching, and the achievement of students. The reports contain a variety of tools for educators and parents, depending on the nature of the evaluation. For example, they may provide the indicators ERO's review officers used to make their judgements about quality; focus questions for school self-review; examples of high and low quality practice; and questions for parents to use when discussing related issues with their school.

ERO consults with the Ministry regarding its evaluation questions and approach used in its National Evaluations. ERO also draws on local and international research to identify suitable evaluation indicators. These indicators are closely examined by internal reference groups and, in some cases, external reference groups. The reference groups also ensure that the final evaluation reports provide relevant information for the primary audiences and accurately reflect the evaluative evidence that has been gathered. ERO uses a range

of approaches in preparing different types of National Education Evaluation Reports (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1 The Education Review Office's approaches to preparing National Education Evaluation Reports

Reports on National Evaluation Topics: National Evaluation Topics (NETs) reflect current issues of interest to the government. To report on NETs, ERO gathers evaluative findings as part of individual school reviews. National Evaluation Topics provide lenses through which ERO investigates key aspects of individual school performance, while also gathering information that is synthesised into a National Education Evaluation Report. The collection of evidence for NETS usually takes place over one or two school terms. ERO has some ongoing NETS that are always a part of ERO reviews in schools; these include *Success for Māori students* and *Success for Pacific students*. ERO reviews approximately 600 primary and secondary schools each year, so the education evaluation reports reflect the findings from a substantial number of schools.

Good Practice Reports: Some of the schools identified in the NETS evaluations may be used to produce National Education Reports that focus on Good Practice. Typically these reports use a case study approach to identify, in more detail, the nature of effective practice in schools. These reports help provide a quality benchmark for school leaders and those in policy.

Reports prepared by specialist evaluation teams: Other National Education Evaluation Reports may be prepared by specialist evaluation teams. These involve small groups of ERO staff who have expert knowledge in the area being evaluated. Recent examples of this include ERO's evaluations of primary school science education and *Te Reo Māori* teaching. These specialist teams develop the evaluation methodologies, questions, indicators and information collection tools. Some of these investigations may also use a good practice approach, such as ERO's recent reports on Boys' Education and Good Practice in Alternative Education.

Source: Information provided to the OECD review team by the Education Review Office (ERO).

Further, New Zealand participates in international reviews of educational policy, such as the OECD projects on Improving School Leadership, Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care, and Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes.

Strengths

A common accountability framework for the state sector

New Zealand has a well established public sector management and accountability framework that provides strategic direction and a range of monitoring tools for all state sector agencies. In the mid-1980s, the public management system underwent significant reforms to make the state sector more responsive to Ministerial demands. The New Zealand Treasury set up the following key principles for public management in all state agencies: clarity of objectives, freedom to manage, accountability, effective assessment of performance, and adequate information flows (New Zealand Treasury, 1987; Cook, 2004).

In 2004, the government introduced an overarching framework of high level goals for system performance called Managing for Outcomes. The Managing for Outcomes

framework seeks continuous improvement of the public sector's ability to identify, deliver and evaluate interventions that contribute to government goals. For the education sector this means that different education agencies need to co-ordinate their strategic direction so as to ensure that monitoring of education quality is related to high level goals of system performance. The Management for Outcomes framework provides a common model of a quality management cycle for all state departments. This improvement cycle involves four steps: setting direction; planning; implementation; and review, which then feeds forward to inform future planning.

More recently, the state sector Performance Improvement Framework was introduced to provide a more comprehensive model for performance improvement and cycles of performance assessments. It establishes a common language that defines what good performance means for the state sector and provides guidance on how agencies can focus on continuous improvement of their work. It also includes agency and sector models that can be used for either formal review or self-review.

Clear education objectives and strategies at the national level which are monitored over time

An important strength of New Zealand approach to education system evaluation is the clarity of strategic objectives, coupled with clear frameworks for reporting on progress and performance.

Education system reporting

The focus for education system evaluation is determined through the priorities set by the Ministry of Education's annual Statement of Intent (SOI). The Ministry of Education reports against its annual SOI to the Parliament. In the 2010-2011 SOI, three priority areas were established for schooling: all children achieving literacy and numeracy levels that enable their success; all youngsters having the skills and qualifications to contribute to their and New Zealand's future; and Māori achieving education success as Māori. All education agencies are working towards these objectives for school improvement.

An Education Indicators Framework has been developed to help decision makers analyse the state of the education system and monitor trends over time. The indicators described in this framework relate to six priority domains: education and learning; effective teaching, student participation; family and community; quality education providers; and resourcing. For each of these six indicator domains, there are specific measures to determine the extent to which certain aspects of a result have been achieved. The Indicator Framework also includes contextual information to help the interpretation of results. The performance of the education system is assessed against these indicators and reported annually in the annual publications *The State of Education in New Zealand* and *New Zealand Schools / Ngā Kura o Aotearoa*.

More comprehensive and regularly updated information on performance in each of the six indicator domains is also available online at the Education Counts website (www.educationcounts.govt.nz). The Education Counts website has been developed as a “one-stop-shop” for information on education statistics and research. The website is open to all audiences and brings together a wide range of information including demographic and contextual information; statistical information on educational participation and performance; analyses of education information; and research publications.

Reporting on national strategies

In addition to the overall objectives stated in the Ministry of Education's SOI, there are a number of strategies at national level to define more concrete system-level goals for particular student groups. Three key documents in this respect are the Māori Education Strategy *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* 2008-2012, the *Pasifika Education Plan* 2009-2012, and the *Disability Strategy*. The Ministry regularly reports on progress towards the implementation of these strategies.

- *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* sets out specific outcomes, targets and actions to realise the full potential of Māori learners. As an integral part of *Ka Hikitia*, the Ministry is developing a Measurable Gains Framework, which aims to provide accurate and ongoing information on the extent to which initiatives funded by the Ministry of Education are making a difference for Māori learners achieving education success as Māori. Progress towards the achievement of government goals for the educational success of Māori learners is also reported in a series of annual reports called *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga*.
- The *Pasifika Education Plan* establishes goals and targets for the achievement of Pasifika learners by 2012. An annual *Pasifika Education Plan Monitoring Report* has been developed to benchmark the level of Pasifika engagement and achievement before the implementation of the plan and to sketch the level of progress needed to achieve the plan's goals and targets.
- The *Disability Strategy* was developed by the New Zealand Office for Disability Issues to provide a guiding framework for all government agencies involved in developing policies that impact on disabled people. The Ministry of Education, like all other government departments, develops an annual Disability Strategy implementation work plan with concrete goals and actions. Since 2007-08, the work plans include a progress report for the previous year.

Monitoring of policy implementation

The Ministry of Education also commissions independent evaluations to monitor the implementation of national policies. Most prominent among these are ongoing evaluations of the implementation of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and the National Standards.

The implementation of *The New Zealand Curriculum* in English-medium schools is being monitored by ERO in a series of reports. The curriculum took full effect in 2010, but schools have been preparing to implement the curriculum since 2008, using a range of support tools. In its latest report, ERO found that by the end of 2009, 76% of schools were managing the curriculum change well, with 13% already giving full effect to the curriculum and 63% making good progress (ERO, 2010b).

The Ministry, in collaboration with ERO, has also developed a framework to monitor and evaluate the implementation of National Standards in English-medium schools. The National Standards: School Sample Monitoring and Evaluation Project, run by a contracted evaluation team, will collect information from a sample of state schools over the period of 2009-2013. This information will be complemented by survey data, information from ERO reports and results from national and international assessments. A framework for evaluating the implementation of National Standards in Māori-medium education (*Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori*) is currently being developed.

Nationally consistent information on student learning outcomes in primary and secondary education

New Zealand collects a wide range of data on education system performance in relation to national curriculum goals. Information on student learning outcomes is collected from a sample survey (NEMP) in primary education and from assessment for qualifications (NCEA) in secondary education. New Zealand has a tradition of focussing on holistic student development, and student assessment is well aligned to this approach. Student assessments that are used for national monitoring cover a wide range of curriculum goals and have a strong emphasis on authentic and performance-based items, including group work, hands-on tasks and project work. While it can be challenging to score such open-ended tasks reliably, New Zealand has put in place strong tools and training for assessors and a range of moderation mechanisms that ensure the consistency of national assessment results.

Sample-based monitoring of student outcomes in primary education (NEMP)

The results from NEMP give a comprehensive national picture of student performance in primary education in a broad range of subjects. One of the benefits of NEMP is its broad coverage which ensures that all curriculum areas are assessed. NEMP follows a set four-year cycle, in which each curriculum area is assessed every fourth year. For example, the assessments focused on language and health / physical education in 2010, and on mathematics, social science and information skills in 2009 (Table 6.1). NEMP is conducted every year, but assesses a different set of disciplines each year. To cover a broad range of items without overburdening individual students, three different groups of students are created for each subject, with each group being tested on one-third of the tasks. The tasks are not necessarily related to particular year levels – many tasks are the same for Year 4 and Year 8 students. Each student participates in about four hours of assessment spread over one week. A number of trend tasks are kept constant over the assessment cycles in order to obtain longitudinal data.

The national curriculum encourages the development of values and key competencies, in addition to learning areas that students should master. NEMP is designed to be as well aligned as possible with the curriculum by incorporating competency and value elements. Many of the NEMP assessment tasks are performance-based, requiring students to transfer learning to authentic close-to-real life situations. There are different assessment situations including one-to-one interviews, work stations and teamwork. As the assessment does not carry high stakes for students it is particularly important that tasks are meaningful and enjoyable to them. The assessment provides rich information on the processes used by students to solve problems or conduct experiments. Most assessment tasks are carried out orally so as to analyse what students can do without the interference of reading and writing skills. Some of the tasks are videotaped to allow for an in-depth analysis of student responses and interaction with teachers. NEMP also assesses students' cross-curricular skills, and attitudes towards the learning areas being assessed. Students' enjoyment of particular assessment tasks is also surveyed. For instance, 82.5% are reported as enjoying hands-on tasks, versus around 50% for paper and pencil tests.

Table 6.1 The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) assessment cycles

Year	Curriculum area	Essential skills	
2007 2003 1999 1995	Science Visual arts Information skills: graphs, tables, maps, charts, diagrams	Communication skills Problem-solving skills Self-management and competitive skills Work and study skills	Attitudes
2008 2004 2000 1996	Language (reading and speaking) Aspects of technology Music		
2009 2005 2001 1997	Mathematics Social studies Information skills: library, research		
2010 2006 2002 1998	Language (writing, listening, viewing) Health and physical education		

Source: New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011).

Another strength of NEMP is the high involvement of practicing teachers in all aspects of the assessment. Teachers participate in the development, trialling and implementation of NEMP. About 100 practicing teachers are freed from their teaching responsibilities each year to conduct the assessments. The teachers receive one week of training and then administer the tasks over a period of five weeks. The intention is to ground the assessment practice in sound teaching practice and to build and strengthen teachers' assessment capacities.

Results from the assessment are reported task by task in NEMP Reports for each curriculum area. The task reports indicate a total score as well as sub-group analyses by variables such as school decile, gender and ethnicity. The NEMP reports also provide some information on the patterns of change in student performance over time. For several years, results on NEMP have been remarkably stable, as have most of the New Zealand results on international tests. This should not be interpreted as meaning that NEMP does not serve its purpose. On the contrary, it shows that the students' results on NEMP tasks have some concurrent validity and provide key information on learning and achievement in New Zealand primary schools (Absolum *et al.*, 2009).

The NEMP assessments appeared to be well accepted by the stakeholder groups interviewed by the OECD review team. Key stakeholder groups interviewed by the OECD review team underlined the high quality system-level information generated through NEMP. They particularly welcomed the ability of the project to work constructively with teachers and to provide a wide range of assessment information that can be used by both policy and practice.

Information collected from assessment for qualification in secondary education (NCEA)

NCEA results are a key source of data to gauge the performance of the education system at the secondary level. As discussed in Chapter 3, performance results from NCEA assessments are highly credible. While approximately two-thirds of standards contributing to NCEA are assessed internally, a range of procedures are in place to ensure

that assessment practices are nationally consistent (Chapter 3). While this ensures that the qualifications have public credibility and can be used by employers and further education institutions for selection purposes, it also makes these results a useful source for system-level analysis. NZQA publishes national statistics from NCEA assessments on its website. This information provides a national picture of student attainment and performance and also allows comparing the outcomes of schools with similar student populations.

Another strength of the NCEA is that its results can be used to analyse trends in student performance over time. In 2010, NZQA launched its first *Annual Report on NCEA and NZ Scholarship Data and Statistics* (2009). The report describes major trends in student achievement and differences between major population sub-groups since the full implementation of the NCEAs in 2004. At present, the report is more focused on providing an accurate description of the last five-year trends and makes few attempts to explain the results or make recommendations. It is probably cautious to do so, as there are only five data points to determine the trends and as adjustments in the process may have occurred during the early implementation years.

A unique national student identifier

The National Student Number (NSN) has been used in the school sector since 2006. The NSN is a unique identification number given to every student. This unique identifier facilitates the management and sharing of information about students across the education sector in a way that protects their privacy. At the level of the Ministry of Education, almost all data collection from schools is set up in a way as to enable longitudinal analysis, using the NSN as a link. The existence of a widely applied unique identifier covering both schooling and the tertiary sector is a key strength of system monitoring in New Zealand.

The NSN can be used by authorised users for the following five purposes: monitoring and ensuring a student's enrolment and attendance; ensuring education providers and students receive appropriate resourcing; statistical purposes; research purposes; and ensuring that students' educational records are accurately maintained. Among other things, the NSN is applied for reporting purposes by education agencies, analysis of student assessment data over time, moving data between software applications, and issuing documentation students need to present to other schools or education providers.

Education policy builds on research and evaluative evidence

A commitment to developing a strong evidence base in education

New Zealand not only has a wealth of data and information on the state of its education system, but is also collecting an increasing amount of evidence on the factors and practices that can contribute to improving teaching and learning.

The purpose of the Ministry's Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) programme is to strengthen the evidence base so as to inform education policy and practice in New Zealand and act as a catalyst for systemic improvement. The BES programme produces a series of publications synthesising available research evidence on factors that can influence a range of learner outcomes. Recent BES publications have focused on issues such as school leadership; effective pedagogy in particular curriculum areas; and

teacher professional development. The iterative approach to building knowledge requires the BES authors to engage in a collaborative process with colleagues from educational policy, research and practice. The national advisory groups for the BES programme included synthesis writers, quality assurers, research methodologists, teacher union representatives, educational researchers and policy advisers (Alton-Lee, 2004).

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) also plays an important role in conducting educational research and evaluation, developing research-based tools and resources such as surveys and tests, and providing independent advice and information on education policy and practice. NZCER is an independent research organisation with 53 full-time equivalent staff, conducting research for a number of clients including the Ministry of Education. For example, it co-ordinates the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), a government fund for research about effective teaching and learning. NZCER also conducts longitudinal studies such as the Competent Children, Competent Learners project which started in 1993 and followed 500 students from Early Childhood Education throughout their school career to analyse how their educational experiences impacted on their learning and engagement.

The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC), a Crown Entity and professional body for teachers, further contributes to building a sound evidence base on high quality teaching. NZTC commissions research relating to all aspects of the teaching profession, including induction and mentoring, teacher education, teacher standards and the status of the profession. The intention is to build an evidence base that will strengthen policies and standards to support teaching quality (for more information on teacher standards, see Chapter 4).

New Zealand researchers and academics have traditionally contributed to the discussion around evaluation and assessment policies in education, individually and via advisory groups set up by the Ministry. Furthermore, in 2008, a group of leading researchers in this area created the New Zealand Assessment Academy (NZAA) as a permanent inter-institutional and independent expert group on educational assessment issues. The aims of this group are to (1) Advance research and scholarship in assessment; (2) Stimulate discussion and provide information and commentary on assessment issues, policies and practices; and (3) Proactively build assessment expertise in New Zealand. Representatives of NZAA reported that the creation of the group has helped its members establish an independent voice, especially in the debate around National Standards.

Focus on using evaluation results for policy and practice

There is a strong commitment at the national level to feed the results of evaluations back into the development of policy. All education agencies are expected to use information from education system evaluation in their strategic planning and review cycles. Within the Ministry of Education, a Research and Evaluation Team (in the Research Division) is responsible for building the Ministry's evaluative capacity. This involves building the infrastructure and the expertise to ensure that the Ministry plans effectively and uses evaluative information strategically for decision making.

There are examples of using information from international student assessments to feed back into policy and practice development. The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2011) reports that poor results of middle primary schools in the TIMSS assessment in 1994/95 led to the formation of a Mathematics and Science Taskforce in 1997. Following publication of PIRLS results, the New Zealand Education Institute in collaboration with

the Ministry of Education, launched focus group discussions on the findings from PIRLS across New Zealand, allowing schools to reflect on how those findings relate to their own practice.

Similarly, data from national assessments is used at the system level to analyse learning areas in need of particular attention. For example, the 2007 NEMP report on science indicated a dramatic decline in students' enjoyment of science. The percentage of students with a negative perception of science had increased from 15% in 1999 to 37% in 2007 (Crooks *et al.*, 2008). In this period there had been a reduction of the time at school dedicated to science and especially to hands-on science experiments. As a follow-up to these results, the Ministry of Education asked ERO to conduct an Education Evaluation Report on science teaching in primary school. Results from NCEA assessments are also scrutinised to monitor developments in particular subject areas. NZQA publishes profiles of expected performances (statistical predictions) and monitors the actual spread of performances. If there are major discrepancies, this might lead to professional development for teachers in this subject, or to the revision of the standard.

The information collected from schools may also be used at the national level to identify issues or challenges that particular schools are experiencing. Data from ERO school reviews are used by the Ministry of Education to identify schools that are facing challenges and where the Ministry might decide to intervene. In addition, the information from school roll data and teacher turnover data can provide indications of problems in school management (Wylie, 2009).

Challenges

Some remaining data gaps in the national monitoring system

It is an important ambition of national goals and indicators to stay relevant in the context of changing social, economic and environmental demands. As stated in the Ministry of Education's Indicator Framework for the education sector, "the development and reporting on indicators will always be a work in progress" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2005). By definition, keeping track of emerging priority demands poses a challenge to any monitoring system and the work on ensuring the relevance of goals and indicators must be ongoing. The richness of data available in New Zealand is commendable and few stakeholders expressed concerns about significant gaps in data. However, challenges remain in some key measurement areas.

National data on students' and teachers' linguistic backgrounds is limited

One of the areas that seems insufficiently covered by national education statistics is the first language / language spoken at home by students. Language is a complex and important issue in the New Zealand education system. In 2008, 22.3% of the population in New Zealand were foreign-born (OECD, 2010). While the UK remains the largest source country, the vast majority of immigrants do not speak English as their first language and their children may have learned it to varying degrees before entering the school system. Language remains an important issue for second-generation immigrants. While most of the Pasifika students were born in New Zealand, this does not necessarily mean that English is their first language. Māori students may also face particular challenges related to language. In both English-medium schools and Māori-medium

schools, there are students who do not speak the language of instruction at home or who have not learned it as their first language.

While the importance of language in education is well recognised in New Zealand, information on the languages spoken by students and teachers outside school is not collected nationally. The State Services Commission acknowledged a data gap around the issue of first languages. The teacher census provides a range of high quality data but there is no information on teachers' linguistic background. The Pasifika Group within the Ministry of Education also noted that the basic information on students' first languages and their level of proficiency in their first language was inadequate. They acknowledged the need for enhanced research in the area of bilingual learning. Considering the importance of the language in education, it is unfortunate that such important data are not gathered nationally. It would provide useful information to determine the need for a national strategy and teachers' guidance for ELL students.

There is room for more fine-grained analysis of different ethnic groups

New Zealand has a strong focus on collecting and reporting data by ethnicity. In standard reporting, data are disaggregated for the three major ethnic groups – European, Māori and Pasifika. However, the indicator framework states that, as the information system matures, there is room to go into deeper analysis of different ethnic groups. Such analysis could concern both a more fine-grained analysis of different Pasifika groups as well as more focus on other ethnic groups.

National monitoring in primary education does not include Māori-medium schools

Major steps have been taken to ensure that the progress and achievement of Māori and Pasifika students is continuously monitored. Wherever possible, outcomes are monitored by separate ethnic groups as well as the whole student population. However, the key national monitoring tool in primary education (NEMP) was discontinued in Māori-medium schools in 2005. The main reason for this was that the items used for assessment in Māori-medium schools had not been developed within a Māori context. They were in fact direct translations of the English items used in the English-medium sector. The Ministry is now collaborating with Māori assessment experts to develop a national monitoring study for the Māori-medium sector.

The use of school reporting information could be further enhanced

New Zealand has already taken major steps to create consistency in data management systems by auditing commercial student management systems (SMS) and providing a list of “accredited” SMS that are compatible with national reporting requirements. However, it remains voluntary for schools to purchase and implement student management systems. In a 2006 survey, almost a third of the responding primary school principals reported that they had no SMS yet (Hipkins *et al.*, 2007).

Systematic sharing of data between schools is still limited

Further, the diversity of approaches to school data management may create challenges in ensuring follow-up of students across transitions. For example, lack of information on students' socio-economic situation and inaccurate or delayed transmission of assessment information may lead to disruptions in students' learning as they enter a new level of

education (Tolley and Shulruf, 2009). While good connections between secondary schools and their feeder schools may help alleviate the difficulties often encountered in the transition years, such connections may be difficult to establish when a large number of primary feeder schools are involved.

Indeed, a 2006 NZCER survey on school reporting frameworks indicates that the introduction of school planning and reporting frameworks has had little impact in terms of improving the communication of schools about student results. The sharing of information about students between schools was reported by principals and teachers as the area of least impact of the school reporting framework (Hipkins *et al.*, 2007). In their analysis of the data, Hipkins *et al.* (2007) suggest that this should be an area of further investigation. Among the reasons for limited data sharing could be the fact that it is not easy to use the school-wide data to extract data about individual students. Also, the lack of a data sharing tradition may take time to overcome.

The Ministry of Education is well aware of these challenges and is currently working on a Student Record Transfer initiative that should allow feeder schools to upload the data of their graduating students to a secure file server from which the receiving school will be able to download it.

The use of school reporting information for system monitoring and feedback is limited

Improvements could also be made to way school reporting data is used by the educational administration. Schools are required to report annually on their progress to the Ministry of Education. Based on the interviews conducted during the OECD review visit to New Zealand, the OECD review team formed the impression that there was room to further clarify the purpose and use of this type of reporting information at the level of the Ministry. Several stakeholders we interviewed questioned whether the data reported by schools to the Ministry was actually used purposefully for accountability or improvement.

In a 2006 survey (Hipkins *et al.*, 2007), the majority of primary school principals saw the purpose of school reporting to be adjustments and improvements in their own school practices. Only 38% of primary principals and 25% of secondary principals saw national policy developments among the purposes of school reporting. Only 17% of primary principals and 9% of secondary principals believed that school reporting aimed at allowing government to gather data about each school and assist schools.

The State Services Commission commented that from a system evaluation perspective, there is certainly scope to create more system-wide consistency in the ways schools measure and report on their performance. In fact, the high variability in the format, content and quality of school reporting to the Ministry of Education severely reduces the usability of this information for system monitoring or to systematically identify schools in need of support.

Uncertainties about schools' reporting on standards

From 2012/13, schools will have to report on their students' results in relation to standards in their annual reports. The introduction of National Standards raises additional questions about how this new reporting information from schools will feed into system-level evaluation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is variability between teachers and between schools in their assessment practices. The standards are a new tool that requires teachers to make complex judgements. The existing suite of assessment tools predates the introduction of the standards and there are challenges in relating the existing progressions and assessment tools to the National Standards. It is not clear in what way teachers can use existing assessment tools and progressions to benchmark their students against standards. Some of the teachers we spoke to during the visit reported difficulties in relating standards to existing tools, for example that a student who achieves well on Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle) may not be meeting the standard.

Beyond the questions about the reliability of standards-based assessment, there is also a need to improve communication about the purpose and use of the new reporting information in education system monitoring. During the interviews of the OECD review team with stakeholder groups, many expressed confusion about the intentions behind the introduction of the standards. There is a concern that schools will be judged and compared based on their students' results against the standards. This is considered inappropriate because the standard reporting currently does not give information about the rates of progress of students or about the value added by schools to student learning. The simple information about the number of students above and below the standard, disconnected from other sources of evidence, provides little insight about the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Policy recommendations

The OECD review team commends the clarity of the current strategic framework and monitoring of the results of the New Zealand education system. Based on clear national objectives and strategic plans, the system evaluation framework produces a wealth of high quality data that are published transparently. Within this context, the review team would recommend considering the following points for future policy development to further strengthen the system evaluation framework:

- Continue to broaden the collection of data on diverse groups of students;
- Optimise the use of school reporting data for system improvement;
- Strengthen the reliability of standards-based reporting information.

Continue to broaden the collection of data on diverse groups of students

In order to continue to meet information needs to adequately monitor progress towards national education goals, it would be important to strengthen the information system regarding diverse groups of students. Information systems could be strengthened by further disaggregating information on different sub-groups of Pasifika students and other ethnic groups in regions where such information is relevant.

The immediate priority to ensure better monitoring information towards the Ministry's strategic goal of "Māori achieving education success as Māori" is to obtain better data on Māori learning outcomes in primary education. As mentioned above, work towards developing a culturally relevant version of NEMP for Māori-medium education is ongoing. Implementing a revised version of NEMP in Māori-medium settings has the potential to produce highly valuable system-level information. As NEMP tests are mostly performance-based, they are not affected to the same extent by reading and writing

abilities. They could provide useful information on the impact of language and culture in the cognitive processes involved in Māori students learning.

To design adequate strategies for second language learners, the Ministry should consider gathering more information on students' linguistic profiles. In particular, it would be useful to begin collecting data on the languages students speak at home and proficiency in their first and second language. More comprehensive data on the linguistic profiles of students would be helpful in designing a language strategy at the national level and making decisions about specific resources and support allocated to second language learners. It would also be of interest to provide national assessment data broken down by specific language profiles in order to monitor trends and analyse whether specific groups of English language learners face particular challenges with some tasks. This is in line with ERO's recommendation that data on the linguistic profiles of children should be gathered systematically and that achievement results be reported according to such profiles.

Currently, while schools are encouraged to collect data on their students' linguistic competencies, it is not clear to what extent this is done systematically across the country. A national template could be used to assist schools in gathering essential information on students' linguistic profiles locally and in feeding up and aggregating such data at the national level. This national template should include the most important and basic questions and could be complemented by questions of interest at the local level which would not be reported at the national level.

In Ontario, for example, data on students' linguistic profile is gathered from parents, teachers and children at the time of the provincial testing in Year 3. This allows some form of triangulation among sources which makes the data more valid. Data is gathered on language use in a large variety of circumstances, such as languages spoken at home, with parents, with siblings, at parents' work, outside of home (with friends, etc.) as well as the languages that children prefer to write in and how often they do so. Questions are also asked about the availability of books for reading both in the language spoken at home and in the language of instruction and the use of media (TV, music, movies, Internet). The idea is to obtain a picture or profile of how many opportunities the child has to speak and practice the language of instruction outside of the classroom. Ultimately, the data will be used for language planning at the school and system level.

Optimise the use of school reporting data for system improvement

The amount of existing information on school and system performance offers many opportunities to engage stakeholders in supporting improvements in education outcomes. While large amounts of data are collected from schools, there is room to strengthen the analysis and mobilisation of such information to optimise the use of these data for system monitoring and improvement. There is a range of options that could be considered to ensure more effective use of existing information by key actors in the education system. Simple options include ensuring that data is used effectively for transition management between schools and analysing data at the level of the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education. Such improvements in reporting have the potential to improve the interconnections among schools and between schools and regional and national jurisdictions in education.

Establish a protocol for data sharing

To ensure smooth transitions of students from one level from the next, schools need to identify the types of information that they would like to obtain from their feeder schools as well as the data they could report upwards to the next level of education. Good reporting on students' previous accomplishments can help create coherence in students' educational trajectories. It may contribute to easing transitions while saving a lot of time in assessment of prerequisites when entering a new level of education. Passing information back to feeder schools can also help them analyse how well they are preparing students for future learning.

The Ministry of Education could support schools in the process of identifying the most suitable types and formats of data to ease transitions for students. This could be done through a consultation or survey of stakeholders regarding data needs and could result in developing a protocol for data sharing. Such a consultation could also reveal professional development needs related to the collection and passage of data. As Absolum *et al.* (2009) have put it: "teachers also need to know how to gather the assessment information that other stakeholders require, and how to pass it on in ways that are consistent with, and supportive of, student learning." The development of the Student Record Transfer initiative provides a timely opportunity to conduct such a consultation on data needs and principles of data sharing.

Envisage data collection, analysis and use as a collaborative process

As Tolley and Shulruf (2009) point out, to optimise the use of data across the education system it is essential that schools are not merely seen as data providers but that they become part of a collaborative process of data sharing and analysis. This means that information would not just flow upwards to the Ministry of Education but that feedback would also flow from the educational administration back to schools.

The Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education could possibly take on such a feedback role. As they are closer to the local level than the national Ministry Office, the Regional Offices could use school reporting data as a basis for engaging in meaningful discussions with schools and Boards of Trustees. In 2006, only 19% of secondary principals said that their annual reports were followed by professional discussions with the Ministry, whereas another 35% would like such discussions (Wylie, 2009).

To further strengthen the role of Regional Offices, the Ministry could also consider disaggregating system-level data by region so as to allow a more fine-grained analysis of geographical differences. The Regional Offices could thus provide information to schools as to how they compare to other schools with similar student populations in the same area or region. Such work should be based on consultations with Regional Office staff concerning the type of data that would be most useful for analysing education issues at a regional level.

Clarify the use of standards-referenced reporting in system monitoring

Throughout discussions with stakeholder groups, the OECD review team noted a lack of clarity around the use of standards reporting in system monitoring. While National Standards intend to provide a nationally standardised measure of students' foundation skills, assessment practices vary between schools (ERO, 2007; Wylie and Hodgen, 2010). If the standards information is to be used to monitor academic outcomes at the national

level, further steps need to be taken to ensure that the assessment information is indeed nationally consistent. There are a range of options for the Ministry of Education to support schools in making reliable and consistent assessments against the standards.

First, the introduction of National Standards could be used as an opportunity to focus further attention on building assessment capacity across the primary school system. It will take substantial training and support for teachers to make reliable assessments within the new framework given by the standards. This requires further investment in providing professional development opportunities which support teachers' capacity to assess students specifically in the context of the National Standards. Also, it would be helpful to establish feedback channels for teachers to report on how the National Standards work for them in practice, and where they would suggest improvements. New Zealand's experience with the introduction of NCEA has shown that it takes time, professional support and collaboration to build collective understanding of evidence for standards-based assessment (Wylie and Hodgen, 2010).

Second, consideration should also be given to developing further tools that teachers can draw on for their assessment practice. As mentioned above, the introduction of the National Standards poses new challenges to the existing assessment instruments. It is essential to clarify the role of the existing range of assessment tools in relation to the new National Standards. It would be helpful to ensure that the benchmarks of National Standards are more closely aligned with the progression levels and measurement scales of the existing assessment tools. The range of exemplar materials in particular subject areas and year levels could also be expanded.

Third, the national authorities should encourage and support systematic moderation procedures linked to the reporting on standards. External moderation is key to ensure reliability and validity of teacher judgements against standards and can provide opportunities for rich discussion among teachers. In their first evaluation report on the implementation of National Standards, ERO (2010a) reported that two-thirds of schools had some internal moderation processes in place and that "some" of these schools were also working with others on moderation. However, 18% of schools were just beginning to look at moderation and 15% had not yet considered how to moderate teacher judgements.

Finally, national level reporting of standards should not take away attention from the array of existing national monitoring tools. The standard reporting information should not be seen as stand-alone but be complemented with other available measures of student learning outcomes, including international assessments, NEMP, ERO thematic reviews and broader school reporting information.

Notes

1. In Māori-medium schools, NEMP was used from 1999, but it was discontinued in 2005, essentially because the items had not been adapted to a Māori context. A new national monitoring study for Māori-medium education is currently being developed.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Education system context

New Zealand offers inclusive schooling for an increasingly diverse student population

New Zealand's schools offer inclusive education for all students in their local area regardless of the students' level of impairment or educational need. Schools are comprehensive at all levels and few distinctions are made between academic and vocational programmes. The country has a bicultural and bilingual Māori and European heritage which is reflected in the provision of Māori-medium education and, more broadly, the development of education pathways that support and encourage Māori language and culture. Schools also cater to an increasingly diverse student population, with over half of the school-age population expected to identify with multiple and non-European ethnic heritages within the next five years. *The New Zealand Curriculum* states its commitment to strong equity principles, including valuing cultural diversity and inclusion of all students in a non-sexist, non-racist and non-discriminatory way. For evaluation and assessment, this implies that approaches at all levels are expected to consider and respond to individual learner needs and school community contexts.

National priorities relate to further improving performance of all New Zealanders while closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performers

The performance of New Zealand students is significantly above the OECD average in all areas assessed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2009). But while on average New Zealand students are among the top performers in the world, there is a large dispersion of achievement scores. Performance differences are most pronounced *within* schools rather than between schools. This indicates that greater efforts are necessary to adapt education to needs of highly diverse learners within the comprehensive school. While some Māori and Pasifika students show high performance, Māori and Pasifika students are over-represented at the lower end of the performance distribution. The key priorities for schooling outlined in the Ministry of Education's Statement of Intent (2010-2011) relate to lifting student achievement in literacy and numeracy, all young people achieving worthwhile qualifications and ensuring that Māori students achieve education success "as Māori". Evaluation and assessment are a key element in the national strategy to improve performance and raise equity in education.

Responsibility for school education is highly devolved

New Zealand has one of the most devolved school systems in the world. As part of a major administrative restructuring, the 1988 Tomorrow's Schools reforms devolved responsibility for the management of individual schools to Boards of Trustees consisting of elected members from the school community. Boards of Trustees hold a wide range of responsibilities including strategic management, school self-review, employment of staff and appraisal of the school principal. Boards of Trustees, together with the principal and school staff, are also in charge of developing and implementing the local curriculum. As the national curriculum sets out key competencies and achievement objectives for each of eight learning areas rather than prescribing curriculum content, self-managing schools have a large amount of freedom and flexibility in designing their own teaching programmes to fit the needs of their local student population. In line with the overall governance model, responsibilities for evaluation and assessment are also highly devolved, with school leaders, teachers and students playing a key role in measuring their own performance and progress to inform self-improvement.

Strengths and challenges***New Zealand has a coherent national agenda for evaluation and assessment but some components could be better aligned***

The key purposes and principles of evaluation and assessment in New Zealand are well articulated. The national evaluation and assessment agenda is solidly based on research evidence and characterised by a high degree of coherence. Particularly positive features include the strong emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment, the commitment to respond to diverse learner needs and the focus on evidence-based policy and practice. Clear learning goals and performance expectations are provided in the curriculum, the National Standards, the national qualifications framework, teacher standards and indicators for school review. However, while each of the different components of evaluation and assessment are well developed, there is no policy document or written strategy on the overall framework for evaluation and assessment. Hence, it is not always clear how evaluation and assessment at student, teacher, school and system level are intended to link together and be complementary. There are a number of linkages or articulations between different elements of the evaluation and assessment framework that could be further strengthened. These include articulations between the National Standards, the national curriculum and student assessment; the coherence between two different sets of teaching standards; linkages between teacher appraisal and school evaluation; and the articulation of school reporting with school evaluation and education system monitoring.

Evaluation and assessment build on trust and collaboration, but there are challenges in ensuring consistency of practices

New Zealand has developed its own distinctive model of evaluation and assessment that is characterised by a high level of trust in schools and school professionals. Teachers carry the prime responsibility for student assessment, have a good degree of ownership of their own appraisal and are also strongly involved in school self-review. Students are

engaged in self-and peer-assessment and encouraged to provide feedback for school evaluation purposes. In recent years, schools' own self-review has become the centre piece of school evaluation while the Education Review Office (ERO) provides an external validation of the process. The development of the national evaluation and assessment agenda has been characterised by strong collaborative work, as opposed to prescriptions being imposed from above. As can be expected from such a devolved approach, ensuring consistency in the implementation of national evaluation and assessment policies is a challenge. There is evidence that while schools are obliged to have assessment, appraisal and evaluation approaches in place, there is large variation in the extent to which these processes are effective and aligned.

School self-management encourages professionalism but requires ongoing investment in capacity building

School autonomy and self-management create good conditions for school leader and teacher professionalism and continue to be strongly valued by school leaders. This governance structure recognises that schools know their contexts best and allows professionals to adopt a diversity of evaluation and assessment practices, thereby creating conditions for innovation and system evolution. At the same time, there is increasing concern about the complexity and breadth of school leaders' and teachers' responsibilities regarding evaluation and assessment, requiring a new set of skills which many may not have acquired in their initial training. Boards of Trustees also play a key role in planning, reporting and self-review tasks but their preparedness and capacity to fulfil this role is highly variable. The effectiveness of the overall evaluation and assessment framework depends to a large extent on whether those who evaluate and those who use evaluation results at the different levels of the system have the appropriate competencies. In the context of self-management, individual schools can be relatively isolated and may have limited opportunities for learning from effective practice from across the region or the country. Continuing to build the capacity of teachers, school leaders and Boards of Trustees for effective evaluation and assessment remains a priority.

Student assessment is designed to improve teaching and learning, but there is room to optimise assessment for diverse learners

Assessment in New Zealand is conceived as an integral part of quality teaching and learning and focuses less on summative end point testing. Effective assessment is described by the Ministry of Education as a circle of inquiry, decision making, adaptation and transformation – it should be “a process of learning, for learning”. Whether assessment improves learning depends to a large extent on the quality of interactions between teachers and students. In this respect, New Zealand's strong focus on the importance of helping all students achieve is a major strength. At the same time, there is still room to optimise assessments for students with diverse educational needs. While inclusive assessment practice exists in many schools, there is evidence that some schools struggle to provide adequate assessment opportunities for students with special educational needs. As New Zealand's demographics have changed and resulted in a diversification of its population, it is also important that teachers are sensitive to cultural and linguistic aspects of learning and assessment. In addition, there is a need to develop a wider range of assessment tools particularly adapted to Māori-medium education.

Teachers in New Zealand have the prime responsibility for student assessment, which requires ongoing investment in teachers' assessment capacity

New Zealand's assessment approach is based on a firm belief in teacher professionalism. Instead of implementing high-stakes national assessments to monitor student achievement and progress, the New Zealand strategy aims to build teacher capacity and provide teachers with a range of assessment tools to help them make their own professional judgements about student performance. This approach is expected to avoid some of the potential negative consequences of high-stakes testing such as curriculum narrowing, assessment anxiety and teaching to the test. At the same time, there is evidence that primary schools still vary greatly in the way they choose to deliver the curriculum, assess student results and report to parents. While this may allow schools to respond and adapt quickly to local priorities, it also raises problems regarding the fairness and consistency of assessment. A significant proportion of teachers are still at an early stage of developing their professional judgement in relation to National Standards and there is room to enhance their skills in effective reporting and communication about student learning and progress.

While National Standards respond to a specific need in primary education, there are concerns about their design and implementation

The National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were developed to respond to some of the challenges related to the wide disparity in student achievement and ensuring consistency of student assessment in primary education. They are intended to provide reference points for schools to be used in conjunction with their own assessment practices and to support teachers in making reliable judgements about student learning. Schools are also required to ensure adequate reporting to students and parents in relation to the standards. While the purpose of improving assessment and reporting practice is broadly shared across the education system, there is concern about the design and implementation of the National Standards. Teacher capacity still needs to be built for standards-based reporting to be reliable and it will take some time to develop the expertise and moderation arrangements to make nationally comparable judgements based on the standards. As a new piece that needs to be fitted into the primary education system, the National Standards also need to be embedded into schools' work with the national curriculum and require mutual adjustments with existing tools and approaches to student assessment.

Teaching standards provide reference points for effective teacher appraisal, but the existence of two different sets of standards may send conflicting messages

Teaching standards are a key element in any teacher appraisal system as they provide credible reference points for making judgements about teacher competence. Standards also offer the potential to frame the organisation of the teaching profession including initial teacher education, teacher registration, professional development, career advancement and teacher appraisal. New Zealand has two sets of teaching standards: Registered Teacher Criteria are used in the appraisal for teachers to gain or renew registration to teach, and professional standards are used as part of the employer's

performance management processes for salary progression and professional learning. While having well-developed teaching standards is a strength of the system, the co-existence of two different sets of standards risks sending conflicting messages about what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at different stages of their careers. In schools, there is often a lack of clarity about the respective purpose and use of each of the standards and, in practice, school management personnel may “amalgamate” the two sets of standards for performance management purposes.

While teacher appraisal processes are well established, there is need to strengthen links to professional development and career progression

Teacher registration processes are well established and serve to ensure that every school in New Zealand is staffed with teachers who meet agreed standards for teaching practice. Teacher appraisal as part of regular performance management processes also appears to be consolidated; it has essentially an improvement function with emphasis on teacher professional development but also serves as an attestation for salary progression. Teacher appraisal, in its different forms, is school-based and seems to be well ingrained in schools’ cultures. However, some aspects of teacher appraisal require further policy attention. First, the limited extent of input that is external to the school and moderation might not be adequate as teachers are fully dependent on local capacity and willingness to benefit from opportunities to improve their practice, see their professional development recognised and gain greater responsibility. Second, teacher appraisal could be more systematically linked to professional development opportunities. The organisation of teacher professional development varies across schools, depending in large part on school leadership. Third, there is currently no clear alignment between teaching standards, registration processes and the career structure, which may reduce the incentive for teachers to improve their competencies.

The approach to school evaluation is strongly collaborative, but perceptions of purpose are not yet fully consistent across the system

New Zealand has probably gone furthest among countries internationally towards a collaborative school evaluation model. The basic premise is that schools are best placed to analyse their own contexts and that the Education Review Office (ERO) provides an external perspective to validate or challenge the schools’ own findings. The current focus of ERO’s work is to ensure that school self-review and external review are complementary and mutually reinforcing processes. Complementing self-review by external review adds an element of distance from the internal dynamics of the school and provides the kind of perspective and challenge to assumptions and interpretations which can lead to greater rigour in the process.

At the same time, there are inevitably tensions to be confronted between ERO’s multiple accountabilities and its improvement purpose. For example, an aspect of ERO’s accountability to government is the gathering of information on the implementation and efficacy of government policies in schools visited. What may become salient in a review will depend on, and reflect, the government’s current interests. Although schools have a responsibility as Crown Entities to deliver the education priorities of the government of the day they may perceive an element of uncertainty about what will be focused on in a review, with respect to political and policy change.

The strong focus on building schools' self-review capacity is commendable and needs to be sustained

In common with systems elsewhere which are moving toward proportional review, New Zealand's differentiated review cycle is exemplary in taking account of the educational health of schools. ERO's differentiated approach recognises that while a school might promote high levels of student achievement, this is unlikely to be sustained in the longer term without effective self-review. Serious concerns about a school's self-review performance will result in an ongoing longitudinal review designed to help schools build their evaluative capacity. ERO also offers workshops and professional development opportunities to build the capacity of ERO reviewers, school professionals and Boards of Trustees. While the strong focus on self-review is commendable, there are indications that further work is necessary to ensure consistently effective self-review practices. Some schools struggle to collect, analyse and interpret student assessment data effectively for improvement and school leaders may have limited opportunities to learn from effective practice elsewhere. High expectations are also placed on Boards of Trustees members, many of whom have no background in education and little expertise in data analysis. The degree to which school leaders receive constructive support through appraisal processes is also variable.

School reporting does not appear well integrated in the evaluation and assessment framework

Schools are required to establish annual strategic planning and reporting cycles and report on their progress to the Ministry of Education. The annual reporting process is seen by some as useful in bringing a range of school data together in one document, but there is a need to clarify the purpose of this type of reporting information at different levels of the system. It appears that school annual planning and reporting cycles are not well aligned with other elements of the evaluation and assessment framework. Schools do not generally receive feedback on their reports either from the Education Review Office or the Ministry of Education in a way as to support them in their internal evaluation and further planning. While ERO's reviews focus on schools' self-review capacity, they do not systematically build on schools' annual reporting processes. Also, the reports are not systematically used by Boards of Trustees in the appraisal of school principals. Moreover, the use of school reporting information for system evaluation is limited as the reports are highly variable in format, content and quality.

There is a lack of clarity about the use of standards reporting for school and system evaluation

From 2012/13, schools will have to include information on their students' results in relation to standards in their annual reports, which raises additional questions about how this new reporting information will feed into school- and system-level evaluation. There is widespread concern that schools might be judged and compared based on their students' results against the standards. This is considered inappropriate because the standard reporting does not give information about students' rates of progress or value added by schools. The simple information about the number of students above and below the standard, disconnected from other sources of evidence, provides little insight about the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Also, while National Standards intend to provide a nationally standardised measure of students' foundation skills, assessment

practices vary between schools. If the standards information is to be used to monitor academic outcomes at the national level, further steps need to be taken to ensure that the assessment information is indeed nationally consistent.

The education system sets clear strategic objectives and monitors system performance over time, but there are still a few data gaps

An important strength of the New Zealand approach to education system evaluation is the clarity of strategic objectives, coupled with transparent frameworks for reporting on progress and performance. The Ministry of Education sets priorities through its annual Statement of Intent and an Education Indicators Framework has been developed to analyse the state of the education system and monitor trends over time. There are also national education strategies defining system-level goals for particular student groups, such as the Māori Education Strategy, the Pasifika Education Plan and the Disability Strategy. Information about education system performance is collected through a range of tools including sample-based international and national assessments, school roll returns and thematic reviews on particular schooling issues and priorities. ERO publishes Education Evaluation Reports on national education issues that inform both policy and practice. The richness of data available in New Zealand is commendable. There is still a need for more fine-grained data in specific key areas including students' and teachers' linguistic backgrounds. While New Zealand collects data on the three major ethnic groups, as the information system evolves it would also be of interest to further disaggregate data on the achievement and progress of different Pasifika groups and other cultural groups.

Education system evaluation monitors student outcomes while avoiding high-stakes testing

The education system aims to make the best use of student assessment data to inform decision making at all levels while limiting possible negative impacts of high-stakes assessment. Instead of testing a whole student cohort every year, New Zealand monitors education system performance through sample-based assessments that do not carry high stakes for individual students, teachers or schools. High quality information on student learning outcomes in all curriculum areas is collected from the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) in primary education and from assessment for qualifications (NCEA) in secondary education. These assessments cover a wide range of curriculum goals and emphasise authentic and performance-based items, including group work, hands-on tasks and project work. While it can be challenging to score such open-ended tasks reliably, New Zealand has put in place strong tools and training for assessors and a range of moderation mechanisms that ensure the consistency of national assessment results. However, NEMP was discontinued in Māori immersion schools and hence, there is currently insufficient national level information on the learning outcomes of students enrolled in the Māori-medium sector. The national monitoring system will also need to be adjusted to match recent changes such as the introduction of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and National Standards.

Policy recommendations

Further strengthen consistency between different components of evaluation and assessment

To optimise complementarity, avoid duplication and prevent inconsistencies of evaluation practices at different levels of the system, the New Zealand authorities could consider developing an overall mapping or framework for the entire evaluation and assessment system. The idea would not be to introduce a new strategy or approach to evaluation and assessment, but to take stock of existing research syntheses, position papers, standards and indicators to integrate them in a coherent and concise framework. The overarching goal would be to propose a higher level of integration and coherence of the different components of evaluation and assessment. The outcome of such a mapping process could be a concise document providing a framework for evaluation and assessment approaches at student, teacher, school and system level. This framework could outline how the different elements are interrelated and describe for each individual component (1) the purpose and goals of the process, (2) evidence-based principles of effective practice, (3) available tools and reference standards for implementation, and (4) reporting requirements and/or intended use of results. The process of developing such a framework document of evaluation and assessment levels would provide an opportunity to analyse the various linkages between different components and identify missing links and articulations in need of strengthening.

Develop regionally based structures to support schools' evaluation and assessment practices

Bringing together national strategies and school practices is challenging in New Zealand's highly devolved education system. More locally or regionally based structures for school development could provide support that responds to local needs while helping to develop more consistently effective practice across New Zealand. A major step in this direction would be to reinforce the school support role of Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education. Being closer to the local level than the national Ministry, the Regional Offices could offer high quality advice to school professionals and support them in using their planning and reporting structures for continuous improvement. An important aspect of such a regional structure would be to establish collective knowledge-building and sharing so as to facilitate innovation and system learning. A regional school support structure could also serve as a platform for school leaders in the same area to collaborate and work towards a systematic approach to evaluation and assessment. These suggestions are in line with recent developments to strengthen the regional role of the Ministry of Education, such as the establishment of a “Student Achievement Function” within the regions of the Ministry of Education.

Continue to build and strengthen teacher capacity for effective student assessment

Because student assessment plays such an important role at all levels of the education system, the needs for the development of teachers' professional assessment skills are large. School professionals need to develop not only the capacity to use, interpret and follow up on results obtained from nationally provided assessment tools, but also to

develop valid and reliable assessment tools to meet their own specific local needs. Initial teacher training and professional learning opportunities need to provide teachers with expertise and skills to be innovative in the design of personalised assessment approaches that respond to the diversity of learner profiles within the comprehensive school. Teachers also need to be trained to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic aspects of learning when assessing students from diverse backgrounds. Skills for communicating assessment results effectively without oversimplifying the complex issues involved in student learning are also essential. Exemplars of good practice in data collection, reporting and communication should be provided nationally to make sure some minimal requirements are met. Central agencies could consider developing a unique set of teachers' competencies in assessment to set clear targets for teacher initial training and professional development in this area.

Enhance school capacity in the collection, analysis and interpretation of school-wide data

Alongside general training in assessment literacy, effort should be directed towards increasing the skills of school staff in the use and interpretation of data for school improvement. Schools need to be further supported in their approaches to collecting school-wide assessment data and in disaggregating data for relevant sub-groups including different ethnic and language groups. More emphasis should also be placed on using data to monitor the effectiveness of school programmes, initiatives and teaching approaches for different sub-groups of students. There is also a need to focus on helping schools interpret and translate evaluative information into action. Boards of Trustees play a key role in school evaluation and need to develop the capacity to understand, interpret and make decisions based on school results. They should be supported through learning opportunities that help demystify data, make data more user-friendly and give Boards confidence to hold “courageous conversations” with their principal.

Further develop and embed the National Standards within the New Zealand assessment system

There are a range of options for the Ministry of Education to work towards embedding the standards over time and support schools in making reliable and consistent assessments against the standards. First, the introduction of National Standards should be used as an opportunity to further focus attention on building assessment capacity across the primary school system. This requires ongoing investment in professional development opportunities that support teachers' capacity to assess students specifically in the context of the National Standards. Second, it is essential to clarify the role of the existing assessment tools in relation to the new National Standards. It would be helpful to ensure that the benchmarks of National Standards are more closely aligned with the progression levels and measurement scales of the existing assessment tools. There is also a need to properly align primary school standards with those of secondary school so as to facilitate transitions for students. Third, the national authorities should encourage and support systematic moderation procedures linked to the reporting on standards. Moderation can improve the dependability of overall teacher judgements and remediation strategies while also providing valuable professional learning for teachers. Fourth, it would be helpful to establish feedback channels for teachers to report on how the National Standards work for them in practice, and where they would suggest improvements. Finally, while it is

important to further embed the National Standards in the assessment system, it is essential to sustain work on learning progressions in subject matters other than literacy and numeracy.

Consolidate teaching standards as a basis for career-progression appraisal

A framework of teaching standards is essential as a reference point for teacher appraisal. The current co-existence of two sets of teaching standards in the country as well as the lack of clarity about their respective use call for their consolidation into a single set of standards so there is a clear shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching. The consolidated standards should describe competencies for different roles and career steps of teachers. This would recognise the variety of responsibilities in today's schools, and teachers' acquired knowledge, skill sets and expertise developed while on the job. Alignment between teaching standards and a career structure for teachers would then allow teacher registration to be conceived as career-progression appraisal. This should include an element of externality such as an accredited external evaluator, be based on classroom observation and a range of data required to demonstrate teacher effectiveness and take into consideration the teacher's own views.

Strengthen developmental appraisal as part of performance management and ensure it is linked to professional development and school development

Given that there are risks in bringing together both accountability and improvement functions in a single teacher appraisal process, it is recommended that teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes is conceived as predominantly for improvement (developmental appraisal). This developmental appraisal would be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers, and the school principal, but the process would need to be strengthened and validated externally. It should include self-appraisal, peer appraisal, classroom observation, and structured conversations and regular feedback by the school principal and experienced peers. The main outcome would be feedback on the performance of the teacher which would lead to a plan for professional development. To ensure effective school-based teacher appraisal, it is important to build capacity in appraisal methods by preparing members of the management group or expert teachers to undertake specific appraisal functions within the school. It is also important to reinforce the linkages between teacher professional development and school development. The schools that associate identified individual needs with school priorities, and that also manage to develop the corresponding professional development activities, are likely to perform well.

Include a focus on teacher appraisal in school evaluation processes

Given that the systems of school evaluation and teacher appraisal have both the objectives of maintaining standards and improving student performance, there are likely to be great benefits from the synergies between school evaluation and teacher appraisal. To achieve the greatest impact, the focus of school evaluation should either be linked to or have an effect on the focus of teacher appraisal. This indicates that school evaluation

should comprise the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. This is already the case in ERO’s school reviews through the choice of “effective teaching” as one of the six dimensions of effective practice, the comment on teacher quality overall in the school, classroom observations, and the dialogue with teachers. School evaluation could also play a role in guaranteeing that systematic and coherent developmental appraisal is conducted in all schools across New Zealand. An option is that ERO reviews, in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, include the review of the processes in place to organise developmental appraisal, holding the school’s Board of Trustees accountable as necessary. This would ensure that minimum standards for developmental teacher appraisal are met and that every teacher receives proper professional feedback.

Strengthen school leadership for effective teacher appraisal and school self-review

Schools also need to build appropriate expertise related to effective teacher appraisal and school self-review. Given the key role of school leadership in New Zealand’s devolved education context, it is difficult to envisage either effective teacher appraisal or productive school self-review without strong leadership capacity. Hence, the recruitment, development and support for school leaders is of key importance in creating and sustaining strong school evaluation cultures. There is a need to continue building the credibility and competencies of all school leaders with an educational focus so that they can lead self-review processes and operate effective feedback and coaching arrangements for their staff. Alongside extending access to professional development programmes for all those who exercise a leadership role, other elements of the national strategy might include broad dissemination to school leaders of resources and support for whole school review, including the direct evaluation of instructional practice and the strategic planning of teacher professional development. Further enhancing the performance appraisal of school leadership is also important to provide leaders with external feedback, identifying areas of needed improvement and offering targeted support to improve practice.

Maintain an emphasis on the improvement function of school evaluation

It is a challenge to find the perfect balance in school evaluation between the collaborative use of data for school improvement and the use of data for accountability. The policy implications are to maintain and reinforce the improvement focus and to help schools develop a strong sense of internal accountability through which it becomes easier for them to have a credible story to tell to external bodies. As the cornerstone of the quality assurance system, self-review needs both consolidation and enhancing. Learning to measure what is valued should be modelled and promoted by the Ministry and ERO. Ongoing support is needed to ensure that professionals in schools have the capacity to conduct effective self-review covering the whole breadth of the curriculum and focus on raising learning outcomes in all the areas it covers. Capacity for school evaluation and improvement could also be strengthened by involving practitioners integrally in the role of peer evaluators or participating in ERO review teams. The education system could draw on the expertise of principals and school staff from leading-edge schools to engage them as change agents working with other schools to build good practice across the system.

Support schools' collaboration with improvement partners and other schools to develop their self-review work

While self-review may suggest an internal self-sufficient process, there is strong evidence internationally as well as in New Zealand that schools benefit from the support and challenge of a critical friend. Working with an “experienced other”, such as a professional development provider or in-school leader of professional learning, is likely to result in deeper learning. At policy level, such arrangements may be either strongly encouraged or institutionalised. There is also much potential for schools to collaborate and learn from each other in the process of school evaluation. Providing funding for clusters of schools to work collaboratively would provide an incentive and stimulate collegial networking, peer exchange, sharing and critiquing of practice, fostering a sense of common direction. A starting point could be with principals working together to identify common challenges, devising common strategies and approaches to peer evaluation. The process would benefit from the appointment of an external facilitator or critical friend chosen and agreed by the principals themselves. Within such clusters of schools, professional learning communities of leaders and teachers from neighbouring schools could pool existing data from a range of schools and build a collective understanding of how to interpret such outcome data.

Ensure that school annual reporting is used effectively for school evaluation and education system evaluation

Given a significant level of dissatisfaction with annual reporting by schools, the nature and use of these reports should be revisited. There is a need to closely examine the relative costs and benefits of different forms of reporting and the form that teachers and school leaders would find most productive. If self-review and ERO reviews are both formative, the annual review should reflect ways in which they have contributed to professional development and school improvement. There is a need to bring clarity as to whose interests annual reports are designed to serve. To optimise the use of the data brought together by schools in their annual reports, it would be important that the reports are not merely used as provider of data for higher levels of the educational administration, but that schools also receive useful feedback based on the information provided. The reports could be used as a basis for Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education to engage in discussion with schools and Boards of Trustees. There is also a need to strengthen the alignment between school annual reporting, school self-review and ERO reviews. If the annual reports are to be used for education system monitoring, there is a need to ensure greater consistency in the format and content of the reports across schools.

Clarify the ways in which information from national standards reporting will be used

Resistance to National Standards partly stems from concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the use of the information from standards-based reporting by the national authorities. It is of utmost importance to clarify what kind of information standards-based reporting can and cannot provide, who should have access to the information and what uses of the information are considered appropriate. For the purpose of reporting to parents, consideration should be given to introducing a nuanced reporting system that describes different levels of individual student achievement and progress, rather than just a cut-off point for determining whether students are above or below the standards. For the

purpose of school evaluation, it should be ensured that the information from standards reporting is actually used and useful for schools in reviewing their progress and improving teaching and learning approaches. At the same time, it is essential to ensure that the focus of National Standards on literacy and numeracy does not marginalise other learning areas where measurement of school performance and progress is more challenging. For the purpose of national system monitoring, appropriate moderation arrangements need to be in place to ensure that the reporting information is reliable and nationally consistent.

Continue to broaden the collection of data on diverse learner groups to monitor education system progress

In order to continue to meet information needs to adequately monitor progress towards national education goals, it is important to strengthen the information system regarding diverse groups of students. This could involve further disaggregating information on different sub-groups of Pasifika students and other ethnic groups in regions where such information is relevant. The immediate priority is to ensure better monitoring information towards the Ministry’s strategic goal of “Māori achieving education success as Māori.” This requires collecting data on student learning outcomes in Māori-medium schools and settings. Implementing a revised version of NEMP in Māori-medium settings has the potential to produce highly valuable system-level information. To design adequate strategies for second language learners, the Ministry should consider gathering more information on students’ linguistic profiles. In particular, it would be useful to begin collecting data on the languages students speak at home and proficiency in their first and second language. More comprehensive data on the linguistic profiles of students would be helpful in designing a language strategy at the national level and making decisions about specific resources and support allocated to second language learners.

Annex A. The OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

The OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes is designed to respond to the strong interest in evaluation and assessment issues evident at national and international levels. It provides a description of design, implementation and use of assessment and evaluation procedures in countries; analyses strengths and weaknesses of different approaches; and provides recommendations for improvement. The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation frameworks that countries use with the objective of improving student outcomes. These include student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and system evaluation. The Review focuses on primary and secondary education.¹

The overall purpose is to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education.² The overarching policy question is “How can assessment and evaluation policies work together more effectively to improve student outcomes in primary and secondary schools?” The Review further concentrates on five key issues for analysis: (i) Designing a systemic framework for evaluation and assessment; (ii) Ensuring the effectiveness of evaluation and assessment procedures; (iii) Developing competencies for evaluation and for using feedback; (iv) Making the best use of evaluation results; and (v) Implementing evaluation and assessment policies.

Twenty-three countries are actively engaged in the Review. These cover a wide range of economic and social contexts, and among them they illustrate quite different approaches to evaluation and assessment in school systems. This will allow a comparative perspective on key policy issues. These countries prepare a detailed background report, following a standard set of guidelines. Countries can also opt for a detailed Review, undertaken by a team consisting of members of the OECD Secretariat and external experts. Twelve OECD countries have opted for a Country Review. The final comparative report from the OECD Review, bringing together lessons from all countries, will be completed in 2012.

The project is overseen by the Group of National Experts on Evaluation and Assessment, which was established as a subsidiary body of the OECD Education Policy Committee in order to guide the methods, timing and principles of the Review. More details are available from the website dedicated to the Review: www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

Notes

1. The scope of the Review does not include early childhood education and care, apprenticeships within vocational education and training, and adult education.
2. The project's purposes and scope are detailed in the OECD 2009 document entitled "OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Design and Implementation Plan for the Review", which is available from the project website www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

Annex B. Visit programme (23-30 August 2010)

	Monday 23rd	Tuesday 24th	Wednesday 25th	Thursday 26th	Friday 27th	Monday 30th
	Agencies & Research		Sector		Stakeholders	System Perspective
8.00	8.30 Secretary for Education Deputy Secretary Schooling	8.15 Ministry: Research, Evaluation and System Strategy			8.30 School Trustees Association	8.30 Independent schools
9.00	Ministry: Assessment, Qualifications & Teaching/ Workforce	New Zealand Council for Educational Research			9.30 New Zealand Education Institute	9.15-10.00 State Services, Treasury, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
10.00	Ministry: Senior Leadership Team	New Zealand Assessment Academy			10.30 Post Primary Teachers Association	10.15 Career Services/ Employers
11.00	Teachers Council				11.30 Primary Principals Federation	11.30 Preliminary impressions: Leadership Team & Chief Executives
12.00			Travel to Hamilton		12.30 Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools	
13.00	12.30-14.30 Education Review Office	12.00-14.30 Integrated Secondary School Visit St Catherine's College Kilbirnie			13.30 Special Education	12.30-15.00 Secondary School Visit Newlands College
14.00			Te Wharekura o Rakaumangamanga		14.30 Secondary Principals	
15.00	National Education Monitoring Project		Rahui Pokeka Huntly	Initial Teacher Education Hamilton Ministry of Education	15.30 Catholic Education Office	15.30 Meeting with Minister of Education
16.00	New Zealand Qualifications Authority	Flight to Auckland		Hamilton Ministry of Education	16.30 Pasifika Group	End of Review
17.00			Māori Academics/ Practitioners			
18.00		Pasifika Fono Ministry of Education	Hamilton Ministry of Education			
19.00	Dinner Secretary for Education			Flight to Wellington		
	Wellington	Auckland	Hamilton	Wellington	Wellington	Wellington

Annex C. Composition of the review team

Dany Laveault, a Canadian national, is Full Professor of Measurement and Evaluation at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa (1991). From 1993 to 2001, he was Director of the international French-language journal *Mesure et évaluation en education*. In 1995, he received the annual prize for exceptional contributions to measurement in education from the Association for the Development of Educational Evaluation Methodologies (ADMÉÉ). From 1998 to 2002, he was vice Dean of research at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. In 2002, he was appointed co-president of an expert committee on literacy teaching by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Since 2003, he has worked as an expert consultant on evaluation for the Education Quality and Accountability Office of Ontario. He is currently working on a three-year project on “Self-evaluation and regulation of learning in minority environments” supported by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

John MacBeath, a British national, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Cambridge where he has held the Chair of Educational Leadership since 2000. He is currently Projects Director for the Commonwealth Centre in Education. From 1997 to 2001 he was a member of the Tony Blair’s Task Force on Standards and from 1997 to 1999 Scotland’s Action Group on Standards. In 1997 he received the OBE for services to education. International consultancies have included OECD, UNESCO and ILO, the Bertelsmann Foundation, the European Commission and an EU working party on European indicators. In 2006 he assumed the Presidency of the International Congress on School Effectiveness and Improvement. In June 2008 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Edinburgh. Since 1997, he has been a consultant to the Hong Kong Education Bureau on school self-evaluation, external school review and on implementation of the new 3-3-4 reform.

Deborah Nusche, a German national, is a Policy Analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education. She is currently working on the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. With the OECD since 2007, she previously worked on the thematic reviews on Education and Diversity and Improving School Leadership. As part of these two studies, she has led several country reviews and case study visits in a range of OECD countries. She also co-authored the OECD reports *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students* (2010) and *Improving School Leadership* (2008). She has previous work experience with UNESCO and the World Bank and holds an M.A. in International Affairs from Sciences Po Paris. She co-ordinated this review of New Zealand and acted as *Rapporteur* for the review team.

Paulo Santiago, a Portuguese national, is a Senior Analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education, where he has been since 2000. He is currently the co-ordinator of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. He has previously assumed responsibility for two major cross-country reviews, each with the participation of over twenty countries: a review of teacher policy (between 2002 and 2005, leading to the OECD publication *Teachers Matter*) and the thematic review of tertiary education (between 2005 and 2008, leading to the OECD publication *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society*). He has also led reviews of teacher policy and tertiary education policy in several countries. He holds a PhD in Economics from Northwestern University, United States, where he also lectured. With a background in the economics of education, he specialises in education policy analysis.

Annex D. Comparative indicators on evaluation and assessment

	New Zealand	Country Average ¹	New Zealand's Rank ²
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a) ³			
% of population that has attained at least upper secondary education, by age group (excluding ISCED 3C short programmes) ⁴ (2008)			
Ages 25-64	72	71	16/30
Ages 25-34	79	80	=21/30
Ages 35-44	74	75	=19/30
Ages 45-54	71	68	=11/30
Ages 55-64	62	58	=13/30
% of population that has attained tertiary education, by age group (2008)			
Ages 25-64	40	28	4/31
Ages 25-34	48	35	4/31
Ages 35-44	40	29	6/31
Ages 45-54	38	25	4/31
Ages 55-64	34	20	3/31
Upper secondary graduation rates (2008) % of upper secondary graduates (first-time graduation) to the population at the typical age of graduation			
	78	80	=16/26
STUDENT PERFORMANCE			
Mean performance in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA 2009 Results (OECD, 2010d) ³			
Reading literacy	521	493	4/34
Mathematics literacy	519	496	7/34
Science literacy	532	501	4/34
SCHOOL SYSTEM EXPENDITURE Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a) ³			
Expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary institutions as a % of GDP , from public and private sources			
1995	m	~	m
2000	m	~	m
2007	4.0	3.6	6/29
Public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education as a % of total public expenditure (2008) ⁵			
	11.7	9.0	4/29
Total expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education from public sources (2007) (%)			
	85.6	90.3	20/25
Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions , (2007) (USD) ⁶			
Primary	4675	6741	22/28
Lower secondary	5146	7598	22/26
Upper secondary	6828	8746	20/26
All secondary	5933	8267	23/28
Change in expenditure per student by educational institutions , primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, index of change between 1995, 2000 and 2007 (2000 = 100)			
1995	m	88	m
2007	m	125	m
Current expenditure – composition , primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (2007) ⁷			
Compensation of teachers	m	63.8	m
Compensation of other staff	m	14.9	m
Compensation of all staff	m	79.2	m
Other current expenditure	m	20.8	m

	New Zealand	Country Average ¹	New Zealand's Rank ²
SCHOOL STAFF NUMBERS			
Ratio of students to teaching staff (2008) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a)^{3,8}			
Primary	17.1	16.4	12/27
Lower Secondary	16.2	13.7	4/24
Upper Secondary	12.8	13.5	10/24
All Secondary	14.5	13.7	10/29
TEACHER SALARIES in public institutions, Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a) ³			
Annual teacher salaries (2008)⁶			
Primary – starting salary (USD)	25964	28949	22/29
Primary – 15 years experience (USD)	38412	39426	16/29
Primary – top of scale (USD)	38412	48022	21/29
Primary – ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	1.42	1.16	5/29
Lower secondary – starting salary (USD)	25964	30750	23/29
Lower secondary – 15 years experience (USD)	38412	41927	18/29
Lower secondary – top of scale (USD)	38412	50649	24/29
Lower secondary – ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	1.42	1.22	8/29
Upper secondary – starting salary (USD)	25964	32563	23/28
Upper secondary – 15 years experience (USD)	38412	45850	19/28
Upper secondary – top of scale (USD)	38412	54717	24/28
Upper secondary – ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	1.42	1.29	10/28
Number of years from starting to top salary (lower secondary education) (2008)	8	24	=25/27
Decisions on payments for teachers in public schools (2008)⁹			
Criteria for base salary and additional payments awarded to teachers in public institutions			
● Base salary/■ Additional yearly payment /Δ Additional incidental payment			
Years of experience as a teacher	● 29 ■ 9 Δ8		
Management responsibilities in addition to teaching duties	■ 12 ■ 18 Δ7		
Teaching more classes or hours than required by full-time contract	- ● 2 ■ 10 Δ17		
Special tasks (career guidance or counselling)	■ 4 ■ 13 Δ11		
Teaching in a disadvantaged, remote or high cost area (location allowance)	■ 9 ■ 18 Δ4		
Special activities (e.g. sports and drama clubs, homework clubs, summer schools etc.)	■ 1 ■ 8 Δ12		
Teaching students with special educational needs (in regular schools)	■ 9 ■ 11 Δ5		
Teaching courses in a particular field	■ 5 ■ 8 Δ4		
Holding an initial educational qualification higher than the minimum qualification required to enter the teaching profession	● 18 ■ 9 Δ5		
Holding a higher than minimum level of teacher certification or training obtained during professional life	● 15 ■ 11 Δ3		
Outstanding performance in teaching	■ 5 ■ 9 Δ8		
Successful completion of professional development activities	- ● 10 ■ 7 Δ4		
Reaching high scores in the qualification examination	- ● 4 ■ 3 Δ3		
Holding an educational qualification in multiple subjects	- ● 3 ■ 4 Δ3		
Family status (married, number of children)	- ● 2 ■ 8 Δ1		
Age (independent of years of teaching experience)	- ● 4 ■ 3 Δ1		
Other	■ 1 ■ 8 Δ2		
SYSTEM EVALUATION			
Examination regulations, public schools only (2008)			
Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a) ^{3,10}			
Primary education (Yes/No)			
A standard curriculum or partially standardised curriculum is required	Yes	27/29	
Mandatory national examination is required ¹¹	No	4/29	
Mandatory national assessment is required ¹²	Yes	19/29	
Lower secondary education (Yes/No)			
A standard curriculum or partially standardised curriculum is required	Yes	27/29	
Mandatory national examination is required	No	10/28	
Mandatory national assessment is required	Yes	18/29	

	New Zealand	Country Average ¹	New Zealand's Rank ²
Potential subjects of assessment at national examinations¹¹ (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008)^{3,10}			
National examinations exist (Yes/No)	No a	8/25 9/9	
Mathematics	a	9/9	
Science	a	7/9	
National language or language of instruction	a	9/9	
Other subjects	a	8/9	
Compulsory for schools to administer national examinations (Yes/No)	a	7/9	
Year/Grade of national examination	a	9.2	
Potential subjects of assessment at national periodical assessments¹² (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008)^{3,10}			
National periodical assessments (Yes/No)	No a	14/25 12/13	
Mathematics	a	12/13	
Science	a	5/13	
National language or language of instruction	a	12/13	
Other subjects	a	6/12	
Compulsory for school to administer national assessment (Yes/No)	a	10/13	
Year/Grade of national assessment	a		
Possible influence of national examinations (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008) ³			
None/Low/Moderate/High ¹³			
Performance feedback to the school	a	None:2 Low:1 Moderate:1 High:3	
Performance appraisal of the school management	a	None:4 Low:1 Moderate:1 High:1	
Performance appraisal of individual teachers	a	None:4 Low:2 Moderate:0 High:1	
The school budget	a	None:7 Low:1 Moderate:0 High:0	
The provision of another financial reward or sanction	a	None:7 Low:1 Moderate:0 High:0	
The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills	a	None:3 Low:0 Moderate:3 High:0	
Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers	a	None:7 Low:0 Moderate:0 High:0	
Likelihood of school closure	a	None:7 Low:0 Moderate:1 High:0	
Publication of results (Yes/No) ¹⁰	a	9/10	
Publication of tables that compare school performance (Yes/No)	a	2/10	
Possible influence of national periodical assessments (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008) ³			
None/Low/Moderate/High ¹³			
Performance feedback to the school	a	None:4 Low:1 Moderate:2 High:3	
Performance appraisal of the school management	a	None:6 Low:2 Moderate:1 High:0	
Performance appraisal of individual teachers	a	None:8 Low:1 Moderate:0 High:0	
The school budget	a	None:8 Low:1 Moderate:0 High:0	
The provision of another financial reward or sanction	a	None:9 Low:0 Moderate:0 High:0	
The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills	a	None:5 Low:1 Moderate:3 High:0	
Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers	a	None:9 Low:1 Moderate:0 High:0	
Likelihood of school closure	a	None:9 Low:0 Moderate:0 High:1	
Publication of results (Yes/No) ¹⁰	a	7/12	
Publication of tables that compare school performance (Yes/No)	a	2/12	
Use of achievement data for accountability (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where the principal reported that achievement data is used in the following procedures			
Posted publicly	77.3	36.4	3/33
Used in evaluation of the principal's performance	47.2	35.5	10/33
Used in evaluation of teachers' performance	46.7	44.2	13/33
Used in decisions about instructional resource allocation to the school	66.9	32.2	4/33
Tracked over time by an administrative authority	92.9	65.2	2/33
SCHOOL EVALUATION			
Requirements for school evaluations by an inspectorate (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008) ³			
None/1 per 3+ years/1 per 3 years/1 per 2 years/1 per year/1+ per year	1 per 3 years	None:4 1 per 3 years:6 1 per year:1	1 per 3+ years:5 1 per 2 years:0 1+ per year:1

	New Zealand	Country Average ¹	New Zealand's Rank ²
Possible influence of school evaluation by an inspectorate (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008) ³			
None/Low/Moderate/High ¹³			
Influence on performance feedback			
Performance feedback to the school	High	None:0 Low:1 Moderate:1 High:10	
Performance appraisal of the school management	High	None:0 Low:2 Moderate:3 High:7	
Performance appraisal of individual teachers	Low	None:1 Low:5 Moderate:2 High:3	
Financial and other implications			
The school budget	None	None:5 Low:2 Moderate:2 High:1	
The provision of another financial reward or sanction	None	None:4 Low:4 Moderate:0 High:1	
The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills	Low	None:1 Low:2 Moderate:6 High:2	
Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers	None	None:6 Low:1 Moderate:2 High:0	
Likelihood of school closure	Low	None:2 Low:3 Moderate:2 High:2	
Publication of results (Yes/No) ¹⁰	Yes	11/13	
Publication of tables that compare school performance (Yes/No)	No	1/12	
Requirements for school self-evaluations (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008) ³	None:6	1 per 3+ years:1	
None/1 per 3+ years/1 per 3 years/1 per 2 years/1 per year/1+ per year	1 per 3 years	1 per 3 years:1 1 per 2 years:0	1 per year:8 1+ per year:3
Possible influence of school self-evaluations (lower secondary education) (2006)			
Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008) ³			
None/Low/Moderate/High ¹³			
Influence on performance feedback			
Performance feedback to the school	m	None:1 Low:2 Moderate:1 High:8	
Performance appraisal of the school management	m	None:2 Low:2 Moderate:4 High:4	
Performance appraisal of individual teachers	m	None:4 Low:4 Moderate:2 High:2	
Financial and other implications			
The school budget	m	None:5 Low:2 Moderate:2 High:1	
The provision of another financial reward or sanction	m	None:4 Low:4 Moderate:1 High:0	
The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills	m	None:3 Low:2 Moderate:1 High:5	
Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers	m	None:5 Low:3 Moderate:0 High:1	
Likelihood of school closure	m	None:8 Low:0 Moderate:1 High:0	
Publication of results (Yes/No) ¹⁰	No	4/14	
Publication of tables that compare school performance (Yes/No)	No	1/14	
Accountability to parents (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where principals reported that their school provides parents with information on:			
This child's academic performance relative to other students in the school	44.4	46.1	17/32
This child's academic performance relative to national or regional benchmarks	71.3	46.8	8/33
This child's academic performance of students as a group relative to students in the same grade in other schools	43.6	23.1	5/33
TEACHER APPRAISAL			
Methods used to monitor the practice of teachers (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where the principal reported that the following methods have been used the previous year to monitor the practice of teachers at their school			
Tests of assessments of student achievement	66.6	58.3	14/34
Teacher peer review (of lesson plans, assessment instruments, lessons)	88.2	56.3	5/34
Principal or senior staff observations of lessons	95.1	68.3	7/34
Observation of classes by inspectors or other persons external to the school	50.7	28.0	5/34
STUDENT ASSESSMENT			
Completion requirements for upper secondary programmes Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2009) ^{5,9}			
• Final examination / ■ Series of examinations during programme / Δ Specified number of course hours and examination / ♦ Specified number of course hours only			
ISCED 3A ⁴	•	•21 ■19 Δ19 ♦3	
ISCED 3B	-	•6 ■8 Δ7 ♦0	
ISCED 3C	-	•17 ■18 Δ17 ♦1	

	New Zealand	Country Average ¹	New Zealand's Rank ²
Student grouping by ability (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where principals reported the following on student grouping by ability			
Student are grouped by ability into different classes			
For all subjects	3.6	9.4	20/33
For some subjects	89.8	37.4	=2/33
Not for any subject	6.0	50.4	31/33
Student are grouped by ability within their classes			
For all subjects	2.1	4.5	=22/33
For some subjects	78.8	46.4	1/33
Not for any subject	15.7	47.0	33/33
Groups of influence on assessment practices (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where the principal reported the following groups exert a direct influence on decision making about assessment practices			
Regional or national education authorities (e.g. inspectorates)	76.6	56.6	6/33
The school's governing board	12.9	29.6	27/33
Parent groups	5.2	17.3	28/33
Teacher groups (e.g. staff association, curriculum committees, trade union)	60.8	58.1	17/33
Student groups (e.g. student association, youth organisation)	7.3	23.4	27/33
External examination boards	98.3	45.2	1/31
Responsibility for student assessment policies (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where the principal reported the following groups have considerable responsibility in establishing student assessment policies			
Establishing student assessment policies			
Principals	85.9	63.5	7/33
Teachers	71.0	69.0	19/33
School governing board	28.6	26.5	15/33
Regional or local education authority	-	15.5	-
National education authority	18.1	24.3	16/33
Frequency of student assessment by method (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% of students in schools where the principal reported the student assessment methods below are used with the indicated frequency			
Standardised tests			
Never	18.5	23.7	16/33
1-2 times a year	43.9	51.0	21/33
3-5 times a year	18.1	16.5	13/33
Monthly	7.4	4.3	7/33
More than once a month	9.9	3.4	=3/33
Teacher-developed tests			
Never	0.7	2.7	11/33
1-2 times a year	2.8	6.7	21/33
3-5 times a year	26.5	30.0	20/33
Monthly	35.8	27.6	10/33
More than once a month	32.8	33.3	16/33
Teachers' judgmental ratings			
Never	2.6	6.6	17/33
1-2 times a year	12.3	12.0	14/33
3-5 times a year	32.5	22.9	8/33
Monthly	17.2	15.7	10/33
More than once a month	30.6	42.2	22/33
Student portfolios			
Never	18.1	24.1	17/33
1-2 times a year	41.0	34.4	13/33
3-5 times a year	27.2	20.6	8/33
Monthly	7.4	10.4	17/33
More than once a month	3.2	9.3	21/33
Student assignments/projects/homework			
Never	0.0	1.5	=23/33
1-2 times a year	2.4	12.2	28/33
3-5 times a year	14.6	16.1	17/33
Monthly	16.9	13.6	7/33
More than once a month	63.8	56.5	12/33

	New Zealand	Country Average ¹	New Zealand's Rank ²
% of students reporting the following on the frequency of homework (2000) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Student Compendium (Reading) (OECD, 2000) ³			
Teachers grade homework			
Never	4.9	14.9	23/27
Sometimes	41.0	44.2	21/27
Most of the time	37.7	24.5	=2/27
Always	14.9	13.9	11/27
Teachers make useful comments on homework			
Never	17.1	23.5	22/27
Sometimes	50.9	50.1	13/27
Most of the time	24.7	19.2	5/27
Always	6.2	4.9	6/27
Homework is counted as part of marking			
Never	10.7	13.7	11/27
Sometimes	53.6	33.3	2/27
Most of the time	22.9	25.7	16/27
Always	10.6	24.7	21/27
Use of student assessments (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ³			
% students in schools where the principal reported that assessments of students are used for the following purposes			
To inform the parents about their child's progress	98.9	97.5	15/33
To make decisions about students' retention or promotion	76.3	77.1	23/33
To group students for instructional purposes	89.7	49.8	3/33
To compare the school to district or national performance	91.4	53.0	2/33
To monitor the school's progress from year to year	96.8	76.0	2/33
To make judgements about teachers' effectiveness	58.9	46.9	=12/33
To identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved	97.9	76.7	2/33
To compare the school with other schools	81.5	45.4	2/33
% of students repeating a grade in the previous school year according to reports by school principals in the following levels (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b) ^{3,4}			
ISCED2	0.2	3.2	=24/29
ISCED3	1.6	4.5	=19/29
Parents' perception of school's monitoring of student progress (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for the parent questionnaire (OECD, 2010c) ³			
% of parents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements ¹⁴			
My child's progress is carefully monitored by the school			
Strongly agree	21.6	18.5	2/8
Agree	62.5	59.4	=3/8
Disagree	11.8	17.3	7/8
Strongly disagree	1.5	2.2	6/8
My child's school provides regular and useful information on my child's progress			
Strongly agree	21.6	19.9	3/8
Agree	60.7	54.3	=3/8
Disagree	14.0	19.7	5/8
Strongly disagree	2.0	4.0	7/8

Sources:

- OECD (2000), *PISA Student Compendium (Reading)*, OECD, <http://pisa2000.acer.edu.au/downloads.php/>.
- OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators 2008*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2009), *Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators 2009*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2010a), *Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators 2010*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2010b), *PISA 2009 Compendium for the school questionnaire*, OECD, <http://pisa2009.acer.edu.au/downloads.php>.
- OECD (2010c), *PISA 2009 Compendium for the parent questionnaire*, OECD, <http://pisa2009.acer.edu.au/downloads.php>.
- OECD (2010d), *PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do, Volume I*, OECD, Paris.

Data explanation:

- m Data is not available
- a Data is not applicable because the category does not apply
- ~ Average is not comparable with other levels of education
- = At least one other country has the same rank

PISA is the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment, which was undertaken in 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009. 15-year-old students worldwide are assessed on their literacy in reading, mathematics and science. The study included 27 OECD countries in 2000, 30 in 2003 and 2006, and 34 in 2009. Data used in this appendix can be found at www.pisa.oecd.org.

Notes:

1. The country average is calculated as the simple average of all countries for which data are available.
2. “New Zealand’s rank” indicates the position of New Zealand when countries are ranked in descending order from the highest to lowest value on the indicator concerned. For example, on the first indicator “population that has attained at least upper secondary education”, for the age group 25-64, the rank 16/30 indicates that New Zealand recorded the 16th highest value of the 30 OECD countries that reported relevant data.
3. The column “country average” corresponds to an average across OECD countries.
4. ISCED is the “International Standard Classification of Education” used to describe levels of education (and subcategories).

ISCED 1 - Primary education

Designed to provide a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics and a basic understanding of some other subjects. Entry age: between 5 and 7. Duration: 6 years

ISCED 2 - Lower secondary education

Completes provision of basic education, usually in a more subject-oriented way with more specialist teachers. Entry follows 6 years of primary education; duration is 3 years. In some countries, the end of this level marks the end of compulsory education.

ISCED 3 - Upper secondary education

Even stronger subject specialisation than at lower-secondary level, with teachers usually more qualified. Students typically expected to have completed 9 years of education or lower secondary schooling before entry and are generally around the age of 15 or 16.

ISCED 3A - Upper secondary education type A

Prepares students for university-level education at level 5A

ISCED 3B - Upper secondary education type B

For entry to vocationally oriented tertiary education at level 5B

ISCED 3C - Upper secondary education type C

Prepares students for workforce or for post-secondary non tertiary education

5. Public expenditure includes public subsidies to households for living costs (scholarships and grants to students/households and students loans), which are not spent on educational institutions.
6. Expressed in equivalent USD converted using purchasing power parities.

7. Expenditure on goods and services consumed within the current year which needs to be made recurrently to sustain the production of educational services – refers to current expenditure on schools and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions. The individual percentage may not sum to the total due to rounding.
8. Public and private institutions are included. Calculations are based on full-time equivalents. “Teaching staff” refers to professional personnel directly involved in teaching students.
9. The column “country average” indicates the number of countries/systems, in which a given criterion is used, for example, regarding the indicator “Decision on payments for teachers in public schools”. In the row “Management responsibilities in addition to teaching duties”, •12 ■18 Δ7 indicates that this criterion is used to determine the base salary in 12 countries/systems, to determine an additional yearly payment in 18 countries/systems and to determine an additional incidental payment in 7 countries/systems.
10. The column “country average” indicates the number of countries for which the indicator applies. For example, for the indicator “mandatory national examination is required” 4/29 means, that 4 countries out of 29 for which data is available report that mandatory national examinations are required in their countries.
11. By “national examination” we mean those tests which do have formal consequences for students.
12. By “national assessment” we mean those tests which do not have formal consequences for students.
13. These measures express the degree of influence on the indicator: None: No influence at all, Low: Low level of influence, Moderate: Moderate level of influence, High: High level of influence. The column “country average” indicates the number of countries/systems, in which one of the given criteria is used.
14. Results are based on reports from parents of the students who were assessed and reported proportionate to the number of 15-year-olds enrolled in the school.

Source Guide

Participation of countries by source

	PISA (OECD, 2000)	Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008)	Education at a Glance (OECD, 2009)	Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a)	PISA Compendium (OECD, 2010b/c) PISA Results 2009 (OECD, 2010d)
Australia	●				
Austria	●	●	●	●	
Belgium (Flemish Community)		●	●	●	
Belgium (French Community)	●	●	●	●	
Belgium (German Community)					●
Canada	●	●	●	●	●
Chile				●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	●	●	●
Denmark	●	●	●	●	●
Estonia					●
Finland	●	●	●	●	●
France	●	●	●	●	●
Germany	●	●	●	●	●
Greece	●	●	●	●	●
Hungary	●	●	●	●	●
Iceland	●	●	●	●	●
Ireland	●	●	●	●	●
Israel					●
Italy	●	●	●	●	●
Japan	●	●	●	●	●
Korea	●	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	●	●	●
Mexico	●	●	●	●	●
Netherlands		●	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●
Norway	●	●	●	●	●
Poland	●	●	●	●	●
Portugal	●	●	●	●	●
Slovak Republic		●	●	●	●
Slovenia					●
Spain	●	●	●	●	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	●	●	●	●	●
Turkey		●	●	●	●
UK - England					
UK - Wales					
UK - Northern Ireland	●	●	●	●	●
UK - Scotland					
United States	●	●	●	●	●

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