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Paulo Santiago, Alison Gilmore, Deborah Nusche and Pamela Sammons

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OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Czech Republic 2012

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Foreword

This report for the Czech Republic 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.

The Czech Republic 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 Paulo Santiago (OECD Secretariat), co-ordinator of the Review; Alison Gilmore (Associate Professor/Co-director, Educational Assessment Research Unit, University of Otago; New Zealand); Deborah Nusche (OECD Secretariat); and Pamela Sammons (Professor of Education, Department of Education, University of Oxford; United Kingdom). 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 the Czech Republic, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: (1) Provide insights and advice to Czech education authorities; (2) Help other OECD countries understand the Czech approach; and (3) Provide input for the final comparative report of the project.

The Czech Republic's involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Jana Straková, Researcher at the Institute for Information on Education.

An important part of the Czech Republic's involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on evaluation and assessment policy, published by the Institute for Information on 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 project 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 Czech 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 the Czech Republic, should be read in conjunction.

The Review visit to the Czech Republic took place on 29 March – 5 April 2011. The itinerary is provided in Annex B. The visit was designed by the OECD in collaboration with the Czech 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 municipal authorities; officials from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS); relevant institutes managed by the MEYS which deal with evaluation and assessment issues; the Czech School Inspectorate; teacher representatives; parents' organisations; representatives of schools; representatives of school directors; students; teacher educators 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, Jana Straková, Researcher at the Institute for Information on Education, for going to great lengths to respond to the questions and needs of the Review Team. We were impressed by her efficiency and expertise and enjoyed her kindness and very pleasant company. This gratitude extends to her team for providing excellent support to the Review Team. The courtesy and hospitality extended to us throughout our stay in the Czech Republic 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 Review report (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 Czech 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 the Czech Republic, 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 the Czech Republic and fully understanding all the issues.

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

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CBR	Country Background Report
CERMAT	Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
CSI	Czech School Inspectorate
ESF	European Social Fund
FEP	Framework Education Programme
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement
IIE	Institute for Information on Education
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
NEP	National Education Programme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment
SEP	School Education Programme
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Executive summary

Student learning outcomes in the Czech Republic are around or slightly below the OECD average, depending on the skills assessed. However, there is some evidence from international student surveys of a significant decline in student learning outcomes in the last decade. There are also indications that both performance and choice of educational track are strongly influenced by family background. Another concern relates to the basis for attending a special school, sometimes as a result of learning difficulties and/or a social disadvantage and not following the identification of a learning disability. Since the 1989 Revolution, schools benefit from considerable autonomy including over the content of instruction, teaching methods, student assessment criteria, and management of the teaching body. In this context, the role of evaluation and assessment as key tools to achieve quality and equity in education was reinforced. While there are provisions for evaluation and assessment at student, teacher, school and system levels, challenges remain in strengthening some of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework, in ensuring articulations within the framework to ensure consistency and complementarity, and in establishing improvement-oriented evaluation practices. The Review Team identified the following priorities in its review of evaluation and assessment policies in the Czech Republic.

Integrating the evaluation and assessment framework and developing capacity across the school system

There is clearly the perception in the education system that the evaluation and assessment framework needs to be strengthened and that there needs to be a greater focus on improving student outcomes. This is reflected in current initiatives. However, at the present time, there is no integrated evaluation and assessment framework – it is not perceived as a coherent whole and it does not visibly connect all the different components. An important initial step for policy development is to develop a strategic plan or framework document that conceptualises a complete evaluation and assessment framework and articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components. The process of developing an effective evaluation and assessment framework should give due attention to: achieving proper articulation between the different evaluation components (*e.g.* teacher appraisal, school evaluation and school development); and ensuring the several elements within an evaluation component are sufficiently linked (*e.g.* teaching standards and teacher appraisal). Another challenge are the limited evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the education system in spite of the considerable national efforts to stimulate an evaluation culture, as well as providing some competency-building learning opportunities. Hence, an area for policy priority is consolidating efforts to improve the capacity for evaluation and assessment. As the Czech education system is highly devolved and relies on the evaluation and assessment capacities of diverse school agents, it is important that capacity building responds to the diverse needs of school governing bodies (regions and municipalities), school principals and teachers.

Maintaining the centrality of teacher-based assessment, improving its consistency and introducing national standardised tests on a solid basis

At all levels of education, teachers play the major role in assessing and reporting on student achievement. In general, it can be said that the autonomy in assessment for teachers and for schools is uncontested and widely supported. However, generally there is a traditional approach to the organisation of classrooms in the Czech Republic. Assessment for learning is not systematically used in Czech schools. There is little emphasis in assessment practices on providing student feedback and developing teacher-student interactions about student learning. As a result, the Czech Republic needs a stronger commitment to improving students' achievement through the use of formative assessment to enhance student learning, rather than simply through the use of assessment summatively for recording and reporting learning. Another concern relates to the current introduction of national standardised tests at grades 5 and 9 (in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics), which arises as the result of the increased focus on key learning outcomes for students. The standards against which the national tests will be marked, currently being developed, may be more appropriately regarded as specifications for the national tests, rather than indicators of the quality of student achievement expected at different levels of the education system. The preparation of the standards is also being rushed by the requirement for national tests to be piloted in 2011. It would be best to thoroughly develop sound educational standards covering the full breadth of student learning objectives prior to developing national tests. Also, it is essential to better articulate the purposes of national tests and recognise that they cover a limited range of competencies. A further priority should be the introduction of moderation processes within and across schools to increase the reliability of teacher-based judgments. The objective is to reduce the variations in the ways teachers assess students and set marks so equity of student assessment is improved. This should go along with the development of guidelines at the national level for assessing against student learning objectives.

Developing teaching standards, strengthening teacher appraisal for improvement and establishing teacher certification

Teacher appraisal appears to be widely accepted and a well-established aspect of regular practice in schools. However, its application is hindered by the absence of teaching standards, no national framework to make school-based practices consistent across schools and there is no mechanism to ensure that each individual teacher receives proper professional feedback. As a result, the Czech education system should pursue the efforts that are being made in preparing a professional profile or standards for the teaching profession to provide a credible reference to make judgements about teacher competence. Another priority should be strengthening regular formative appraisal with a professional development focus which is separate from the more summative appraisal processes. Teacher appraisal for improvement purposes is likely to benefit from a non-threatening evaluation context, a culture of mutually providing and receiving feedback, clear individual and collective objectives, simple evaluation instruments, supportive school leadership, opportunities for professional development and close linkages to school self-evaluation. To ensure that developmental appraisal conducted by school principals is systematic and coherent across Czech schools, it is important that the Czech School Inspectorate validates externally the school-level processes for teacher appraisal. Finally, advancement in the

teaching career could be organised through a system of teacher certification at key stages in the career, which would imply the establishment of a clearer career structure that applies across the country. The different career steps should match the different levels of expertise reflected in teaching standards and be associated with certain pay levels.

Strengthening school evaluation and developing the instructional role of school leadership

The Czech Republic shows a clear commitment to external accountability based around school evaluation with a well-established regular cycle of external school evaluations carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate. However, a challenge for the Czech Republic is that currently external school evaluation tends to emphasise compliance with legislation rather than the promotion of school improvement. There is also a new emphasis on promoting schools' self-evaluation. However, the penetration of school self-evaluation across the school system remains at an early stage of development. As a result, the external school evaluation process should strengthen its focus on school improvement and move away from the current "compliance" driven model. This would imply providing advice for improvement to all schools evaluated, rather than just focusing on lower performing schools. The school evaluation framework, the criteria and questions governing judgements and the methods employed should all focus much more directly on the quality of learning and teaching and their relationship to student outcomes. Also, it is recommended establishing better synergies between external and schools' self-evaluation, especially concerning the alignments of the aspects assessed. In addition, school leaders need to refocus more their work on instructional leadership. This would imply school leaders engaging in more professional development to enhance capacities especially in promoting school improvement, and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Finally, there is a need to re-conceptualise the overall approach to evaluate school principals by school organising bodies so that the role of the school principal as an instructional leader is reinforced.

Raising the profile of system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework

The evaluation of the education system as part of the evaluation and assessment framework has received limited policy attention thus far and there is no comprehensive strategic approach to it. As it stands, system evaluation draws mostly on the evaluation of schools complemented with a set of indicators on education. Some key information gaps remain such as the unavailability of measures on students' socio-economic background and the limited information on the teaching and learning environment. At the same time, the national monitoring system for school education is considerably weakened by the absence of national data on student performance, *i.e.* there is no information on student learning outcomes which is comparable across schools, regions or over time. Also, system-level data are not used to their full potential in analysis which could be useful to inform policy development. As a result, the profile of system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework needs to be raised. An initial priority is to broaden the concept of system evaluation as the wide range of system-level information which permits a good understanding of how well student learning objectives are being achieved. It should include a varied set of components such as broad measures of student outcomes; demographic, administrative and contextual data; information systems; and research and analysis to inform planning, intervention and policy development.

Chapter 1

School education in the Czech Republic

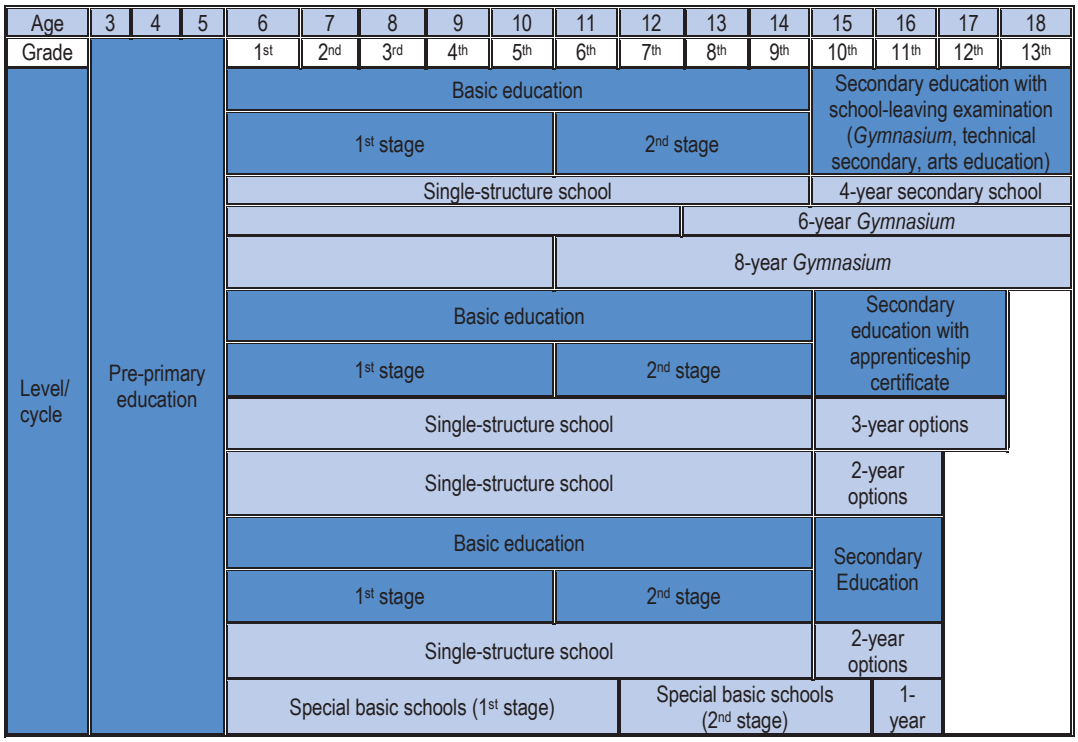
School governance in the Czech Republic is fairly decentralised and involves three levels of administration: the central government, regions and municipalities. This follows a major reform of public administration in 2002 which strengthened self-government. Each region is the organising body of secondary schools, while municipalities take responsibility for pre-primary and basic schools. The content of instruction in the Czech Republic is established at two levels as dictated by the 2005 Education Act, the main legislative document governing education. At the central level, the Ministry determines Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) for each educational area within pre-primary, basic and secondary education. In agreement with such framework, schools further develop School Education Programmes (SEPs), which consist of the operationalisation of FEPs to fit the context of individual schools. This reflects increased autonomy for schools from an education system which, prior to 1989, was characterised by a strong central direction and the standardisation of processes. Student learning outcomes in the Czech Republic are around or slightly below the OECD average but have shown a serious decline in recent years. There are also concerns about strong social selectivity and inequities in the education system, including misplacement of some students in special schools.

Main features

The structure of the education system

The school system in the Czech Republic is organised in three sequential levels: pre-primary education (ages 3 to 6), basic education (typical ages 6 to 15) and secondary education (typical ages 15 to 16/18). Basic education is organised according to two stages (grades 1-5; grades 6-9) (see Figure 1.1). School attendance is compulsory for nine years, typically from 6 to 15 years old. Students typically attend a single-structure school during their basic education but can also enrol in a *Gymnasium* (a secondary school providing general education) following the 5th (8-year *Gymnasium*) or the 7th grade (6-year *Gymnasium*) (in 2009/10 about 11% of students aged 11-15 attended a *Gymnasium*). The latter options are considered prestigious pathways in the school system. In the first stage of basic education, all subjects are usually taught by a generalist teacher, while at the second stage, subjects are taught by teachers specialising in two subjects or, exceptionally in one.

Figure 1.1 The Czech school system



Secondary education is of three types:

- **Secondary education with school-leaving examination**. It includes 4-year programmes in three strands: General education; technical education; and arts education at *conservatoires*. These programmes are completed with a school-leaving examination with a common component external to the school. They are either mainly geared to working life or the continuation of studies at higher education level.

- **Secondary education with final examination leading to an apprenticeship certificate**, vocational education programmes completed with an apprenticeship certificate with a duration of two to three years. These are geared towards an initial qualification for students, giving priority to their entering the job market while, at the same time, allowing them to study further (but with no direct transition to higher education).
- **Secondary education with final examination leading to a final school report**, general and vocational programmes typically provided by practical schools which do not require a certificate of completion. These programmes are geared towards entering the job market.

Admission to schools providing secondary programmes is conditional on requirements set by schools, possibly including an entrance examination and an aptitude test organised by the school. In the 2008/09 school year, 1 239 schools provided education leading to a school-leaving examination, 541 schools provided programmes leading to an apprenticeship certificate and 111 schools provided secondary education that does not require any certificate of completion. For the same school year, secondary school leavers were distributed as follows: 20% completed secondary general education, 54% completed technical education and 26% completed secondary education programmes not requiring a school-leaving examination.

Students with disabilities can attend mainstream basic schools, be placed in special needs classrooms or receive their education from special basic schools – in 2009/10, 4.8% of compulsory school students were educated outside mainstream basic schools. Special schools exist from pre-primary to secondary education. Attendance of a special school requires a recommendation from an appropriate authority and parental consent. The 2005 Education Act puts emphasis on increased integration of students with special needs in mainstream schools.

Major characteristics

- **A decentralised school network**. Pre-primary and basic schools are administered by municipalities while secondary schools are administered by regions. This is in addition to the administrators of private schools (*e.g.* churches).
- **Low expenditure on education**. The amount of public funding for education is relatively low. Among OECD countries for which data are available, the Czech Republic ranks among the lowest in terms of the amount of public resources devoted to primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary institutions, with about 2.5% of GDP and 6.1 % of total public spending (the lowest such figure in the OECD area, see Annex D).
- **Morning only schooling, day-care after classes and average class sizes**. In the Czech Republic, classes are held mostly in the morning. For the lower grades, schools typically offer students all-day care and some schools offer extracurricular activities for older students in school facilities. The number of students per class was on average 20 in the 2009/10 school year (rules establish a minimum of 17 and a maximum of 30 students per class).
- **Public schooling is dominant**. The great majority of students attend public schools. In the 2009/10 school year, the proportion of students attending public schools was 98.7% in basic education and 84.2% in secondary education. Private

schools can be publicly-subsidised with basic subsidies equivalent to between 50 and 80% of those received by basic schools, depending on a range of criteria including inspections by the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI). Education in private schools does not differ significantly from that in public schools.

- **Funding**. Schools, which are administered by regions and municipalities, benefit from two funding streams: *(i)* capital and operating expenditures are financed by regions and municipalities (from general tax allocation to regions and municipalities and grants received from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) which are strongly earmarked); and *(ii)* staff costs are covered by the State budget (the central Ministry budget) via the regional administration.
- **Diversity in the school system**. Roma students represent an important minority group in the Czech school system. Moreover, the Polish minority has its own schools – in 2009/10, 21 basic schools and 3 secondary schools had Polish as the language of instruction.

Distribution of responsibilities

School governance is fairly decentralised and involves three levels of administration: the central government, regions and municipalities. The MEYS is responsible for national education policy and the overall strategy for the education system. Every four years it develops a strategic plan entitled Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system. Its responsibilities include the supervision and development of the education system, establishing the framework for student learning objectives (through Framework Education Programmes), defining the levels of funding, setting the requirements for the professional and pedagogical competence of educational staff, determining the workload of teachers and managing the Register of Schools and School Facilities and the Register of Legal Entities Performing Activities of Schools. Another significant player is the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI), a public administration body. It is responsible for monitoring schools and school facilities and checking the conditions and results of the education they provide, the quality of their management, the efficiency of the use of resources and their compliance with binding regulations.

The Ministry is assisted in its work by a range of national-level agencies which are directly managed by the MEYS and partially funded from its budget. These include: *(i)* the Institute for Information on Education, which collects, processes and provides information on education (statistics, analysis, surveys, and diagnoses) and implements international comparative studies of student achievement; *(ii)* the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (CERMAT), which takes responsibility for the common (or State) part of the school-leaving examination, supports student assessment in basic school, and also organised student testing in the 5th and 9th grades between 2005 and 2007; *(iii)* the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, which is responsible for work which informs policy development in technical and vocational education, including the administration of the National Qualifications Framework, the development of educational programmes and the organisation of the apprenticeship certificate; *(iv)* the Research Institute of Education, which develops work to inform policy development in basic and general secondary education including the content of educational programmes; and *(v)* the National Institute for Continuing Education, which takes responsibility for the continuing education of educational staff – it consists of 13 regional centres which co-ordinate and organise in-service training courses for teachers and school management.[1]

Regions take responsibility for education in their territories. Regional authorities develop Long-term policy objectives for their specific region in agreement with the national-level Long-term policy objectives. Regional authorities are also the organising bodies for various schools, particularly secondary schools. Municipalities are responsible for implementing compulsory schooling. They establish and administer basic schools (*i.e.* serve as their organising bodies) and pre-primary schools. In some cases, especially for smaller municipalities, groups of municipalities come together to take such responsibility. Schools benefit from extensive levels of autonomy, becoming legal entities in 2003. As a result, within their schools, school principals are given full responsibility for the quality of the education, the financial management, the appointment and dismissal of teachers, and the relations to the school community and the general public. A school board is established by the school's organising body allowing parents, students, educational staff, and the public to participate in the administration of the school. School principals are appointed by the organising body and can only be dismissed on the grounds stipulated by the 2005 Education Act.

Policy consultation

The development of educational policies led by the MEYS involves a range of consultations sometimes through the formation of advisory bodies. The groups which are typically involved include the Association of Regions, the Association of Towns and Municipalities, teachers' professional associations (teacher unions and disciplinary associations), employers' representatives, associations of school principals, experts in education and the association of non-governmental organisations in education (parents' organisations are involved only in exceptional cases). The Education Act specifies situations in which the opinion of stakeholder groups is required. For instance, the Education Act specifies that "The Ministry shall draw up long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system of the Czech Republic, discuss the draft objectives with relevant central trade union bodies, the relevant national employers' organisations and with regions…".

Main trends and concerns

Some challenges with educational attainment remain

Secondary-school attainment has traditionally been high, and continues to be so. In 2008, the proportion of adults aged 25-64 who had attained at least upper secondary education was 91%, the highest figure in the OECD area (against an OECD average of 71%). The equivalent proportion for adults aged 25-34 reached 94%. By contrast, tertiary educational attainment is very low by international comparison, although increasing enrolment rates imply the situation is gradually improving. In 2008, the proportion of adults aged 25-64 who had attained tertiary education was 14%, the 4th lowest figure in the OECD area (against an OECD average of 28%). This proportion was 18% for adults aged 25-34 (the 3rd lowest figure against an OECD average of 35%).

Student learning outcomes are around the OECD average but have declined significantly

Student learning outcomes in the Czech Republic are around or slightly below the OECD average, depending on the skills assessed. In 2009, achievement levels of Czech students in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were

not statistically significantly different from the OECD average in mathematics and science and were just below the OECD average with statistical significance in reading literacy (OECD, 2010a). However, trend analyses of PISA results have shown a serious decline in student learning outcomes, among the most serious in the OECD area.

In PISA 2009, the main focus was on reading literacy. The performance of Czech 15-year-olds in reading was statistically significantly below the OECD average – 23 OECD countries scored significantly higher than the Czech Republic. This is the result of a significant decline in performance since the first PISA study in 2000 (OECD, 2010b) – the Czech Republic is among the four OECD countries for which performance between 2000 and 2009 decreased significantly. The mean score for Czech students in PISA 2000 was 492 points, compared to 478 for PISA 2009. The proportion of students who failed to reach Level 2 (at the lower end of the reading literacy proficiency scale) increased significantly from 17.5% in PISA 2000 to 23.1% in PISA 2009.

The results of Czech 15-year-olds in mathematics are around the OECD average, although 14 OECD countries significantly outperformed the Czech Republic. However, the PISA 2009 results indicated a substantial decline in test scores in comparison to the PISA in-depth assessment of mathematics in 2003 (OECD, 2010b). In PISA 2009, the average mathematics score was 493 points, 24 points lower than it was in 2003 – representing a statistically significant decrease in mathematics, the most serious such decrease among OECD countries. Science results of Czech 15-year-olds were also not statistically different from the OECD average in 2009, although 13 OECD countries scored significantly higher than the Czech Republic. In science there was also a significant decline in performance between 2006 and 2009, again the most pronounced among OECD countries.

The variation in performance between high- and low-performing students in the Czech Republic was lower than the OECD average in reading in PISA 2009 and a statistically significant decline was observed since 2000 (OECD, 2010c). Variations in student reading performance are about the same within and between schools (OECD, 2010c). Both types of variation did not significantly change between 2000 and 2009 with between-school variation and within-school variation respectively slightly above and below the OECD average.

Regarding the PISA relationship between socio-economic background and performance (*i.e.* between the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status and the performance of 15-year-olds), the following indications emerge: *(i)* the Czech Republic is not statistically different from the OECD average in terms of the percentage of variance in student performance explained by student socio-economic background (strength of the socio-economic gradient); and *(ii)* the Czech Republic is significantly above the OECD average in terms of the score point difference associated with one unit increase in the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (slope of the socio-economic gradient) (OECD, 2010c). There was a statistically significant decrease between 2000 and 2009 in this indicator.

There are concerns about strong social selectivity and inequities in the education system

There is evidence that performance as well as choice of educational track is strongly influenced by family background. Koucký *et al.* (2004), based on the PISA 2003 results, show that family background matters more than academic ability in explaining access to a 6- or an 8-year *Gymnasium*. Similarly, Münich (2005) predicts that parental education is

the most powerful determinant of access to *Gymnasia* in the Czech Republic. For instance, growing up with a mother who has a tertiary education qualification increases the probability of being enrolled in a *Gymnasium* by 31% *vis-à-vis* a student whose mother has primary education. Koucký *et al.* (2008), using three rounds of the European Social Survey, assess inequality in access to tertiary education for a set of 23 European countries. For the period 1990-2005, they find that the Czech Republic is among the six countries with the greatest inequality as measured by the odds ratio of attending tertiary education between a student whose father has the highest occupational status (as classified by the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status) and a student whose father has the lowest occupational status.

An issue often debated is the fact that the 6- and 8-year *Gymnasium* has potentially far reaching effects on equity as it tends to favour a minority of students into elite publicly-funded schools. Another concern relates to the basis for attending a special school. It is well known in the Czech school system that a good proportion of students who attend special schools do so as a result of learning difficulties and/or a social disadvantage and not following the identification of a learning disability. This is particularly the case of Roma children whose attendance of special schools is still very high in spite of the decision to progressively integrate disadvantaged students into mainstream schools. The Czech School Inspectorate in its 2009/10 annual report identified a clear situation of discrimination with the extensive placement of Roma students in special education schools – for instance, in the special schools visited, it found 35% of Roma students in the group of children with a diagnosis of mental impairment (CSI, 2010).[2]

There is also little evidence that Roma students have equal access to and information about the provision of pre-primary education opportunities. The policy of not admitting children to school if they are not deemed "ready", but then providing no extra input to ensure they are given extra support to promote school readiness, means that Roma children are more likely to enter school late, and they also are less likely to have experienced pre-primary education. This tends to perpetuate inequality from an early age. Preliminary classes targeted at Roma students have been instituted but these are not used to the desirable extent.

Demand for general education not satisfied

There are indications that the supply of general secondary programmes is insufficient to satisfy the demand for general education, leading a large number of students to unwillingly enrol in vocationally-oriented courses (OECD, 2006). Access to the general secondary strand is directly fixed by the organising body (regions) and indirectly fixed by the MEYS via budgetary allocations. In addition, the MEYS and the regions decide on the opening of a new school, as well as its supply capacity and programme orientation. Some empirical analysis shows that many students in vocational programmes would qualify for a more demanding secondary education programme (Münich, 2006). To a great extent, limitations in the access to general secondary programmes reflect the notion among some circles that in order to maintain quality the *Gymnasium* should be restricted to a narrow elite.

Main developments

A major reform of public administration with large implications for education

In 2002 the reform of public administration significantly affected the governance of the education system, in that a traditional model of sector-based central governance was abolished and the influence of self-government was strengthened. Fourteen newly established regions gained significant autonomy, including the governance of their own education system. Each region develops a strategy for its education system in accordance with a national framework and takes responsibility for monitoring such strategy. Each region is the organising body of secondary and special schools. Similarly, municipalities take responsibility for pre-primary and basic schools (including special schools). Municipalities have acquired substantial responsibilities including in the quality assurance of the schools they take responsibility for.

Increased autonomy for schools

Prior to 1989, the Czech education system was characterised by a strong central direction and the standardisation of processes. Instruction was based on a detailed syllabus, specified textbooks, detailed guidelines for teachers and standardised procedures for the preparation of teachers. The approach radically changed following the 1989 Revolution. Schools benefit from the free choice of textbooks and considerable autonomy over the content of instruction, namely through the development of their own education programmes (in accordance with the national Framework Education Programmes). Teachers can choose their teaching methods in agreement with the school strategy and the requirements set in the School Education Programme.

The development of Framework Education Programmes and School Education Programmes

The 2005 Education Act, the main legislative document governing education, establishes two levels for determining the content of instruction in the Czech Republic.[3] At the central level, the MEYS determines Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) for each educational area within pre-primary, basic and secondary education. These define the compulsory content, scope and conditions of education and provide a national framework for student learning. In agreement with such framework, schools further develop School Education Programmes (SEPs), which consist of the operationalisation of FEPs to fit the context of individual schools. Schools have considerable room to design their own learning strategies as FEPs are not markedly detailed. However, SEPs as well as approaches to student assessment and the content of textbooks need to comply with the requirements defined in FEPs.

FEPs as well as SEPs started being implemented in basic education in the 2007/08 school year and reflect a significant curricular reform, a prominent feature of the 2005 Education Act. In 2010/11, almost all students in compulsory education were receiving education according to FEPs. In secondary education, only a small fraction of students were covered by FEPs – this is explained by the fact that most FEPs at this level are still being developed (there are over 250 fields each to be covered by a FEP).

The introduction of standardised testing and exit examinations

School autonomy in the development of programmes and in choosing instruction methods has generated the need to monitor student outcomes across schools. Not surprisingly, the introduction of external instruments for the assessment of students such as national testing at key stages of schooling and an external national-level component to the school-leaving examination have been among the main policy issues in the education agenda. National tests at the 5th and 9th grades are currently being developed (following a first experience between 2004 and 2008) and the external common part to the school-leaving examination was organised for the first time in the spring 2011. Also, common assignments to be used by schools in the final exam to gain the apprenticeship certificate have been introduced.

Notes

1. Subsequently to the visit by the Review Team, a major restructuring of these agencies took place. The Institute for Information on Education was abolished at the end of 2011, and part of its services were integrated in the Czech School Inspectorate. In July 2011, the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education and the Research Institute of Education were merged into the National Institute for Education.
2. The disproportionately high placement of Roma students in special schools is documented in detail in Devroye (2009) and Dženo Association (2004).
3. More rigorously, the 2005 Education Act establishes three levels for determining the content of instruction. In addition to the described Framework Education Programmes and School Education Programmes, it also provides for the development of a National Education Programme (NEP). However, the NEP has not yet been developed.

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Chapter 2

The evaluation and assessment framework

Evaluation and assessment in the Czech Republic operates at four key levels: (i) system (national and regional subsystems) – namely through education indicators and international student surveys; (ii) school – external inspection by the Czech School Inspectorate and school self-evaluation; (iii) teacher – through school-dictated approaches to performance management; and (iv) student – with instruments ranging from external national examinations to ongoing daily formative assessment in the classroom. The overall evaluation and assessment framework appears fragmented with individual components which developed independently of each other over time. Particularly positive characteristics of the framework include the existence of common references at the national level; good conditions for adapting learning to local needs; a good articulation of responsibilities; a range of initiatives to strengthen evaluation and assessment; the "open door" climate among teachers; and the growing understanding of the need to support policy work with specific expertise. However, considerable challenges exist in building an effective evaluation and assessment framework. These include the incipient development of some key components; missing links between different elements of the framework; insufficient attention to equity and inclusion; student learning objectives not perceived as specific enough to guide teaching and assessment; a narrow understanding of the purposes of evaluation and assessment; insufficient competencies for evaluation and assessment across the system; limited support from the centre; and inadequate articulation between levels of government.

This chapter looks at the overall framework for evaluation and assessment in the Czech Republic, *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 judgments on individual student progress 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. Finally, the term "evaluation" is used to refer to judgments on the effectiveness of schools, school systems and policies.

Context and features

Governance

As for other OECD countries, the Czech Republic does not have an integrated evaluation and assessment framework that was designed as a whole but instead has a series of components operating at different levels that have developed relatively independently of each other over time. Evaluation and assessment in the Czech Republic operate at four key levels: system (national and regional subsystems), school, teacher and student. At each of these levels, evaluation and assessment mechanisms provide a basis for assessing how effectively education is being provided for students in the Czech Republic. They also identify strengths and weaknesses of the system, schools, teachers and students which inform areas for improvement. The ultimate objective is to improve the quality of education in the country.

The Czech Republic's approach to evaluation and assessment combines central direction over policy development and standard-setting with a measure of devolved responsibility for the implementation of evaluation and assessment at the region, municipal and school levels. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) is responsible for the supervision of the entire education system and plays a role in all components of the evaluation and assessment framework, including developing binding student learning objectives (Framework Education Programmes, FEPs), determining the career structure for teachers and monitoring the performance of schools and the education system. The MEYS also designs, implements and monitors education policies, including the establishment of Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system. Some of its agencies have key functions in the framework. Prominent among these is the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) which takes responsibility for the external evaluation of schools and contributes to system evaluation. The Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (CERMAT) takes the leadership in external student assessment while the Institute for Information on Education plays a key role in system evaluation through the development of indicators on education and the respective analysis. Regions take responsibility for education in their territories and develop Long-term policy objectives for their specific region in agreement with the national-level Long-term policy objectives. Regional authorities and municipalities are the organising bodies for schools, and therefore assume responsibility for the quality of the education offered. Their role tends to concentrate on the compliance with financial regulations and support for schools to improve. Schools benefit from extensive autonomy in the organisation of

the various components of evaluation and assessment at the student, teacher and school level. They take most responsibility for student assessment, including the definition of assessment criteria and instruments; they operate teacher appraisal with approaches defined at the school level; and they take responsibility for their self-evaluation.

Main components

In a nutshell, the Czech framework for evaluation and assessment can be described as consisting mainly of the following four main components:

- **Student assessment**. Student performance in the Czech Republic is assessed by a wide range of instruments, ranging from externally-based examinations to ongoing daily formative assessment in the classroom. Teachers take the main responsibility for student assessment. All students are assessed in an ongoing manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area. Students are assessed both orally and through school-based tests/examinations. Marks used to report student achievement are on a scale of 1 to 5. Assessment criteria and methods are defined by each school and reflected in the respective School Education Programme (SEP). There are no externally-based national final examinations at the end of basic (and compulsory) education (but some regions make available to their secondary schools standardised tests developed by private companies, to be used as entry examinations). By contrast, externally-based exit examinations are mandatory at the end of secondary education. These refer to the school-leaving examination and the final examination to obtain the apprenticeship certificate. Traditionally, the content, administration and marking of exit examinations, have been the responsibility of individual schools. However, as of 2011, the school-leaving examinations have a common national standardised part. Finally, full-cohort national standardised tests are currently being introduced in grades 5 and 9 of basic education in the Czech language, foreign language and mathematics with the main objective of monitoring national education standards (and possibly serve as a basis for enrolment into a higher level of education).
- **Teacher appraisal**. There are no national requirements for teacher appraisal and no formal procedures exist to periodically evaluate the performance of teachers. However, teacher appraisal is typically conducted by school principals in approaches defined locally by the schools. There are no national performance criteria or reference teaching standards to guide the process. Appraisal criteria are decided by the schools and often by the school principal in processes which tend to include interviews and classroom observation. In the context of their autonomy, school principals generally use the results of teacher appraisal in defining professional development plans of individual teachers and in determining their career progression and pay levels.
- **School evaluation**. There are two main forms of evaluation: school self-evaluation and school external inspection. The latter is the responsibility of the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI). Mandatory external school evaluations are conducted in a 3-year cycle. These involve, for each school in the system, a sequence of activities comprising a preparatory phase for the school; a visit by a team of inspectors including the observation of teaching and learning in the classroom; the publication of the team's report; and a follow-up phase to respond to the recommendations in the report which typically involves the organising bodies (regions and municipalities). The precise nature of school self-evaluation

varies across schools as the legal requirement to undertake it does not come with a prescribed approach (but guidelines are available). Schools are required to engage in self-evaluation and reflect its results in the school annual report. Organising bodies also inspect their respective schools but typically concentrate on compliance with financial regulations.

- **System evaluation**. A range of tools are used to monitor performance of the education system. The monitoring system includes a range of statistics on education based on snap-shot data collected from schools on a standardised format. These are the basis for annual publications with indicators on education at the national and regional levels. Both the central government and regions prepare annual editions of the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System* to assess progress towards their respective Long-term policy objectives. Also, international benchmarks of student performance provided by international student surveys such as PISA and TIMSS have been influential in driving policy development at the system level. At the moment, no national-level information on student learning outcomes which is comparable across schools and regions and over time is available but the MEYS is currently developing national standardised tests in grades 5 and 9 in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics to address this gap. In addition, there has been a growing interest in undertaking studies of the impact of policy initiatives and in preparing thematic reports which can inform policy development. These are promoted by the MEYS as well as agencies such as the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI).

Educational goals

Goals for student learning are expressed at different levels. The 2005 Education Act defines the objectives of the education system as granting:

- The personal development of a human being who shall possess knowledge and social competencies, ethical and spiritual values for their personal and civic life, for pursuing a profession or working activities, and for acquiring information and learning in the course of life;
- The acquisition of general or vocational education;
- An understanding and application of the principles of democracy and a legal State, fundamental human rights and freedoms along with responsibility and a sense of social coherence;
- An understanding and application of the principle of equality between women and men in society;
- The formation of national and state citizenship awareness and respect for the ethnic, national, cultural, language and religious identity of every person;
- The knowledge of global and European cultural values and traditions, understanding and acquiring principles and rules arising from European integration as a basis for coexistence at national and international levels; and
- The acquisition and application of knowledge of the environment and its protection arising from the principles of sustainable growth and safety and the protection of health.

In addition, at the central level, governments in office establish priorities for education policy through the 4-year Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system. The Long-term policy objectives set in 2011 established four priorities:

- Increasing the quality of the process of education and its outcomes, including the consolidation of the curricular reform.
- Introduction of new approaches to school evaluation, including external and self-evaluation and the introduction of student national assessments in grades 5 and 9.
- Optimisation of educational provision and support for vocational education – in line with the needs of the economy and the employability of school leavers, the structure of programmes in secondary technical and vocational education and co-operation of educational institutions and employers.
- Support for educational staff – improving their professional standards and working conditions, and establishing a career structure with links to remuneration.

Student learning objectives

More specific learning objectives for students are elaborated in common references established at the national level through Framework Education Programmes (FEPs). These binding documents stipulate the content of learning in each field of education and the expected outcomes at given stages in the education system. FEPs are organised according to the two main stages of education (in addition to the FEP for pre-primary education):

- Framework Education Programmes for basic education including lower levels of 6-year and 8-year *Gymnasium* (FEP BE)

  The FEP BE defines the following (Research Institute of Education, 2007):

  - A set of nine overall objectives for basic education (*e.g.* "to make it possible for the pupils to acquire learning strategies and to motivate them to lifelong learning"; "to stimulate creative thinking, logical reasoning and problem solving in pupils").
  - Descriptions of the key competencies to be acquired by students upon completion of basic education. There are six key competency areas: learning competency, problem-solving competency, communication competency, social and personal competency, civic competency, and professional competency. Each area includes between four and five competencies.
  - Nine educational areas consisting of one or more education fields (in parentheses): language and language communication (Czech language and literature; foreign language); mathematics and applications; information and communication technologies; man and his world; man and society (history, civics); man and nature (physics, chemistry, natural sciences, geography); arts and culture (music, fine arts); man and health (health education, physical education); and man and the world of work.
  - Characteristics and objectives for each educational area. For instance, the "language and language communication" area has seven objectives such as "gaining the self-confidence for public performance and for cultivated expression as a means of self-assertion".

- Expected outcomes for each educational field at the end of three key stages in basic education (cycle 1: grades 1-3, cycle 2: grades 4-5, and stage 2 of basic education). For example, in mathematics, for stage 2 of basic education, expected outcomes are organised in four areas (numbers and variables; dependencies, relations and working with data; planar and spatial geometry; and non-standard application exercises and problems). For each area, between 2 and 13 expected outcomes are proposed, for instance "seek, evaluate and process data" and "sketch and construct basic bodies".
- Subject matter domains for each educational field and each of the two stages of basic education. These define content domains to be covered in the instruction of students. For instance, in history, 34 content domains are prescribed (across 8 areas) such as "Antique Greece and Rome" and "Baroque culture and the Enlightenment".
- Cross-curricular subjects to be offered in basic education: moral, character and social education; civic education for democracy; education towards thinking in European and global contexts; multicultural education; environmental education; and media education. The FEP BE defines, for each of the cross-curricular subjects, characteristics, contribution to the development of the pupil's character, and recommended content.
- Requirements for time allocated to each educational area/field at each stage of basic education as well as the number of "disposable hours" for schools to allocate as they wish (*e.g.* to implement cross-curricular subjects, to introduce other areas of compulsory education which align with the profile of the school, to offer a second foreign language); and requirements specific to some educational areas/fields such as the fact that the Czech language must be taught every year and that a foreign language is compulsory from Year 3 even if it can be offered from Year 1.
- Principles for the education of students with special educational needs and for the education of exceptionally gifted students.
- The material, personnel, sanitary, organisational and other conditions for implementing the FEP BE.
- The principles for schools to develop their School Education Programme (SEP) (see below), including a structure for the SEP.

• Framework Education Programmes for secondary education (general and technical/vocational)

Framework Education Programmes for secondary education follow an approach similar to the development of the FEP BE. The *Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Schools* (*Gymnasium*) defines eight educational areas, five cross-curricular subjects and the key competences of a school leaver. The number of lessons taught per week must always be between 27 and 35 in each grade. The school principal determines optional subjects and decides on how the time (lessons) available are used. Similarly, the *Framework Education Programmes for Technical and Vocational Education* include general as well as technical/vocational educational areas, cross-curricular subjects and key professional competencies for each school year. Specific FEPs are being developed for all general, vocational and technical fields in over 250 fields of education.

On the basis of the binding FEPs, schools prepare more specific School Education Programmes (SEPs). These determine how the content proposed by FEPs is distributed into individual grades (or other units such as modules) and establish the subject syllabi (a detailed description of the educational content). One educational field can be divided to form one, two or more subjects or, conversely, the content of several educational fields may be integrated into a so-called "integrated subject". Schools shape their profiles by means of their SEPs.

Strengths

There are common references at the national level to provide the basis for evaluation and assessment

There are some common references to provide the basis for evaluation and assessment. At the national level, the central government in office establishes priorities for educational policy, which provide the framework for policy development. These are expressed in the 4-year Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system. These are relevant references to shape the evaluation and assessment framework and inform, in particular, system evaluation. Indicators to assess the progress towards achieving these objectives are developed. However, these policy objectives tend to be somewhat short-sighted and associated with single policy initiatives. For instance, the four policy objectives set in 2011 essentially correspond to the consolidation of the curricular reform, the introduction of national standardised tests in grades 5 and 9, the strengthening of the position of vocational education and a new career structure for teachers with links to remuneration. There are no clear national goals for education aligned with broader social and economic goals. Statements about the aims for the education system such as its promotion of equity and excellence and its role in developing successful learners and informed citizens are not clearly articulated. The 2005 Education Act defines the objectives of the education system along these lines but in a rather abstract way and with no translation into concrete objectives or targets to be reflected in the Long-term policy objectives. This raises challenges in establishing a solid reference point on which to build the evaluation and assessment framework, including a reference against which the evaluation of the overall system can be undertaken.

By contrast, at the level of student learning goals, there is a good basis for common expectations of outcomes from schooling. Both in basic and secondary education, there are national Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) in a range of educational areas. As described earlier, these establish competency aims for students at key stages in the education system and broadly specify the content for the learning. Within these binding goals for student achievement, the schools are given a good degree of autonomy to develop local curricula (School Education Programmes) and approaches for evaluation and assessment. Nonetheless, while schools and teachers have considerable freedom on how to adapt and deliver the FEPs, these still define in some detail what the learning goals are. A major advantage is the fact that FEPs are formulated on the basis of competency aims rather than being limited to learning content. It follows that there is a common basis across the education system for evaluation and assessment of student learning progress against FEPs. The Review Team formed the impression that FEPs are well established across the system.

There are good conditions for adapting learning to local needs

The curricular reform associated with the introduction of the FEPs was based on a fundamental paradigm shift from the detailed prescription of learning content and teaching approaches from the centre to the freedom for schools to adapt learning to local needs. As described earlier, schools are given the autonomy to adapt the broad specification of FEPs into the development of their own educational programmes (School Education Programmes). This entails developing detailed content per subject, distributing it across the different grades, defining distinctive features of their SEP (such as more emphasis on foreign languages) and agreeing on criteria for student assessment.

This extensive autonomy for schools to adapt their learning to local needs has a range of advantages. It promotes curriculum innovation in schools and encourages collaborative work among teachers on curriculum development and adaptation at the local level. It leads to a reflection on student learning objectives and the assessment of students, which is a valuable professional exercise. Overall, it gives a strong sense of ownership to the school over the learning goals for their students. During the Review visit, many teachers and school leaders conveyed that the preparation of SEPs was an enormous and difficult task but one which brought value to the work of the school and translated into good collective learning with a positive impact on the internal dynamics of schools.

The principle of autonomy also applies to the governance of education. The 14 autonomous regions assume responsibility for their own education system. They develop an educational strategy (4-year Long-term policy objectives) within the framework of national policy objectives and take responsibility for monitoring such strategy. However, there are indications that the strategic documents of regions (Long-term policy objectives) vary considerably in terms of their scope and quality (CSI, 2010). Within regions, municipalities take responsibility for managing their basic schools. Hence, policy making in the Czech Republic is characterised by a high level of respect for local ownership. School governing bodies and schools have a high degree of autonomy regarding school policies, curriculum development and evaluation and assessment. This certainly facilitates the response to local needs but raises issues of capacity at the local level to carry out certain responsibilities such as quality assurance (see Chapter 6). It appears that the national guidance, namely through the FEPs and the role of the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI), is well accepted at the local level. There is strong willingness in most regions, municipalities and schools to build on the national evaluation and assessment agenda by adapting it to local circumstances.

Responsibilities across the evaluation and assessment framework are well articulated

A major advantage regarding the way the evaluation and assessment framework is specified is the fact that responsibilities within it are clearly articulated, including through the 2005 Education Act. The MEYS oversees the entire education system and co-ordinates the evaluation and assessment framework, with a role in each of its components. In addition, the role of the CSI in assuring quality in schools is perceived as central by all agents, some of which considerably draw on its work (such as regions' and municipalities' educational authorities). It is accepted that the CSI is in a particularly good position to offer an overall picture of school performance across the country and within regions. Regions and municipalities supervise their respective schools but in clear respect of school autonomy and also drawing on the framework provided by the national level, including the work of the CSI. It is also clearly understood that some areas within

the evaluation and assessment framework are better addressed at the local level such as teacher appraisal and student assessment. Also, school boards give an opportunity for parents to contribute to the evaluation and assessment framework.

There is a range of initiatives to strengthen evaluation and assessment in the school system

Possibly as a result of the declining performance of Czech students in international student surveys, there is clearly the perception in the education system that the evaluation and assessment framework needs to be strengthened and that there needs to be a greater focus on improving student outcomes. Some recent initiatives clearly come as a response to such need. National student standardised tests in grades 5 and 9 are in the course of development, the common part of the school-leaving examination was launched in 2011, external school evaluation is consolidated and increasingly focuses on the improvement of student outcomes, school self-evaluation is mandatory and supported by projects such as the "On the Road to Quality" project (see Chapter 5), Framework Education Programmes are formulated as competency aims, the availability of national indicators on education has considerably expanded, and there is the intention to introduce teaching standards. These developments clearly communicate that evaluation and assessment are priorities in the school system and reveal a broad agenda to develop an evaluation culture among school agents. The Review Team formed the view that there is good support among the school agents for consolidating evaluation and assessment practices at the different levels of the system. Evaluation as part of development and improvement processes is particularly valued.

There is an "open door" climate among teachers

A major strength in the system is the "open door" climate which exists among teachers. Classroom observation is a key instrument in external school evaluation ensuring the proper evaluation of the quality of the teaching and learning in schools. Also, the observation of classes by school management is common practice in schools, including in the context of school-based teacher appraisal and schools' self-evaluation processes. This is a crucial element to ensure the effectiveness of the evaluation and assessment framework which depends to a great extent on the ability to cultivate a culture of sharing classroom practice, professional feedback and peer learning.

There is a good principle of supporting policy work with specific expertise

In the Czech Republic there is a growing understanding of the importance of informing policies and the evaluation and assessment framework with evidence from research, even if practices are still incipient. A major strength is the fact that the MEYS supports its policy work with the analysis and research conducted in institutes with specialised expertise. These are the Institute for Information on Education, the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, the Research Institute of Education, and the National Institute for Continuing Education. These institutes concentrate substantial expertise in each of the areas they cover and provide analysis which is useful for policy decisions by the MEYS.[1] These institutes involve collaboration with educational researchers and educational practitioners. The MEYS, together with the institutes, also conducts studies in a range of educational areas including the implementation of policy initiatives. The aim of such studies is to determine how well policies are being implemented and to enable the

Ministry to draw lessons from such experience to either refine particular measures or to better design future initiatives.

In addition, the Czech Republic engages in major data collections to inform policy analysis. It generates a wealth of data and information on the state of the education system through the education database managed by the Institute for Information on Education and benchmarks internationally its performance by participating in international student surveys.

There is also good openness to external views. For example, the Czech Republic participates in international reviews of educational policy, such as the OECD projects on Learning for Jobs, Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care, and Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. It has hosted OECD Reviews of early childhood education and care, vocational education and training, tertiary education and transition from initial education to working life. This is in addition to the participation in a range of international surveys to benchmark the performance of the education system.

However, overall, it can be said that the use of evidence and research results in policy development is not yet systematic. There is still limited use of data for policy analysis (see Chapter 6), limited collaboration with researchers and incipient concern for gathering data to inform policy. In particular, the MEYS has not yet developed approaches to ensure that academic research in the relevant domains (*e.g.* education, sociology, economics, political science) is systematically considered in the elaboration of educational policy. Politics, ideology, views and beliefs provide a good part of the foundations for policy development.

There are some reporting requirements

The evaluation and assessment framework is strengthened by the establishment of some requirements for public reporting. The Czech Republic collects a wide range of data on education system performance, including through participation in international student surveys, qualitative studies and inspection reports (see Chapter 6). The MEYS, through the Institute for Information on Education, publishes a comprehensive set of educational statistics and has developed one publicly available education database and an information system available to a range of stakeholders. The Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) publishes the reports from individual external school evaluations. In addition, CSI also publishes its annual report with an overview of the external inspections undertaken as well as thematic studies. Finally, schools are required to publish their annual reports.

Challenges

The evaluation and assessment framework needs to be completed and made coherent

There is no integrated evaluation and assessment framework

As in many other OECD countries, the different components of evaluation and assessment have developed independently of each other over time and there is currently no policy document on the overall framework for evaluation and assessment in the Czech Republic. There are provisions for student assessment, school evaluation, teacher appraisal and system evaluation, but these are not explicitly integrated or aligned (more

on this below). The existing framework is not perceived as a coherent whole and it does not visibly connect all the different components.

The evaluation and assessment framework is incomplete

While the initiatives introduced in the last decade have helped to develop an evaluation culture across the education system, the evaluation and assessment framework is not yet complete. Some key components of a comprehensive evaluation and assessment framework are currently still underdeveloped:

- The formative assessment of students by teachers is underdeveloped as a result of the focus placed on marks and classroom practices which are still very traditional. The formative use of assessment information seems to be increasingly displaced by the generation of summative results (see Chapter 3).
- The moderation of marks which reflect the summative assessment of students by teachers across schools is not undertaken. As a result, it is not possible to guarantee that teacher-based marks are fair across schools and reflect a consistent assessment against student learning objectives (see Chapter 3).
- Systematic teacher appraisal is not in place. A national framework for teacher appraisal with teaching standards, appraisal criteria and instruments, and possible consequences, does not exist. Practices are at the school level and depend on the initiative of the school's leadership (see Chapter 4).
- School self-evaluation is still at an early stage of development and the approaches and competencies to implement school self-evaluation vary across schools (see Chapter 5).
- There is no national framework for the appraisal of school principals and, in many cases, it is undertaken with little capacity (see Chapter 5).
- System evaluation has a low profile within the evaluation and assessment framework. The concept of system evaluation, as the wide range of system-level information which permits a good understanding of how well student learning objectives are being achieved, needs to be broadened. This includes the current absence of information on student outcomes which can be compared across schools, regions and over time; the limited intervention of school governing bodies in quality assurance; and the fact that there is no systematic overview of the existing quality assurance systems in regions and municipalities (see Chapter 6).

Some articulations within the evaluation and assessment framework are not sufficiently developed

How the different components have to be interrelated in order to generate complementarities, avoid duplication, and prevent inconsistency of objectives is an important aspect of designing the evaluation and assessment framework. The Review Team noted a number of missing links, or underdeveloped articulations, between different elements of the evaluation and assessment framework in the Czech Republic. These can be grouped into two distinct sets:

1. Within specific components of the evaluation and assessment framework:
   - Linkages between teacher appraisal and teacher professional development

     There are some indications that the provision of professional development for teachers is not systematically linked to teacher appraisal (see Chapter 4).
   - Linkages between school evaluation and school improvement

     The linkages between school evaluation and school improvement are not systematic (see Chapter 5).
   - Articulation between school self-evaluation and external school evaluation

     There does not seem to be enough reflection about the relative contributions of self-evaluation and external evaluation (see Chapter 5).
   - Absence of teaching standards

     There are no teaching standards which work as the reference for teacher appraisal (see Chapter 4).
2. Between specific components of the evaluation and assessment framework:
   - Articulation between teacher appraisal, school evaluation and school development

     This relates to a range of aspects such as: school-based teacher appraisal being validated by school evaluation processes; making the focus of school evaluation on teacher effectiveness systematic across schools; and school development processes exploring links to the evaluation of teaching practice. At the present moment, the only link between the external evaluation of schools and teacher appraisal consists of the focus of external school evaluation on the observation of teaching and learning in schools.
   - Articulation between school evaluation and the appraisal of school principals

     The appraisal of school principals bears little relation to school evaluation even if governing bodies sometimes use the CSI reports to inform the appraisal of school principals.
   - Articulation between school evaluation and system evaluation

     Evaluation at the system level could make better use of the information generated by school inspection processes (see Chapter 6).

The lack of integration of the evaluation and assessment framework as well as the existence of underdeveloped components and a number of missing links has long been recognised by policy makers in the Czech Republic. For instance, the key strategic document *The National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* known as the White Paper states that "the body of evaluation activities is inappropriate: evaluation of some areas is missing, and there are no links between its components" (MEYS 2001). The 2007 Long-term policy objectives also point to an absence of a comprehensive system of evaluation (MEYS 2007).

There is little attention to equity and inclusion in the evaluation and assessment framework

Equity and inclusion are not prominent within the evaluation and assessment framework. Articulation of equity among the national goals for education is narrow. The 2005 Education Act states that equal access to education is a principle of the education system but does not specify equity or inclusiveness among the stated education goals (see earlier for a list of educational goals). Similarly, none of the 4-year Long-Term policy objectives is directly associated with equity and inclusion as areas for further policy attention (even if some basic references are made to equity within each of the objectives). The implication is that the evaluation and assessment framework does not have clear reference goals for equity and inclusiveness against which progress can be monitored. Not surprisingly, evaluation and assessment places little emphasis on equity issues.

Also, little is known about educational disadvantage in the Czech education system – no differential analysis is undertaken on student performance across specific groups such as Roma students, students from disadvantaged families or those who live in a remote location. Also, no measures of equity in the education system have been developed so progress towards reducing inequities can be monitored. Because there are no national data sets on student attainment at the school level, it is not possible to establish whether some schools are more successful than others in raising attainment for disadvantaged groups of students, including those of low socio-economic background or Roma background.

The Framework Education Programmes are not perceived as specific enough to guide teaching and assessment

As explained earlier, FEPs seem to be fairly accepted across the system and the development of SEPs seems to be perceived as a useful developmental exercise in schools. Nonetheless, the Review Team formed the impression that there is uneven capacity and very diverse understandings of how FEPs should be translated into practice (*i.e.* SEPs). A range of stakeholders expressed that FEPs do not provide statements of learning goals and expectations that are clear enough to guide teaching and assessment practices and bring consistency to education in the Czech Republic. The agreed national competency aims for student performance, as expressed in the FEPs, are quite broad and there are no descriptions of expected learning progress through the curriculum.

Some stakeholders expressed concerns about the lack of standards concerning the competencies required for a particular mark and the potentially resulting unfairness in teacher grading of students. There seems to be little shared understanding regarding what constitutes adequate, good and excellent performance in different subject areas. Teachers do not benefit from national guidelines to translate the competency aims expressed in FEPs into concrete lesson plans, objectives and assessment activities. Teachers in their classroom assessments tend to use their own personal reference points, based on their experience and school-based expectations. Their reference points are generally a mixture of norm-referenced (in relation to other students), content-referenced (in relation to what I taught) and self-referenced (in relation to growth of the student) and are quite different across different teachers and schools. As a result, student assessment practices differ considerably across schools, which makes it difficult for the evaluation and assessment framework to provide a picture of the extent to which the competency aims expressed in the FEPs are achieved.

The broad competency aims have the advantage of giving teachers ownership in establishing their teaching programme, but there seems to be a need for more structure for a substantial number of teachers. Many stakeholders interviewed by the Review Team referred to the need for clearer learning goals or standards to provide a comprehensive picture of what students should know and be able to do, which can serve as visible reference points for students, teachers, school leaders, policy makers and test developers. The learning goals should be specific enough to enable the establishment of an interdependent relationship among curriculum, instruction and assessment (Allington and Cunningham, 2002).

This is part of a more general challenge about the lack of descriptions of expected performance in the Czech education system. Standards have not been developed not only for student achievement but also for defining the expected performance of teachers, school principals and schools.

It is unclear that the students are at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework

An important challenge in the Czech school system is that it is unclear that students are at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework. Teaching, learning and assessment still take place in a somewhat "traditional" setting with the teacher leading his/her classroom, the students typically not involved in the planning and organisation of lessons and assessment concentrating on summative scores. The opportunity given to parents and students to influence student learning is more limited than in other OECD countries. The Review Team formed the perception that relatively little emphasis is given to the development of students' own capacity to regulate their learning through self- and peer-assessment. Other practices which are developing in Czech classrooms but require further strengthening are the communication of learning expectations to students, the opportunities for performance feedback and mechanisms for individualised support. Overall, students still tend to play a more passive role in their learning.

Feedback in the Czech Republic tends to be focused on test performance and results rather than on learning progress. Also, collecting the views and perspectives of parents and students to inform school improvement through the systematic use of surveys is not a general practice in the Czech Republic. This includes surveys designed by teachers to collect student views on their teaching. Student views are not a key element for the self-evaluation of teachers and schools.

There is a narrow understanding of the purposes of evaluation and assessment

The Review Team formed the view that there is a narrow understanding of the purposes and the potential of evaluation and assessment. Evaluation and assessment are still perceived mostly as instruments to hold stakeholders accountable, to "control" and assess compliance with regulations. This is visible at all levels with the focus often being whether formal requirements are met and with less attention given to the quality of practices or ways for these to improve. School inspections are much better established as an evaluation practice than school self-evaluation, which is not widespread and systematic across the system. Also, student assessment is perceived more as test and measurement rather than learning. The Review Team also formed the impression that there is not enough reflection on the use of results from evaluation activities and the concept of feedback is not yet fully ingrained among school agents. The idea that the ultimate objective of evaluation and assessment is to improve students' learning and

teachers' teaching is not yet fully matured in the Czech evaluation and assessment framework. This translates into a situation whereby the more accountability-oriented elements of the framework are receiving greater attention than processes for improvement, which leads to more limited local engagement in self-assessment activities, incipient practices of evidence-informed inquiry, and assessment and evaluation results not used to their potential.

There is a need to strengthen competencies for evaluation and assessment across the system

The effectiveness of evaluation and assessment relies to a great extent on ensuring that both those who design and undertake evaluation activities as well as those who use their results are in possession of the proper skills and competencies. While there have been considerable national efforts to stimulate an evaluation culture by strengthening assessment and evaluation activities, as well as providing competency-building learning opportunities in some cases, the Review Team assesses that there are still limited evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the education system.

There is a need to improve the evaluation competencies of school governing bodies, in particular at the municipal level. There is great variation in the capacity for municipalities to develop and effectively use quality assurance systems. There is little information nationally regarding the qualifications of municipal education staff, but it seems a clear challenge for smaller municipalities to recruit staff with specific expertise in education. There are no training requirements or competencies profile for assuming educational responsibilities at the municipal level. This does not provide guarantees that the skills and competencies of municipal level educational authorities are adequate to effectively contribute to schools' improvement frameworks.

There is also a need to improve the competencies of school leaders in evaluation and assessment, in particular with regard to ensuring a meaningful school self-evaluation process, and providing pedagogical guidance and coaching to individual teachers. There is no specific initial education to train school leaders or managers in the Czech Republic, nor does the specific career of school leader exist. School principals are required to take a course on educational management within the first two years of their appointment in the context of their professional development. The focus tends to be on the administrative tasks of school leadership. These circumstances lead to limited training and preparation on pedagogical evaluation and human resource management for the role of the school principal in school self-evaluation, school improvement, teacher appraisal and teacher career development.

Another area where there is limited expertise is standardised test development. This is a rather technical area requiring very specific expertise in domains such as educational measurement, test development, validation of test items or scaling methods, which happens to be scarce in the Czech Republic mostly as the result of the limited availability of higher education offerings in these areas in the country. This is a rather problematic challenge as a current priority is the development of standardised testing in grades 5 and 9.

Other areas in which building capacity is a considerable challenge include: the competencies of teachers for student assessment (both formative and summative), also the result of the insufficient focus on skills for student assessment in initial teacher education; the data handling skills of school agents; and analytical capacity for educational planning and policy development at the system level.

The articulation between levels of government and the support from the centre are limited

Given the significant levels of devolution of decision making in education in the Czech Republic, there are variations in the implementation of national policy for evaluation and assessment at the local level. This has both advantages and drawbacks. The diversity of approaches to evaluation and assessment allows for local innovation and thereby system evolution and the large degree of autonomy given to the region, municipal and school levels may generate trust, commitment and professionalism. At the same time, there are concerns about the lack of systematic application of national directions, inconsistency of practices and little capacity or commitment to developing quality frameworks. In the Czech context, these concerns are amplified by weak articulations between the different decision-making levels. For instance, there are limited articulations between each region and the respective municipalities – *e.g.* the latter do not provide the respective region an annual report on the state of their schools. There are also indications that the Long-term policy objectives for the regions vary considerably in scope and quality, and their alignment with the national-level objectives is not systematically monitored. There is also evidence that there is not enough collaboration between municipalities within a region and among regions in the country. There are few examples where networks and partnerships of municipalities have been established as a means to take collective responsibility for quality evaluation and improvement.

There is also limited provision from the centre of tools and guidelines to assist evaluation and assessment activities. The exception consists of the guidelines for school self-evaluation, complemented with the assistance provided by the "On the Road to Quality" project which develops models for school self-evaluation. The MEYS does not develop student assessment tools for teachers to use at their own discretion such as assessment guides, scoring criteria and test or item banks. Also, the MEYS does not provide materials to undertake teacher appraisal such as self-appraisal instruments, appraisal criteria or tools for classroom observation.

There are challenges in the implementation of some evaluation and assessment initiatives

The implementation of some initiatives has been challenging and has exposed a range of difficulties. Certainly the most prominent example is the introduction of the common standardised part of the school-leaving examination. Its development started in 1997 while its implementation occurred in spring 2011. In this long period several models were developed, pilot versions implemented, fundamental features modified several times (*e.g.* whether it should have one or two levels), and heated debates organised. The approach to the examination did not receive consensus among political parties and became an issue for political fights among some groups. Hence, this particular reform has been characterised by significant uncertainty, a fragmentation of adaptations, and the dominance of politics to the detriment of pedagogical aspects.

Another prominent initiative concerns the introduction of national standardised tests. It is presently a policy priority and the government has formed working groups to develop standards to serve as the reference for the tests. However, as noted in Chapter 3, the working groups are under considerable pressure to deliver their standards swiftly. The groups were set up in November 2010 and delivered a version of the standards for public consultation in January 2011. This is very little time to develop the standards and the Review Team perceives a risk of a rushed implementation of the standardised tests,

especially in a context of limited technical expertise in the Czech Republic. The government intends to pilot the tests in 2011 and 2012 for full implementation in 2013.

One more issue which concerns both the development of the national tests and the introduction of the common part of the school-leaving examination is the lack of clarity concerning the objectives for these initiatives. Regarding the national tests, a multitude of objectives has been announced (national monitoring, assess student learning needs, school comparison, basis for enrolment into a higher educational level) but it is still unclear how the tests will achieve several objectives at the same time and how each objective will be operationalised. This might highlight a more general problem about not properly communicating the objectives of policy initiatives with the consequence of not always coming across as adequately connected.

It can also be said that consultation mechanisms in developing and implementing policy initiatives are incipient compared to those in other countries. Policy implementation typically does not involve a stage where the relevant stakeholders are formally consulted and involved in the development of implementation strategies. The development of national standardised tests is providing some opportunities for public consultation and the involvement of educational researchers and practitioners.

Overall, it was clear during the Review visit that the "big picture" was not commonly understood and the potential of evaluation and assessment to help achieve improvement was not perceived widely across the system. This is also the result of the absence of a long-term vision for educational policy and the role of evaluation and assessment in it – indeed, as pointed out earlier, the 4-year Long-term policy objectives tend to be short-sighted and based on a few key policy initiatives.

Policy recommendations

Better articulate learning goals

Establish clear goals for education and make equity and inclusion more prominent

For evaluation and assessment to be effective in improving quality across the whole education system, it is essential that all school agents have a clear understanding of the national goals for education. This requires the development of goals aligned with broader social and economic objectives, including aims at promoting equity and excellence and the articulation of the ultimate purposes of learning for citizens. In this respect, goals for the education system in the Czech Republic could be made more concrete. For instance, the Long-term policy objectives could include targets for improving educational outcomes, contemplating both achievement levels and equity. Also, objectives could be established for the short-term, medium-term and long-term, and be more based on results of the education system rather than single policy initiatives as it is presently the case.

It is also clear that equity and inclusion need to become much more prominent among the goals of the education system. This would facilitate the role of evaluation and assessment in advancing the equity goals of the education system. At the system level, it is imperative to identify educational disadvantage and understand its impact on student performance. Developing equity measures should be a priority. It is also important to ensure that evaluation and assessment are fair to given groups such as cultural minorities and students with special needs.

Clarify reference points and criteria for quality in evaluation and assessment

More clarity and support from the national level is necessary to ensure equivalent education and assessment across all schools in the Czech Republic. As explained earlier, there is a need for clearer reference points in terms of expected levels of student performance. While it is important to keep the curriculum open so as to allow for teachers' professional judgements in the classroom, there is still scope to make student learning goals more concrete. The national competency goals established in the Framework Education Programmes can be refined and expanded to include clearer guidance concerning expected student learning progressions and criteria for assessment in different subjects. This could take the form of national standards defining what constitutes adequate, good and excellent performance in different subject areas at different stages of the education system. At the same time, it is important to provide guidance and strengthen local capacity to translate national competency goals into local curricula, teaching programmes and assessment approaches (*i.e.* School Education Programmes). Collaboration among teachers, schools and school governing bodies should be enhanced so as to ensure moderation processes and enhance consistency in terms of expected student performance (see Chapter 3).

Also, evaluation and assessment processes across the education system as well as competency descriptions for school professionals should reflect the learning goals that the school system is aiming to achieve. In this context, a priority should be the development of an evidence-based statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do as a reference framework to guide teacher appraisal, professional development and career progression. The teaching standards should contain quality criteria for professional teaching practice and should be applied in individual performance appraisals (Chapter 4). Another possibility to better align learning goals to evaluation procedures is to develop an agreed framework of process quality indicators for school evaluation, which could then be made widely available to schools and school governing bodies to use in their own evaluative processes and to the Czech School Inspectorate for external evaluation.

Integrate the evaluation and assessment framework

The Czech Republic is increasingly building on evaluation and assessment to consolidate its school reform programme. There is an emerging evaluation culture in the system and an awareness of the importance of using the evaluation and assessment framework to help drive the reform agenda. However, the full potential of evaluation and assessment will not be realised until the framework is fully integrated and is perceived as a coherent whole.

An important initial step is to develop a strategic plan or framework document that conceptualises a complete evaluation and assessment framework and articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components. Key stakeholders groups should be engaged in the development of the plan so as to ensure that it is responsive to broader social and economic needs as well as to the goals of the education system. Similarly, the different levels of education governance should be engaged, in particular regions and municipalities so their responsibilities and roles in the framework are clearly established. The plan should essentially constitute a common framework of reference for educational evaluation across the country with the ultimate objective of embedding evaluation as an ongoing and essential part of the professionalism of the actors in the education system.

The plan should establish a clear rationale for evaluation and assessment and a compelling narrative about how evaluation and assessment align with the different elements in the education reform programme. It should describe how each component of the evaluation and assessment framework can produce results that are useful for classroom practice and school improvement activities. The plan could also contribute to clarifying responsibilities of different actors for the different components and allow for better networking and connections between the people working on evaluation and assessment activities. It should also create the conditions for a better articulation between the different levels of education governance, including encouraging the formation of networks and partnerships between municipalities.

This reflection should be followed up by improved training and competency descriptions for key people within the evaluation and assessment framework (including education staff in municipalities and regions), include strategies to strengthen certain components of the framework and propose ways of establishing better articulations between different evaluation components (see below).

Strengthen some of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework

As indicated earlier, there are a number of components that are still underdeveloped in the current evaluation and assessment framework. Teacher appraisal requires significant attention as the absence of a national framework leads to inconsistent and non-systematic practices. There is a need to conceptualise teacher appraisal, develop teaching standards and provide a structure to support its implementation at the school level (see Chapter 4). As many studies indicate that classroom teaching is the most important school-level factor impacting on student outcomes (OECD, 2005; Pont *et al.,* 2008), it is essential that the appraisal of teaching practices becomes an integral and systematic part of the evaluation and assessment framework. Also, the appraisal of school principals needs further rethinking and considerably more capacity in order to have an authentic impact on school leadership practices. Similarly, more attention needs to be paid to the implementation of school self-evaluation so it is systematically performed in Czech schools with the involvement of all schools agents and follow-up which leads to school improvement (see Chapter 5). Another priority area is to improve the consistency of teacher summative assessment across schools, mostly through the introduction of moderation processes (see Chapter 3). This is a key area to guarantee fairness of student marking across the country. Another related area which requires reinforcement is the formative assessment of students by teachers (see Chapter 3). Finally, considerable efforts should go into reinforcing system evaluation, including the monitoring of student outcomes at the national level and ensuring that there is a systematic overview of quality assurance systems in regions and municipalities (see Chapter 6).

Further develop some articulations within the evaluation and assessment framework

The process of developing an effective evaluation and assessment framework should give due attention to: achieving proper articulation between the different evaluation components (*e.g.* school evaluation and teacher appraisal); and warranting the several elements within an evaluation component are sufficiently linked (*e.g.* school evaluation and school improvement).

For example, as explained in the previous section, there is room to better define the articulations between: school evaluation and the appraisal of school principals (see Chapter 5); school evaluation and system evaluation (see Chapter 6); and school evaluation and teacher appraisal. Regarding the latter articulation, analysis from TALIS (OECD, 2009) suggests that school evaluations can be an essential component of an evaluative framework which can foster and potentially shape teacher appraisal and feedback. Given that the systems of school evaluation and teacher appraisal and feedback have both the objective of maintaining standards and improve 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, possibly include the external validation of school-based processes for teacher appraisal (holding the school principal accountable as necessary), and school development processes should explore links to the evaluation of teaching practice (see Chapters 4 and 5). In the context of school self-evaluation, it is also important to ensure the centrality of the evaluation of teaching quality and the feedback to individual teachers.

Examples of linkages within single evaluation components which need to be reinforced include the association between teacher appraisal and teacher professional development (see Chapter 4), the linkages between school evaluation and school improvement (see Chapter 5), the articulation between school self-evaluation and external school evaluation (see Chapter 5), and the development of teaching standards to serve as a reference for teacher appraisal.

Build on some key principles to effectively implement evaluation and assessment

The strategy to develop an effective evaluation and assessment framework should build on the following key principles:

- Place the students at the centre of the evaluation and assessment framework

  Given that the fundamental purpose of the evaluation and assessment is to improve the learning of the students, a key principle is to place the students at the centre of the framework. This translates into teaching, learning and assessment approaches which focus on students' progress and development. There are already provisions in the Czech school system for individualised support, growing opportunities for differentiated learning, and greater say of students in their learning. However, these approaches need to become more systematic across schools and classrooms. There is a need for strong messages and incentives for teachers to get away from more traditional teaching strategies and focus on motivating students and using assessment for learning and providing high quality feedback. Students should be fully engaged with their learning, contributing to the planning and organisation of lessons, having learning expectations communicated to them, assessing their learning and that of their peers, and benefitting from special attention when they fall behind. In addition, it is important to build community and parental involvement and an acceptance of learning and teaching as a shared responsibility.

- Ensure a good emphasis on the improvement function of evaluation and assessment

  A priority is to reflect on the best ways for evaluation and assessment to improve student learning. Realising the full potential of the evaluation and assessment framework involves establishing strategies to strengthen the linkages to classroom practice, where the improvement of student learning takes place. Channels which are likely to reinforce such linkages include: an emphasis on teacher appraisal for the continuous improvement of teaching practices; involving teachers in school evaluation, in particular through conceiving school self-evaluation as a collective process with responsibilities for teachers; ensuring that teachers are seen as the main experts not only in instructing but also in assessing their students, so teachers feel the ownership of student assessment and accept it as an integral part of teaching and learning; building teacher capacity for student formative assessment; and ensuring that school evaluation focuses on learning and teaching.

- Communicate the rationale for evaluation and assessment

  It should be clearly communicated that the purpose of the evaluation and assessment framework is to improve the educational outcomes of students. As such, it is expected that school agents actively use the results of evaluation and assessment activities to develop improvement or action plans at all levels.

- Recognise the importance of school leadership

  The effective operation of evaluation and assessment will depend to a great extent on the way the concept and practice of school leadership develops in the Czech Republic. It is difficult to envisage either effective teacher appraisal or productive school self-evaluation without strong leadership capacity. It is essential that school principals take direct responsibility for exerting pedagogical leadership and for assuming the quality of education in their schools. Hence, the recruitment, development and support for school leaders is of key importance in creating and sustaining effective evaluation and assessment practices 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; Leithwood *et al.*, 2006).

- Establish an implementation strategy

  The implementation of evaluation and assessment policies requires the recognition of a range of important aspects. First, reaching agreements on the design of evaluation and assessment activities requires time for discussions and consultations with all stakeholders. Second, developing expertise in the system, including training evaluators is expensive and requires time. Third, conducting evaluation processes induces additional workload for school agents. Fourth, aligning broader school reforms such as professional development opportunities with evaluation and assessment strategies requires more educational resources. It needs to be borne in mind that evaluation and the resulting feedback, reflection and development processes will only support better educational experiences and outcomes for students if school agents collaborate to make it work. To a great extent it is the motivated school agent who ensures the successful implementation of reforms in schools. Hence, it is imperative not only to find ways for school agents to identify with the goals and values of evaluation and assessment practices but also to ensure that such goals and values take account of teacher agency. The

development of national standardised tests is a good example of an initiative which is more likely to be effective if teachers understand the rationale for their introduction and recognise the value they bring to the teaching and learning in the classroom.

Develop evaluation and assessment capacity across the school system

The development of an effective evaluation and assessment framework involves considerable investment in developing competencies and skills for evaluation and assessment at all levels. As the evaluation and assessment framework develops and gains coherence, an area for policy priority is consolidating efforts to improve the capacity for evaluation and assessment. As the Czech education system is highly devolved and relies on the evaluation and assessment capacities of diverse school agents, it is important that capacity building responds to the diverse needs of school governing bodies (regions and municipalities), school principals and teachers.

A priority is to develop the evaluation competencies of school governing bodies, at the region and municipality levels. Competency profiles for regional and municipal education officers should be developed. For school authorities, an area of particular importance is to develop the capacity to understand, interpret and make decisions based on information generated by evaluation activities, including inspections undertaken by CSI. This should be part of the development of capacity to promote, support and guide improvement in their schools.

There is also a need to reinforce the educational leadership skills of school principals as their role in the Czech Republic still retains a more traditional focus on administrative tasks. The objective is that school leaders operate effective feedback, coaching and appraisal arrangements for their staff and effectively lead whole-school evaluation processes. This can primarily be achieved by redefining school leadership as educational leadership, and ensuring that the whole cohort of school leaders receives adequate training in "leadership for learning". It could be helpful to consider developing training offers that are targeted to different stages of a school leaders' career such as aspiring leader (teachers with leadership ambitions), middle or deputy leader, beginning leader, experienced leader and system leader (Pont *et al.*, 2008). School leaders should be trained to implement an authentic evaluation of teaching and learning, feedback and objective setting at their schools, including techniques in teacher observation.

Teachers could also benefit from a range of development opportunities. These include: improving skills for formative assessment including engaging students in assessment; enhancing the capacity to assess against the objectives defined in the Framework Education Programmes including promoting collaborative work among teachers around student summative assessment; and improving the capacity to collect and analyse information for self-improvement. Capacity building through adequate provision of initial teacher education and professional development should be a priority making sure provision is well aligned with the national education reforms.

Another area to explore is building capacity at the system level, including regional and municipal levels, to ensure an effective use of the results generated by evaluation and assessment activities, including analytical capacity for educational planning and policy development (see Chapter 6). Finally, a considerable investment is needed to develop expertise in standardised test development, including areas such as educational measurement and test design. This should come alongside the development of skills for school agents to use data on student learning outcomes.

Improve the articulation between levels of government and assure support from the centre

There is a need to ensure a better articulation between the national, regional and municipal levels in the implementation of policies for evaluation and assessment. In addition to the regulatory provisions defining the respective responsibilities in education and the ways the different levels of decision making are to interrelate, three broad strategies could prove useful in improving the consistency of evaluation and assessment practices: tools and guidelines provided at the national level; collaboration among school governing bodies, in particular partnerships among municipalities; and mechanisms to identify and share best practices within the education system.

An aspect that needs to be strengthened is the support from the national level for evaluation and assessment. Examples of areas in which guidance from the centre could be useful are scoring guides and exemplars of different student performance levels teachers could use in their assessments; assessment tools for teachers to use in the assessment of their students (*e.g.* test items banks); Internet platforms proposing formative teaching and learning strategies; tools for the self-appraisal of teachers; instruments for school leaders to undertake teacher appraisal; and tools and guidelines for school governing bodies to undertake the appraisal of school leaders.

There is also room to improve collaboration within the system. Regions should promote municipal partnerships to develop evaluation capacity, especially among the smallest municipalities. Another possibility is to promote the networking among the national, regional and municipal staff responsible for quality assurance in education. This could be done, for example, through an annual meeting of quality assurance staff at the different levels. The national and regional levels could also pay a greater role in supporting networks of municipalities working on particular quality assurance and improvement projects. Also, the links between the municipal and regional levels in school quality assurance need to be strengthened, for instance, through requiring municipalities to report back to the respective regions on the quality assurance in their schools.

Another strategy involves benefitting to a higher degree from practice-based expertise and from the many innovative practices that have already been developed at the local level. The national agencies, such as the Czech School Inspectorate, could play a greater role in disseminating and sharing effective practice across schools and municipalities. School governing bodies should be encouraged to collect examples of good practice from their schools. The national and regional authorities could provide guidance on how to select good examples, facilitate quality assurance of such examples, and feed evidence back to the system.

Notes

1. As described in the previous chapter, subsequently to the visit by the Review Team, a major restructuring of these agencies took place. Such reorganisation might impact the capacity to provide the MEYS with specialised expertise.

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Chapter 3

Student assessment

Student performance in the Czech Republic is assessed by a wide range of instruments, ranging from externally-based examinations to ongoing daily formative assessment in the classroom. All students are assessed in an ongoing manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area. Students are assessed both orally and through school-based tests/examinations. Marks used to report student achievement are on a scale of 1 to 5. Assessment criteria and methods are defined by each school. There are no externally-based national final examinations at the end of basic (and compulsory) education. By contrast, exit examinations are mandatory at the end of secondary education. These refer to the school-leaving examination and the final examination to obtain the apprenticeship certificate. As of 2011, the school-leaving examinations have a common national standardised part. Finally, full-cohort national standardised tests are currently being introduced in grades 5 and 9 of basic education in the Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. A major asset is that assessment is seen as part of the professional role of teachers in the Czech Republic. Other strengths include the introduction of an external dimension to assessment and the increased focus on student outcomes. However, considerable challenges exist in building effective student assessment approaches. These include the currently traditional approaches to learning and assessment; the incipient development of assessment for learning; concerns about current approaches to summative assessment; the limited consistency of student assessment across schools and classes; the potential risks of national standardised tests; the little interaction among teachers around student assessment; the insufficient attention to assessment skills in initial teacher education; and the narrow information reported to parents and legal guardians.

This chapter focuses on approaches to student assessment within the Czech Republic 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 judgment 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

The approach to student assessment in the Czech Republic – a system in rapid change

As stated in the Background Report for the Czech Republic, "evaluation of pupil achievement has a motivating function, provides feedback and also serves as one of the criteria for decisions concerning the future educational paths of pupils" (IIE, 2011).

Traditionally the provision of education in the Czech Republic was based on standardised practices (classroom instruction according to a detailed syllabus, fixed textbooks, and detailed guidelines for teachers). Student assessment was exclusively the responsibility of classroom teachers and was based on oral examinations in front of the whole classroom and regular tests. From these sources, the teacher derived a mark that was reported on students' school reports twice a year. The most important form of assessment used to be entrance examinations into upper secondary school and higher education institutions.

After 1989 the education system in the Czech Republic was liberalised (free choice of textbooks, more freedom of schools in selecting the content of education and teaching methods). Each school is now responsible for developing a School Education Programme (SEP) in response to the relevant national Framework Education Programme (FEP) that best meets the needs of its student population. Rules for the methods and content of student assessments are set out in the School Education Programme and are part of the internal school regulations. These regulations are approved by the school board.

Despite the liberalisation of the education system and curricular reforms there are many aspects of student assessment that remain largely unchanged. Teachers continue to be responsible for assessing students. All students are assessed in an ongoing manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area. Students are normally assessed orally (at least twice a year in each subject), and regularly take written tests/examinations. Written tests are usually in the form of open questions, and only rarely multiple choice. At the end of each semester, the teacher reports on each student's achievement in all curriculum areas as well as on the student's behaviour. Students' achievement is reported as a mark, in written text, or a combination of both. This applies to classes in basic and secondary schools. Marks used to report students' knowledge are on a scale of 1 (excellent), 2 (very good), 3 (good), 4 (satisfactory) and 5 (fail or unsatisfactory). There is no national final examination at the end of compulsory school (end of basic education). Rather, in the last year of compulsory school attendance, each school issues its students a final report of how well the student has achieved the educational objectives specified by law. This can also occur at the 5th or 7th grade if the student completes his/her compulsory education at *Gymnasium* or Conservatory and continues his/her studies at these schools. This requirement will be removed by amendment of Education Act currently before the Parliament.

When moving to a higher level of education, in some cases, students take entrance examinations, the content of which is the responsibility of individual schools. These examinations have traditionally represented an important milestone and the preparation of students for such examination has a high priority. However, due to population decline, the importance of these examinations is currently limited to urban settings in the transition to 6- and 8-year *Gymnasia*.

School-leaving examinations

Assessment practices in secondary schools – both general and technical education – are similar to those in basic schools. Secondary education is completed by an examination specific to the different strands. These are the school-leaving examination (in general and technical schools), the final examination to acquire the apprenticeship certificate (in secondary vocational schools) and the final examination leading to a final school report.

The school-leaving examination has two components. First, a standardised state component which comprises three assessments: Czech language and literature, a foreign language and an optional subject chosen from mathematics, sciences, information sciences and social sciences (see below). Second, a school-based component which consists of two or three assessments set in Framework Education Programmes (FEPs); and assessments in two optional subjects. The school-based component is aligned with the character of the school (*i.e.* general or technical). The assessments are written or oral. Students may only take these examinations if they have successfully completed the final year of school. The passing of the school-leaving examination is a pre-requisite for admission to a higher education institution or a tertiary professional school.

The final examination to acquire the apprenticeship certificate is composed of practical and theoretical parts in given vocational fields, typically including a written component, an oral test and an examination in practical training. The final examination is vocational in nature and students must demonstrate how well prepared they are to perform the relevant skills for the specified occupations.

Traditionally, the content, administration and marking of exit examinations, including the one associated with the apprenticeship certificate, have been the responsibility of individual schools. Teachers in individual schools specify the examination requirements, and assess students according to the assessment criteria stipulated in the respective school's School Education Programme. However an element of externality is added: a teacher from a different school is appointed as the chair of the examination board. At the same time, a common, standardised component to the school-leaving examination was introduced in 2011 (see below).

As regards the apprenticeship certificate, since 2005 the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education has been working on a new final examination with the development of uniform content/tests (common assignments) to be used by schools in the examination of the various vocational programmes so a certain level of standardisation is reached. The objective is that the standardised content matches standards of individual qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework currently being developed.

The introduction of national assessments

The introduction of national assessments has been identified as a priority in the Policy Statement of the Government of the Czech Republic of 4 August 2010 and the 2011 Long-term policy objectives. Specifically, the examinations at the end of secondary

education are being reformed, and standardised tests introduced in the 5th and 9th grades of basic education.

The introduction of national tests and examinations is controversial. Supporters argue that they will provide a means for clarifying and strengthening important parts of the curricula and will provide objective measures of educational outcomes. Opponents to the standardised tests point to a discrepancy between the content of the tests and the publicly stated objectives of reform. They also argue that the tests will focus the attention of teachers and students on to less important areas of the curriculum and encourage teaching to the test.

Reform of the school-leaving examination

Since 1997 there has been the intention to introduce a common, standardised component to the school-leaving examination, centrally administered and marked (with the exception of the parts which cannot be automatically marked, for which specifically trained teachers in the schools attended by the concerned student take responsibility). Following the development of several versions, the common component of the school-leaving examination was administered by CERMAT in spring 2011. The main reason for delays in its implementation was a lack of clarity about the reform of the examination itself. For example, the objectives the examination should serve were not clear; declared objectives of the FEP contradicted the particular model of the examination; and the models did not reflect changes to the curricula or the increased proportion of students taking them.

As described earlier, the school-leaving examination has now two parts: the common (external) standardised part and the profile (school-based) part. The MEYS, through CERMAT, is responsible for the centrally prepared standardised common part. The common part is offered in two levels of difficulty with the choice up to the student. Both levels of difficulty are supposed to give access to further study conditional upon receiving the school-leaving examination certificate. The main motivation for the introduction of the standardised component was to provide a more objective basis for the access to tertiary education. In 2011, the common part included the following three assessments: Czech language, a foreign language, and an assessment in an optional subject. Students "pass" the final examination if they successfully pass all the assessments in non-optional subjects in both the common and school-based examinations. There is no partial credit awarded for partial success, although students have the right to take a corrective examination in the subjects they failed.

Introduction of national standardised tests at grades 5 and 9

It is planned to introduce standardised tests at grades 5 and 9 of basic education in three curricular areas: Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. The tests will be IT based and able to be scored by computer. The purposes and uses of the tests will be multiple, according to the intentions made known by the Government. It is expected that the tests will provide feedback to students, parents and teachers to subsequently inform student learning. Moreover, it is envisaged to use test results to evaluate the work of schools and provide information to parents about the quality of schools, *i.e.* results will be published at the school level to allow comparison across schools. Also, test results will be used to monitor the performance of the Czech school system as a whole and the differences of performance across regions of the country. Finally, test results might possibly serve as a basis for enrolment into a higher level of education.

The development of the tests has started with the establishment of four working groups by the MEYS in November 2010. Groups are composed of MEYS staff, staff of the Research Institute of Education, school principals and teachers, and their main objective consists of the development of standards to serve as the main reference to design the standardised tests. The plan involves piloting the tests in 2011 and 2012 and fully implementing them in 2013. A first version of the standards for the tests was presented to the professional community in January 2011. A discussion forum on the standards has also been opened on the web portal of the Research Institute of Education. It should also be added that there has been a previous experience with national tests. Between 2004 and 2008 the Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (CERMAT) administered standardised tests at the national level in the Czech language, mathematics and the scholastic aptitude of students attending the 5th and 9th grades of basic schools. The stated purpose of these tests was to provide schools with feedback on their performance. Schools participated in these tests on a voluntary basis in most regions. While participating schools received reports on their results, school-level results were not published and the data were not used for system-level evaluation.

Several private companies operating within the Czech education system also offer to both basic and secondary schools standardised tests in the majority of the subjects for different grades and levels. The use of these tests by the schools is frequent as a means for them to get feedback on the performance of their students in specific curriculum areas and, if used across years to monitor student progress.

Strengths

Assessment is seen as part of the professional role of teachers

Teachers in the Czech Republic play an important role in the assessment of students. At all levels of education, teachers play the major role in assessing and reporting on student achievement. The introduction of School Education Programmes has given an even greater role and increased responsibility to teachers for establishing student learning objectives and assessing against these. Schools are required to establish and publish the criteria against which students are assessed, and have these validated by the school board. According to PISA 2009 data, the following proportion of 15-year-old students are in schools where the principal reported that the following groups have considerable responsibility in establishing student assessment policies: school principals (95.4%, highest proportion among the OECD countries, against an OECD average of 63.5%); teachers (73.2%, against an OECD average of 69.0%); and school boards (51.8%, 4th highest figure against an OECD average of 26.5%) (see Annex D).

All students are assessed in an ongoing manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area using a variety of approaches. There is widespread use of oral assessments (at least twice a year in each subject), as well as written tests/examinations. There is an emerging use of student self-assessment in areas of key competencies. Teachers collect regular evidence of student learning. In general, it can be said that this autonomy in assessment for teachers and for schools is uncontested and widely supported.

Teachers' assessments form the basis for final marks that are reported regularly to parents twice yearly. Parent-teacher meetings are held in schools four times a year to communicate students' achievement. There is no emphasis on students repeating a grade because of poor performance. Students can only repeat a grade in each stage of education. According to PISA 2009 data, grade repetition in the Czech Republic is among the lowest

in OECD countries: 4.0% of Czech students had repeated one or two grades by age 15 according to themselves (9th lowest figure among the 34 OECD countries, against an OECD average of 13.0%, see Annex D).

Teachers' assessments of student achievement are also an important part of formal school-leaving examinations through their dominant role in the school-developed part of the examinations.

On entry to compulsory education, teachers and school leaders informally assess the school readiness of children. This assessment has important diagnostic potential for optimising the educational programmes of children at an early point in their education. However, care must be taken, to ensure that this assessment does not work as a mechanism for tracking or streaming children in ways that limit their educational opportunities.

The centrality of teachers in the assessment process, and the support for this teacher agency from inside and outside schools are particular strengths of the Czech assessment system. A consequence of positioning teachers at the heart of the process is the emphasis on *formative* assessment, an emphasis that is shared in many countries. This is in spite of the variety of interpretations of the concept of formative assessment across the systems of individual countries, including the Czech Republic. Despite some contestation around meaning, there is some commitment in the Czech education system to formative approaches to assessment.

An external dimension to assessment was introduced

As explained earlier, a component of centralised, national assessment of student achievement has been introduced into the procedures of the school-leaving examination. The school-leaving examination includes both a national common component as well as a school/teacher-based component. This model allows for an assessment of students that is consistent in format and content across all schools nationally, while recognising the value of assessments that are best made by teachers.

Also, common assignments for the apprenticeship certificate have been developed by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education for use by the schools. The tests are aligned to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and have been introduced to provide an external, validated examination of key learning outcomes of the FEP and the NQF. The new assessment evaluates student competencies and knowledge against a set of uniform tasks defined for each occupational field and with comparable (standardised) methods (Kuczera, 2010).

Both these developments address one major challenge faced by any system committed to internal, formative and teacher-led assessment: the need for checks and balances across the system to ensure reliability in the application of standards and criteria and to gather system-wide data for the purposes of evaluating system quality. These arguments were used by an OECD Review of vocational education and training to recommend the introduction of a standardised assessment to cover the practical elements in technical education (Kuczera, 2010).

There is an increased focus on student outcomes

With the liberalisation of the education system and the introduction of curricular reforms, there is an increased focus on key learning outcomes for students. Alongside this focus is a move to identify expected minimum standards of achievement for students at

key points in their education. The outcomes and standards foci of education lay the platform for responding appropriately to the educational needs of all students, rather than depending on providing a standardised education to students.

Challenges

Approaches to learning and assessment remain markedly traditional

Generally there is a traditional approach to the organisation of classrooms in the Czech Republic. Teaching and assessment practices have not changed for many decades and largely still reflect the beliefs and approaches used before the liberalisation of the education system in 1989. A large majority of teachers in Czech Republic schools have been in their teaching positions for many years (often decades), and have taught in the same school for all of their teaching careers. An interesting comment from a teacher in his mid 40s, was that he had been the youngest member of his school staff for the last 15 years. In 2008, the proportion of teachers 50 years old and above was 34.0% in primary education, 23.8% in lower secondary education and 40.2% in upper secondary education (against OECD averages of 30.4%, 32.6% and 35.8%, respectively; OECD, 2010). A stagnant professional body potentially perpetuates the traditions that the Czech Republic may wish to reform, and hinders the introduction of innovations and other initiatives. This is likely, particularly in the area of assessment as it relates to supporting and improving learning.

It is well accepted that professional practices are very resistant to change, and if new practices are to be adopted, teachers must effect a change to their beliefs. There are relatively limited opportunities for professional development and learning in assessment for teachers in the Czech Republic, and when opportunities are available teachers may not necessarily recognise that they would benefit from them. Forms of professional development likely to successfully effect changes to assessment practices tend not to be available (see later discussion).

There is an increased awareness amongst educators in the Czech Republic of the importance of feedback as evidenced from comments made by educators in a range of roles who argued that marks would provide valuable feedback to parents or schools on learning or teaching. That is, marks are a means for communicating the status of a student's learning at a particular point in time, but not as the basis for better understanding a student's learning and for determining how to best support it further. Thus, the very little emphasis in assessment practices on providing student feedback hinders any interrogation of their learning, or developing the teacher-student interactions about their learning.

Assessment for learning is not systematically used in Czech schools

Educators interviewed were clear about the importance of collecting evidence of students' learning regularly from oral and written tests. Such evidence is used to assemble written reports for parents twice a year. This is an important summative use of the assessment information. However, there was little indication that the evidence gathered was used in a formative manner. Rather than being used by teachers and students jointly to understand and respond to students' learning needs, feedback was often understood as "summative assessment done more often". Feedback was often cited as being important so that teachers, schools, parents and students could be better "informed". Getting

feedback was also one of the reasons often cited by educators for national tests at grades 5 and 9, and the national examinations being useful.

The research of Black and Wiliam (1998) and many others subsequently have demonstrated the powerful effects of using feedback and other assessment for learning practices for improving students' learning. Flórez and Sammons (2010), in their review of the effects and impact of assessment for learning, indicate that most of the evidence points to a positive effect (noting, however, the need for greater hard evidence on the impact on student outcomes) but stress that a range of contextual aspects emerge as possible obstacles. As stated in the DANZ report "the primary function [of assessment] is to support learning by generating feedback that students can act upon in terms of where they are going, how they are going, and where they might go next" (Absolum *et al.*, 2009, p. 1).

For feedback to be effective, it needs to be timely, informative and constructive. Feedback to students in Czech Republic schools was not immediate, and the quality tended to be quite limited in the form of marks or brief comments. There was no evidence that assessment was used to modify teaching to address the needs of individual students, nor were individual development plans commonly used.

Also, current informal assessments of a child's readiness for schooling need to be treated with care in the Czech Republic. While an assessment has much diagnostic potential, its use should be oriented towards this purpose. For example, it would be inappropriate/unacceptable for the assessment to be used to exclude children from schooling or to track or stream them into particular types of educational programmes.

Summative assessment of students raises some concerns

Teachers tend to give normative marks by comparing a student with other students in their class. With a system-wide focus on learning outcomes and standards of expected achievement for students, such comparative assessments are no longer the most appropriate nor informative frame of reference for educators to use. More appropriate frames of reference for awarding and interpreting marks and comments on student achievement would be in relation to criteria (criterion-referenced assessment), expected levels of achievement expressed by standards (standards-based assessment), or in relation to the student's previous achievement (ipsative assessment).

For each individual subject, teachers are required to report on student achievement as well as behaviour (effort and motivation). These elements tend to be conflated by the use of a single mark/comment. That is, a student's effort and motivation are rewarded and reflected in the mark awarded. This practice confuses grading for achievement and grading for effort and motivation. It is undeniable that effort and motivation are very important factors that influence a student's achievement. However, these measures should be treated and reported separately to ensure that a "pure" indicator of each attribute is retained. This would also allow a better understanding of the student as a complex learner and inform the teacher and parents about how the student's particular learning needs can best be addressed.

There is limited consistency of student assessment across schools and classes

Each school establishes its own School Education Programme (SEP) that is validated by the school board. The school is responsible for establishing the assessment programme and assessment criteria. As described in the Background Report prepared by the

Czech Republic (IIE, 2011), the Czech School Inspectorate reports that assessment rules and practices often differ between schools and descriptions of assessment procedures and criteria are often very general. In addition, it is not common practice for Czech teachers to specify assessment criteria in full detail and to inform students of them in advance. Furthermore there is no documentation of school-based student assessment practices.

Even though schools may use the same five-point marking scale, schools have different marking criteria. Therefore, it cannot be assured that the marks awarded in one school align with similar marks awarded in another school. This inequity of grading becomes particularly problematic when a student moves to another school. The general lack of national specifications or guidelines for student assessment hinders a consistent application of assessment criteria. Variations between schools in the establishment of assessment programmes particularly in how the criteria are applied for assessing students' learning outcomes are inevitable in the absence of national guidelines and resources to support schools and teachers in this work.

Moderation (professional discussions between teachers about the quality of students' work) is one mechanism to build a shared understanding of assessment criteria and standards within schools and between schools. However, there is little moderation of marks within schools and no moderation across schools in the Czech Republic, and generally, moderation which involves teachers discussing authentic student work is underdeveloped.

The national-level support for teacher-based student assessment is limited

As indicated earlier, the curricular reforms and implementation of SEPs have placed greater demands on teachers in student assessment. There appears to be a lack of awareness at national level regarding the need to support teachers in student assessment. Limitations include a lack of guidance to help teachers to assess against FEPs (via their school SEP) in the form of exemplars of students' work, insufficient optional assessment tools for teachers, including test banks, and few options for professional development.

The national standardised tests entail a range of limitations and risks

As described earlier, the Czech Republic is preparing to introduce national standardised tests at grades 5 and 9 (in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics). The purposes of the national tests at grades 5 and 9 while announced by the MEYS remain not well understood by the education sector. The tests are being designed to be IT-based, and will therefore potentially cover the limited range of student learning objectives that can be assessed with objective item formats that can be computer marked. In preparation for the introduction of the national tests, a team of educators has been developing standards against which the national tests will be marked. Teachers will have no role in the marking of the national test.

The specification of standards for the new national curriculum (FEPs) is an essential element for a system to ensure some standardisation of the educational outcomes for students from programmes that are developed locally by individual schools (see Chapter 2). However, the preparation of standards to specifically inform the design of the national tests potentially threatens a number of hard won and very important advances the Czech Republic education system has made since liberalising its system after 1989. It is the view of the Review Team that the development of the standards is being rushed by the requirement for national tests to be piloted in 2011. Development of the standards began in November 2010 to be completed by mid 2011. Given the more immediate reason for

their development, the standards may be more appropriately regarded as specifications for the national tests, rather than indicators of the quality of student achievement expected at different levels of the education system.

The Review Team considers that it is essential to better articulate the purposes of national tests and recognise that they cover a limited range of competencies. The tests, as originally announced by the MEYS, will likely be very "high stakes tests", *i.e.* will have serious consequences attached to them. This will certainly arise if the test scores are used to evaluate schools and/or teachers. Overseas experience (particularly notable in the United States) has demonstrated that there are serious negative side effects when national test scores of student achievement are used for these purposes. In these circumstances national tests can result in teachers and schools adopting practices than maximise the "result" for their class/school, such as: *(i)* teachers focussing only on the learning outcomes that will be assessed in the national test rather than the full range of competencies of the curriculum ("teaching to the test"); *(ii)* teachers ignoring the important cross-curricular learning outcomes; *(iii)* classroom time being spent practising for the test; and *(iv)* schools encouraging only the more able students to be present when the test is administered, etc. Any potentially serious harmful effects must be considered in advance of designing, implementing and using the results of national tests, and the consequences they may have on the educational intent of the curricula reforms. See Morris (2011) and Rosenkvist (2010) for a detailed discussion.

The assessment of students leads to little interaction among teachers

In the Czech Republic teachers are rarely brought together around student assessment. There are no marking criteria or other resources available at the national level to assist with their student assessments against SEPs. In schools, teachers work in relative isolation from each other. There are low levels of teacher moderation of student assessments. Moderation (evidence-based discussions between teachers about authentic pieces of student work) has the potential to provide a very powerful professional learning opportunity for teachers that they can relate closely to their classroom practices. Moderation also contributes to improving teachers' professional judgments about student work and their developing a shared understanding of marking criteria or standards. Evidence of the powerful benefits of professional discussions around students' work to improving students' learning outcomes has been demonstrated in New Zealand's programmes of professional development in literacy, numeracy, and assessment for learning (Timperley *et al.*, 2007).

Multiple purposes to school-leaving examinations raise some concerns

The national examinations at the end of secondary education appear to serve two competing purposes. One purpose for the examination is to provide a certificate of achievement for students at the end of their secondary school education. However, it also appears that national examination results may also be used for comparing the performance of schools. These two purposes are not compatible and would require different approaches to be optimally valid for each purpose. If the national examinations are for certifying students' achievement, then it would be important to ensure that the examinations cover adequately the breadth and depth of the curriculum, knowledge and competencies/skills. There are important other sources of information that would be necessary to collect in order to understand the performance of a school.

Determining the quality of a school (the value added by a school) is a complex, and multi-dimensional task. For example, it would be important to ensure that a range of indicators of school quality consider in addition to student achievement, aspects such as the nature of the student intake, the socio-economic status of the school, the composition of the student population, teacher quality, and opportunities for professional development (see Chapter 6).

There is insufficient attention to assessment skills for teachers in initial teacher education

The assessment and evaluation of students is fundamental to the work of teachers. However, there is very little attention given to pre-service teachers developing these skills through their initial teacher education programmes. How to prepare teachers in assessment during their initial teacher education programme is an international dilemma because of the complexity of the assessment and its integrated role with understanding teaching and learning. International debate and research into this issue reveals that initial teacher education programmes vary in the way that assessment is taught: *(i)* in a dedicated assessment course; *(ii)* within curriculum areas; *(iii)* theoretically; and *(iv)* practically. Added to these are the rapidly changing demands being made of teachers in student assessment.

The information reported to parents and legal guardians is narrow

Schools provide written reports to parents twice a year and communicate students' achievement and progress in parent-teacher meetings. The Review Team agrees that the frequency of reporting to parents via written reports and/or parent-teacher meetings is laudable. However, it has some concerns about the nature of the information that is communicated. The most common reporting format is a mark on a five-point scale (1 = excellent – 5 = unsatisfactory) for each subject. While some schools report students' achievement descriptively (qualitatively), others may report in both ways.

The nature of the information reported to students and parents seems to be rather limited. Information that would be useful to report includes information about students' progress, strengths, areas of need or concern, recommendations and illustrative examples.

The quality of the tests offered by private companies might be limited and not aligned with national student learning objectives

In the Czech Republic there are two main private companies that provide assessment/testing services to schools. However, it was not clear to the Review Team that the tests offered to schools are closely aligned with the national curriculum (Framework Education Programmes). There does not seem to be an accreditation process to validate the use of such tests as reflecting student learning objectives in the Czech Republic. Their use in Czech schools reinforces the limitations referred to earlier in relation to assessing only a limited subset of the learning objectives that can be assessed by multiple-choice questions and be computer scored.

Attempts by one assessment company to provide alternative forms of assessment were described as "unsuccessful" due mainly to the limited understanding by teachers of how to make use of the information that these forms of assessment provide. That, is, teachers do not generally have the capabilities to use alternative (rich) assessment tasks

formatively in their classrooms to inform their teaching. Instead they are more familiar with using assessment (test score) information for summative purposes.

The potential influence of private assessment companies on teacher assessment practices is substantial, as are the form and nature of the national tests. It is very important that assessment policies and practices are introduced that promote and support student learning and improvement, and do not jeopardise it.

Policy recommendations

Develop educational standards covering the breadth of student learning objectives prior to developing national standardised tests

There is a need for clear external reference points in terms of expected levels of student performance at different levels of education. While it is important to leave sufficient room for teachers' professional judgements in the classroom, it is necessary to provide clear and visible guidance concerning valued learning outcomes. Teachers would benefit from education standards with more specific descriptions of what students should know and be able to do at different stages of the learning process (see also Chapter 2). Teachers can use such educational standards to identify the knowledge and skills that students must master on the way to becoming competent in the complex competencies described in the curriculum.

It is the strong feeling of the Review Team that the national tests should not be the vehicle for developing standards as this would set an inappropriate precedent. Rather, sound standards (and associated supporting resources) for the full breadth and depth of the curriculum should be developed as the basis primarily for guiding teachers' work in classrooms, assessing against the curriculum and reporting to students and parents. In other words, if tests are developed they should then be aligned to such standards rather than the tests setting the standards.

The development and introduction of appropriate standards require a number of important elements: *(i)* a measured and informed development; *(ii)* involvement and input from the teaching profession and the education sector in determining standards are appropriately set; *(iii)* trialling within schools so the standards can be refined as required; and *(iv)* support for teachers including specific professional development, examples of best practice, and resources, such as assessment tasks/materials; marking criteria; exemplars of authentic student performance that illustrate the standards accompanied by a commentary of how the judgment about the performance was made. Examples of the types of resources and other professional development support that are essential to support a sound use of standards across the education system may be found in a number of countries, such as Australia, Canada (Ontario) and New Zealand.

The New Zealand Assessment Academy (2009) identified eight key principles that should underlie the strategy to implement national standards in literacy and numeracy, and to assess, monitor and report students' achievements in relation to these standards. These are:

1. *Promote the educational progress of all students*. The focus of educational policy and practice relating to national standards should be on maximising benefit and minimising harm for students.
2. *Optimise the positive impacts* of the strategy on students' learning and educational experiences.

3. *Minimise negative impacts* of the strategy on students' learning and educational experiences. It will be important that national standards do not undermine a balanced curriculum or the educational experiences of all students.
4. *Make the standards evidence-based and achievable*. The national standards should take careful account of current levels of achievement, and promote goals that are challenging but achievable (and therefore motivating) across the wide range of students.
5. *Ensure that teachers' professional expertise is utilised and enhanced*. National standards need to be stated in a way that they do not become prescriptive of teachers' work on schools, but supportive of it.
6. *Acknowledge that parents have a right to be well informed*. Parents should receive trustworthy and meaningful information about their children's achievement and progress so that, together with the teacher and child, they can identify aspects to celebrate and aspects needing attention.
7. *Adopt a solution that particularly suits New Zealand*. There should be sufficient flexibility and choice to fit with New Zealand's model of self-governing schools and the corresponding flexibility built into the New Zealand Curriculum.
8. *Value multiple sources of evidence*. It is a well-accepted measurement principle that no single source of information (test score, teacher's assessment) can provide an unequivocally accurate summary of a student's achievement. This is true at the school and national levels as well.

Limit the undesired effects of national standardised tests

Before implementation, the MEYS should reflect further on the purposes of the national tests, articulate those purposes in ways that are convincing for educators, and carefully design appropriate measures that will optimise the positive impacts on student learning and minimise the negative impacts. If they are to be introduced, they should first be trialled to enable an evaluation of impacts before full-scale implementation. National standardised tests (as well as school-leaving examinations) should be valid and reliable instruments, assess the breadth of learning objectives in the curriculum, and results should be used properly for their intended purposes by teachers and education agencies.

An independent working group with representatives from a range of sectors and organisations in education could be established to further debate the national test, monitor its implementation and conduct impact evaluations. The high stakes nature of the test will undoubtedly influence classroom (and perhaps governmental) practices. It is essential that the independent working group has the remit and expertise to investigate and make recommendations to ensure that the test is valid, that is, it is testing what it is intended to test and is used for the purposes for which it is designed. It will be important also to ensure that the information about student performance is collected in a way that is reliable and that the public can have confidence in the students' results. It will be important too to communicate widely amongst the education sector and with the public, the role and nature of the national test, and the quality assurance measures that might be introduced to ensure public confidence.

Develop a broad strategy for student assessment and strengthen the role of formative assessment

The key to improving student outcomes lies in developing and supporting the expertise of teachers in assessment. This requires an investment in both resources and professional development across the system to:

- develop teachers' assessment capabilities, including training teachers to assess against student learning objectives;
- include a focus on developing assessment capabilities in initial teacher education programmes;
- gain understandings of the developmental progressions that students go through in their learning;
- identify what the indicators of student achievement and progress are (standards and learning progressions);
- provide tools supporting the assessment of students (including banks of items, tests, assessment tasks and exemplars for assessing against student learning objectives and to model appropriate assessment); and
- encourage a broad range of assessment approaches.

At the heart of improving student achievement in the Czech Republic should be a greater awareness and practice of using assessment *for* learning, that is, using assessment formatively in an ongoing way to monitor students' learning and to plan for their next learning steps. Seen in this light, assessment is an essential tool of the education system, but primarily of teachers, in improving student achievement. The Czech Republic needs a stronger commitment to improving students' achievement through the use of formative assessment to enhance student learning, rather than simply through the use of assessment summatively for recording and reporting learning. This is to go alongside high quality pedagogical practice and classroom processes.

The assessment information collected by teachers should be used to improve student learning rather than simply recording student achievement. Teachers (and students) can be active agents in using such information to examine how a student is progressing, identifying a student's strengths and weaknesses, and what the next steps in learning should be for that student to continue to make progress. Both pro-active and re-active approaches to understanding students are essential to optimise each student's learning.

Developing teachers' assessment capabilities through professional development and learning opportunities must focus on how assessment information can be used to inform teaching. By developing teachers' understandings that assessment is central to sound pedagogical practice within the classroom, and supporting them to develop practices in which student learning is informed by assessment information, the role and power of assessment for improving learning can become realised.

Effective formative assessment requires that teachers develop sophisticated skills for uncovering students' level of understanding, for providing feedback and adjusting teaching strategies to meet identified needs, and for helping students to develop their own skills for learning to learn. Strategies to improve the impact of formative assessment might include a stronger focus on short-cycle classroom interactions, building teachers'

repertoire of research-based formative assessment techniques, and strengthening the approaches to respond to identified learning needs (OECD, 2005).

The policy options suggested in this section require a substantial mind-shift to the way assessment (testing and examinations) is viewed and used by the education sector and the public to promote student achievement. This is a necessary, and non-trivial matter that can only be accomplished with a strong, long-term commitment on the part of the education sector. Through attention to developing system-wide expertise in the multiple aspects of assessment capability, the Czech Republic has the potential to be a "learning system" in which assessment in its many roles is used to inform improvement. The New Zealand Ministry of Education *Position Paper on Assessment* (2010) provides a formal statement of its vision for assessment. It describes what the assessment landscape should look like if assessment is to be used effectively to promote system-wide improvement within, and across, all layers of the schooling system. The paper places assessment firmly at the heart of effective teaching and learning.

The purpose and nature of sound teacher assessments in New Zealand is reflected in the following statement:

> *The heart of teacher assessment is supporting the learner and learning in the everyday instructional context. It avoids ritualised testing, marking, and record keeping and emphasises interactive teacher–student processes that involve regular analysis, instructional feedback, and monitoring of learning against clear and publicly known achievement criteria. The success of such assessment depends largely on high but appropriate expectations of students, well-conceived achievement criteria, and high-quality feedback.*
>
> (Absolum *et al.*, 2009, p. 16;
> *www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/research/mainpage/directions*)

Build teachers' capability for student assessment

The Czech Republic needs to make a large investment in developing the assessment capabilities (skills and competencies) of teachers through models of professional development and learning known to be effective (see Timperley *et al.*, 2007) and effective approaches in initial teacher education programmes. The assessment capabilities required by teachers are many and complex, and include skills for designing sound (valid) student assessment tasks, using a wide range of formative assessment practices (including providing constructive, timely and informative feedback), making accurate and dependable judgments about students' learning on the basis of assessment tasks, and using student assessment information to assist with student learning and achievement. For instance, Absolum *et al.* (2009) suggest that assessment capable teachers:

- are knowledgeable about the curriculum and teaching;
- 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;
- are aware of the effects of assessment on learners;
- are able to choose from the available assessment approaches and tools those that will best help them and their students *(i)* judge how well learning goals have been met and *(ii)* determine future directions for learning;

- are able to interpret the information that has been gained and to share it with students (and, where appropriate, with parents) so that they can understand it too;
- recognise when their evidence is dependable and sufficient on which to base a good judgment; and
- can analyse student assessment data.

The importance of investing in resources and professional development to support teachers' use of assessment for learning purposes in the classroom cannot be underestimated. Professional development needs to be seen as integral to the ongoing professional responsibilities of teachers and to be successful, it needs to be school-based, have the support of and involve the school leader, and be practised within teachers' own educational settings. While the conditions for sustainable professional learning that impact positively on student outcomes are complex, nevertheless much is known about them. It is important that programmes of teacher professional learning take advantage of the insights provided by research, such as the Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) Iteration that have been conducted in New Zealand (Timperley *et al.*, 2007). This study indicated that the following describe context and content for effective professional learning and development:

- Providing sufficient time for extended opportunities to learn and using the time effectively;
- Engaging external expertise;
- Focusing on engaging teachers in the learning process rather than being concerned about whether they volunteered or not;
- Challenging problematic discourses;
- Providing opportunities to interact in a community of professionals;
- Ensuring content was consistent with wider policy trends;
- In school-based initiatives, having leaders actively leading the professional learning opportunities;
- Discipline knowledge and the interrelationship between such fundamentals as new curricula, pedagogy, and assessment information;
- Knowledge of students, including their developmental progressions through particular curricula, and their culture;
- Linguistic and cultural resources; and
- Theoretical frameworks and conceptual tools.

Develop a range of tools at the central level to support teacher-based student assessment

To assist teachers in their practical assessment work against educational standards, there is a need to develop support materials, such as marking rubrics listing criteria for assessing and rating different aspects of performance and exemplars illustrating student performance at different levels of achievement. Clear marking rubrics can make teachers' assessment transparent and fair and encourage students' meta-cognitive reflection on their own learning. They can be used to define what constitutes excellent work and enable

teachers to clarify assessment criteria and quality definitions. Such guidance can help teachers make accurate judgements about student performance and progress, which is essential to make decisions about how to adapt teaching to students' needs.

Fulfilment of a decentralised approach to the delivery and assessment of the curriculum for improving students' learning outcomes therefore demands greater resourcing, guidance and support. Similarities evident in other systems such as New Zealand highlight greater roles and increased responsibilities for teachers in curriculum design, delivery and student assessment. There a broad range of support has been provided over an extended period of time to enable teachers to develop these required assessment skills and competencies. These have included school-wide and school-based professional development and learning programmes, curriculum exemplars, item banks in English, mathematics and science, a range of optional assessment tools, such as the Progressive Achievement Tests (standardised tests of achievement), Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle), and dissemination of good practice. The Ministry of Education website (*www.tki.org.nz*) provides an avenue to view assessment initiatives and support for teacher assessments.

Put in place moderation processes to ensure the consistency of student summative assessment

A priority should be the introduction of moderation processes within and across schools to increase the reliability of teacher-based judgments. The objective is to reduce the variations in the ways teachers assess students and set marks so equity of student assessment is improved. This should go along with the development of guidelines at the national level for assessing against student learning objectives. Teachers require exemplars of student work to illustrate achievement at different levels or marks, benchmarks or indicators of desired student achievement, optional assessment tasks, and tests. These issues are particularly important to consider for the school-based assessment component of the school-leaving examination if it is to have national comparability, be fair and have the confidence of the public.

Moderation is also a key mechanism of professional development for teachers in school-based student assessment. Moderation between teachers within a school is the platform for developing a shared understanding of the school assessment programme, assessment criteria, and standards for applying marks. Moderation between teachers across schools broadens further the shared understanding and therefore consistency in teacher judgments about student performance.

It would be beneficial to develop guidelines and professional support for appropriate approaches to moderation, both within and between schools. The guidelines should emphasise the importance of moderation as a process for developing assessment capability, assessment confidence and common understandings of assessment standards amongst teachers, but also as a mechanism for increasing the dependability (validity and reliability) of teacher assessments of students' performance.

Student assessment should be criterion-based rather than norm-referenced

It is essential that teachers and education agencies develop the ability to assess against student learning objectives. The meaning of the 1-5 scale should be reviewed and expressed to reflect achievement against learning objectives of the curriculum.

To facilitate the use of the 1-5 scale in relation to student learning objectives in a criterion-referenced manner, the MEYS needs to provide resources and support for teachers. The learning objectives need to be specified in sufficient detail to be clear and unambiguous, be accompanied by a range of assessment tasks/resources which illustrate how the learning objectives might be validly assessed, and annotated exemplars of student performance to illustrate each level of the learning objectives should be made available.

Assessment of a student's performance should be in relation to achievement against the learning objectives. It should not be confounded with measures of student motivation and effort. These are important, but separate attributes of students' learning that should be reported separately.

Ensure student assessment is inclusive

Assessment systems should underline the importance of responding to individual learner needs and school community contexts, and design assessment strategies that suit the needs of different learner groups. The objective is to develop an inclusive student assessment system based on the principle that all students have the opportunity to participate in educational activities, including assessment activities, and to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competencies in a fair way. Hence, teacher assessment practices and the format and content of national tests and examinations should be sensitive to particular groups of students and students with special needs, and avoid biases by socio-economic background, minority status (*e.g.* Roma students) and gender.

It is suggested that quality assurance guidelines are prepared and practices adopted that ensure that assessments are evaluated or reviewed for their potential bias in these respects. This may include consideration of a variety of assessment formats (test-based, performance tasks, oral, written) so that individual students/groups of students are not systematically disadvantaged; and peer review of the content of test/examination questions.

Provide adequate reporting to students and parents

Good reporting and communication strategies are necessary to ensure consistency between different levels of education and to reach out to parents. Good reporting is also essential for involving parents in supporting their children's learning and in focussing resources, both at school and at home, on essential learning targets (Guskey and Marzano, 2001). Hence, reporting needs to be clear and easy to understand, especially in basic education when parents and teachers can have the greatest impact on a child's learning. It also needs to be informative. A good example is that of New Zealand, where the Assessment Academy (2009) identified the following elements as essential for sound informative reporting:

- Progress in students' achievement against the national standards both in terms of the levels of proficiency and the progress over the term of the report;
- Aspects of the curriculum in which the student is particularly successful;
- Aspects of the curriculum in which the student needs further assistance to reach the desired standards;
- Recommendations for teachers and parents; and
- Examples of student work to demonstrate levels of proficiency and progress (or areas of concern).

Effective reporting is also important to ease student transitions when they are changing schools or moving to a higher level of education. To ensure some minimum quality requirements, it could be considered to provide a national template for reporting student achievement and guidance materials that teachers can use to report student performance against student learning objectives.

Build capacity of markers of external tests and examinations

For external tests and examinations to have national credibility and the confidence of employers and further education institutions, the Czech Republic needs to build the capacity of teachers employed to mark them. This requires paying attention to inter-marker reliability (consistency between markers) and intra-marker reliability (consistency of one marker over time). It also requires teachers being trained to be markers, adopting moderation procedures to ensure that there is inter-marker consistency and monitoring teacher accuracy and consistency throughout the marking period (intra-marker reliability).

Given the importance of the school-leaving examination for students' future study and career plans, it is necessary to adopt procedures that ensure that the marking is reliable, rigorous, unbiased and consistent nationally. Teachers employed to mark the examination scripts should: *(i)* be adequately trained for the role; *(ii)* have clear and detailed marking criteria/rubrics available; *(iii)* have their initial marking moderated; and *(iv)* if necessary, their interpretation of the marking criteria/rubrics clarified and "corrected".

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Chapter 4

Teacher appraisal

In the Czech Republic, there are no national requirements for teacher appraisal and no formal procedures exist to periodically evaluate the performance of teachers. However, teacher appraisal is typically conducted by school principals in approaches defined locally by the schools. Teacher appraisal takes place (1) when teachers are hired as a way to assess their teaching capacities; and (2) as part of teachers' regular work in the school through observations made by their school principals. There are no national performance criteria or reference teaching standards to guide the process. Appraisal criteria are decided by the schools and often by the school principal in processes which tend to include interviews and classroom observation. In the context of their autonomy, school principals generally use the results of teacher appraisal in defining professional development plans of individual teachers and in determining their career progression and pay levels. Particularly positive features of teacher appraisal include the wide acceptance of the principle that teachers should be evaluated; the focus on evaluating classroom teaching; the legal recognition of the importance of teacher professional development; the existing linkages with school evaluation; and the plans to develop teaching standards and a new career system for teachers. However, the development of teacher appraisal is faced with a number of challenges. These include the non-existence of a shared understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching; the non-systematic implementation of teacher appraisal; the little tradition of educational leadership in schools; the tensions between the accountability and improvement functions of teacher appraisal; the lack of transparency in linking teacher appraisal to salary rewards; and the poor links between teacher appraisal and professional development.

This chapter looks at approaches to teacher appraisal within the Czech evaluation and assessment framework. Teacher appraisal refers to the evaluation of individual teachers to make a judgement about their performance. Teacher appraisal typically has two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve teachers' own practice 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). The analysis of teacher appraisal has to be seen within the particular national context: for an overview of key features of the teaching profession in the Czech Republic, see Box 4.1.

Context and features

Teacher appraisal procedures

Teacher appraisal in the Czech Republic is regulated by general labour-law provisions. As the employers of teachers, school principals are responsible for appraising teachers' performance and results. Teacher appraisal takes place (1) when teachers are hired as a way to assess their teaching capacities; and (2) as part of teachers' regular work in the school through observations made by their school principals. However, the Czech Republic does not have a common framework regarding teacher appraisal and little guidance is provided nationally on how to evaluate individual teachers. There are no national reference standards or performance criteria to support schools in their teacher appraisal approaches.

When teachers are hired, school principals typically assess their fulfilment of conditions such as legal requirements, integrity, health and knowledge of the Czech language and consider the qualifications, responsibilities and the nature of activities to be carried out by teachers. Based on this assessment, school principals determine the career and salary levels of newly hired teachers.

Little information is available regarding the procedures and criteria used by school principals for the regular appraisal of teachers in the course of their work. School principals are fully autonomous in the choice of the areas to be evaluated. According to the Institute for Information on Education (2011), the most common elements of teacher appraisal are classroom observations and interviews undertaken by the school principal, while portfolios are relatively rare. Some schools may use a school-based set of criteria developed jointly by the teachers of the school.

Other forms of feedback to teachers

As part of its inspection visits, the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) visits classrooms and interviews teachers, and it may occasionally also use teacher portfolios, teacher self-appraisal or evaluations based on pupil performance. However, the purpose of these visits is to evaluate teaching quality of the school as a whole rather than to appraise individual teachers. Based on a range of evaluations of individual teachers, CSI develops a general statement about teaching quality in the school. Nonetheless, according to the Institute for Information on Education (2011), the results of CSI evaluations may be used by the school principal to provide feedback to individual teachers and/or to determine their career progression, salary level and other benefits.

Teacher appraisal may also be carried out as part of school self-evaluation processes. Depending on the requirements set by the school management, such appraisal may take place to evaluate the quality of the schools' human resource policy. While teachers are

not formally obliged to carry out self-appraisal, they may be encouraged or required to do so by the school leadership team. The results of teacher appraisal performed as part of school self-evaluation are used as background information for inspections.

Teachers who are motivated to receive feedback and improve their work have the possibility to take part in systematic appraisals offered by two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Czech Republic, which are members of international networks ("Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking" and "Step by Step"). These organisations offer voluntary certification processes for teachers. However, school principals are not obliged to take such qualifications into account when recruiting new teachers or in setting their salary levels and increments. Only a small minority of Czech teachers have participated in such certification processes.

While regional authorities do not play a direct role in the school-based teacher appraisal system, some of them have launched initiatives to reward effective teaching practice. For example, the regional authority of Moravia-Silesia receives proposals for teachers to be rewarded from school principals, school boards and municipalities and allocates awards to 25 individual teachers each year. There are two categories of awards: one for high quality of education processes and one for long-term merit.

Competencies to undertake teacher appraisal

The key role in teacher appraisal is exercised by school principals. School principals are typically former teachers appointed by the organising body (regions or municipalities for public schools) following a competitive recruitment procedure. The prerequisites to apply for school principal positions are: (1) to meet the requirements necessary for teachers; and (2) to have obtained experience in direct educational activity (or activities requiring similar specialised knowledge), or managerial activities, or activities in research and development. The features of the selection process, including the announcement, the composition of the selection committee and procedural rules are defined by the MEYS (Eurydice, 2010).

There is no mandatory pre-service training for school leadership, but school principals who do not have qualifications in school management are required to follow a professional training course within their first two years on the job. Human resource management, including evaluation and appraisal, is one of the topics covered in this training, even though it remains a small part of the course. There is also a national professional development project for school principals ("A Successful School Principal"), which includes a module on human resource management.

As part of European Social Fund (ESF) programming, several projects have been developed to improve competencies for teacher appraisal. In particular, the "On the Road to Quality" project, launched in 2009, aims to develop instruments for teacher appraisal as part of school self-evaluation and to build teachers' capacity for understanding and implementing evaluation approaches. One aspect of the project was the development of a 360 degree feedback tool for middle management staff in schools.

Some of the regional authorities have also developed programmes to strengthen the approaches and methods used for teacher appraisal across schools. For example, in the Moravian-Silesian region, a methodology was developed to support school principals in teacher appraisal, as part of an ESF-funded project ("The Chance").

Using appraisal results

Teacher appraisal in the Czech Republic is part of the school's performance management process and has traditionally been used with a summative purpose. It aims to check teachers' performance and can be used to determine the career and salary levels of teachers. It is the responsibility of school principals to make decisions regarding teacher's career progression and pay levels.

Promotions to a higher career level are generally awarded only if teachers take on additional responsibilities. Teachers showing very good long-term performance or performing a range of extra tasks may receive pay increments up to 50% of basic pay (or, in exceptional cases, up to 100%). In practice, however, salary increments are largely determined by teachers' length of service.

Sanctions are only applied in exceptional cases. If teachers violate the obligations set out in legal regulations, school principals may implement two types of sanctions: reducing pay increments or giving the teacher notice.

In some schools, teacher appraisal is being used for formative purposes as well. In these cases, teacher appraisal may include an element of teacher self-appraisal and/or a focus on identifying teachers' professional development needs. However, according to the Institute for Information on Education (2011), little emphasis is put on such formative use of appraisal results.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in the Czech Republic – Main features

Employment status, career structure and salary

Teachers in the Czech Republic are public administration employees. Conditions of service are set out in the Labour Code and other general national labour regulations. Within this framework, school principals are autonomous in detailing the specific service conditions at the school. Most teachers have permanent employment contracts.

There are nine groups of pedagogical/educational staff defined by the Act on Educational Staff, namely: teacher, educator, special needs teacher, psychologist, teacher responsible for leisure activities, teaching assistant, coach and pedagogical manager. For each group, there are five or six career levels. To place teachers on the relevant career level, the school principal takes into account the extent of responsibilities the job involves and the relevant qualification requirements. School principals determine teachers' basic rate of pay based on qualifications and years of experience and can award pay increments and one-off bonuses. All fully qualified teachers are entitled to advancement on the salary scale independent of their type of contract or their form of employment relationship.

Prerequisites to become a teacher

To be admitted to higher education institutions providing teacher education, students must have passed the secondary school-leaving examination as well as the entrance examinations of the institution. Enrolment proceedings vary between faculties and may include a general test, an examination (written and/or oral) in the relevant subjects and/or an interview regarding students' motivation and suitability for the studies. The number of places for teacher education is generally limited primarily by the capacity of each institution.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in the Czech Republic – Main features *(continued)*

After completion of initial teacher education, teachers are hired into schools through an open recruitment procedure led by the school principal. The process cannot be influenced by municipal or regional authorities. The prerequisites for entering the teaching profession detailed in the Act on Educational Staff include: (1) having full legal capacity; (2) being qualified for the direct educational activity being performed; (3) not having a criminal record; (4) being in good state of health; and (5) proving knowledge of the Czech language.

Initial teacher education

The requirement for teaching staff in primary and secondary education (general subjects) is to have obtained a Master's degree in specific education programmes. For practical education teachers, different types of lower vocational qualifications (from non-tertiary education) are sufficient. Teacher education for general subjects is mostly concurrent, while for technical/vocational subjects it is usually consecutive.

Teacher professional development

The school principal is responsible for the professional development of educational staff. The MEYS has established an obligation for all educational staff to regularly undertake in-service training and the details of this requirement are regulated by decree. Teachers are entitled to 12 free and paid days of leave for study purposes per year. The cost of professional development may be covered by the school (fully or partly) or by the participating teachers themselves.

The largest body providing in-service training is the National Institute for Continuing Education, which functions as an institution of the Ministry and receives funding from the State budget. It manages 13 regional centres and provides professional development opportunities for teachers related to national education priorities. It also provides training allowing individuals to obtain additional qualifications; such courses are designed for example for school principals, teachers without qualifications and teaching assistants.

Sources: Eurydice (2010), Institute for Information on Education (2011).

Strengths

The principle that teachers should be evaluated is widely accepted

While the processes and criteria for teacher appraisal are not regulated nationally, there is a clear legal requirement for school principals to appraise their teachers. According to the Institute for Information on Education (2011), teacher appraisal takes place in all schools.

In the schools visited by the Review Team, school principals and teachers described teacher appraisal as a well-established aspect of regular practice in schools. In some schools, teacher appraisal practice was indeed quite extensive, taking place several times a year and with both longer observations lasting for an entire lesson and partial observations done through irregular drop-ins. Several schools had developed their own criteria for classroom observation. Among the school principals and teachers the Review Team spoke to, teacher appraisal was widely accepted as an important and normal part of school activities.

At the same time, little information is available nationally regarding the frequency and quality of teacher appraisal across the Czech Republic. Also, while classroom observations appeared to be normal practice in all schools visited by the Review Team, they were not necessarily undertaken systematically for each individual teacher. In most schools, there was a particular focus on appraising beginning teachers in their first years on the job. In some cases, this was also coupled with induction or mentoring arrangements. Professional feedback and suggestions for professional development were mostly directed at younger, less experienced teachers.

Teacher appraisal is focused on evaluating classroom teaching

Systems of teacher appraisal that evaluate systematically the teaching and learning occurring in each classroom can be powerful levers to increase teacher effectiveness and achieve better student outcomes. A key strength of teacher appraisal in the Czech Republic is that the process is clearly focused on evaluating actual teaching practices in the classroom. The typical approach to teacher appraisal is for school principals and/or their deputies to observe classroom practice, followed by a common discussion and analysis of the observed practice with the teacher.

While the traditional focus of teacher appraisal has been on a summative checking of teacher performance, the emphasis on classroom observation has great potential in terms of developing a more formative dimension in teacher appraisal. In several schools visited by the Review Team, the dialogue following classroom observation was indeed used to identify teachers' strengths as well as discussing individual weaknesses that need to be addressed by professional development.

The importance of teacher professional development is recognised in the legislation

For teacher appraisal to lead to improvement of practices, it is important that feedback is followed up with appropriate professional development. The importance of continuous professional development for teachers is recognised in legal documents in the Czech Republic, with Act No. 563 on Pedagogical Staff establishing an obligation for teachers to undergo in-service training and an annual entitlement of 12 days leave for professional development purposes. School principals are required to develop professional development plans taking account of the teacher's individual development preferences and the school's needs and budget. While there are a number of implementation difficulties regarding teacher professional development (more on this below), the emphasis on continuous learning is an important precondition for teacher appraisal to be followed up with appropriate training.

Some structures for co-operation and exchange among teachers are in place

Exchange with colleagues can also be an important source of constructive feedback to teachers. In the Czech Republic, teachers in larger schools are typically organised in subject commissions bringing together all teachers teaching a particular subject. This structure facilitates peer exchange and co-operation regarding teaching in a particular subject area, such as preparing lessons or discussions about how to teach particular concepts. The heads of subject commissions typically play an important role in organising classroom observations and/or peer appraisal, looking after new teachers and reporting to the school principal with a view to provide input to the school's self-evaluation. In one of the secondary schools visited by the Review Team, there were established systems for

peer review with school-wide criteria and a focus on identifying teachers' individual development needs. However, while good practice related to peer appraisal exists in some schools, there is evidence that this is not widespread across the whole system (more on this below).

There are some linkages between teacher appraisal and school evaluation

As school evaluation and teacher appraisal both aim to maintain high standards and improve teaching and learning, there are likely to be great benefits from synergies between the two processes. In the Czech Republic, there are some linkages between teacher appraisal and school evaluation. School inspection has a strong focus on classroom observation even though its purpose is not to evaluate individual teacher quality. In the current inspection approach, the CSI has developed a checklist of methods and teaching strategies to be observed during classroom visits and the visits also include structured or loose interviews with teachers. While there is no analysis of the practice of individual teachers, this exchange provides opportunities for inspectors to draw attention to good teaching practice or recommend professional development offers to the teacher. The CSI also provides an external check of whether teacher appraisal is organised by school principals as part of their self-evaluation approaches. These linkages between school evaluation and teacher appraisal provide some good connections on which the evaluation and assessment framework can build.

There are plans to develop teaching standards and a new career system for teachers

In 2008/2009, there have been intensive reflections on strengthening the methodology of teacher appraisal and connecting the results to career advancement. While no decision has been made regarding the implementation of such reforms, the debates and initial work in this domain are important steps into the direction of a more systematic and consistently effective teacher appraisal system.

One part of these reflections was focused on the development of standards for the teaching profession. A group of experts chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education published an introductory document concerning the standards for the teaching profession in February 2009, followed by large public discussion involving several thousand teachers. This participative process helped prioritise the topic of teacher appraisal in the public debate and policy agenda. While the work on standards was interrupted in 2009, a new project is currently underway to work on the development of teaching standards.

A second part of the reflections on teacher appraisal focused on the creation of a career system for teachers. By the end of 2010, the MEYS published a draft for a new career system with four distinct career steps: beginning teacher, teacher, teacher with the first attestation (*atestace*, recognition of a higher competence level), and teacher with the second attestation. The proposal is that the school principals should validate their teachers' competencies for inclusion at career levels beyond the first level. It is suggested that teachers should use a professional portfolio to document and keep track of their professional development, work experience, self-appraisal and other elements. The draft also proposes that teachers should complete at least 100 hours of continuing professional development for advancement to the second and third career levels, and 250 hours for advancement to the fourth level.

The link between teacher appraisal and pay increments has potential to incentivise high performance

The basic rate of a teacher's pay is determined based on their qualification and experience, but teachers may be awarded additional pay increments and bonuses that are determined by the school leadership team. The fact that school principals are autonomous in attributing these increments has the advantage that they can make rewards contingent on evidence of professional development and high performance thereby incentivising teachers to take certain responsibilities and continuously improve their practice. However, there are important questions regarding the transparency of how salary rewards are implemented, which raise concerns about the ability of the pay system to provide the right incentives. For example there is a lack of clarity about the way the performance of teachers is appraised and about the aspects of teachers' work that are actually rewarded. These issues are addressed below.

Challenges

There is currently no shared understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching

Even though the initial work undertaken to develop teaching standards in the Czech Republic was promising, this work was interrupted in 2009 and the education system currently still lacks a national framework defining standards for the teaching profession. Hence, at the moment, there is no clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. At the national level, there are no uniform performance criteria or reference frameworks against which teachers could be appraised. Also, there is no teaching body that is led or strongly influenced by the profession itself, which could take the lead in developing such a standard.

Professional standards are essential to guide any fair and effective system of teacher appraisal, given the need to have a common reference of what counts as accomplished teaching (OECD, 2005). The lack of such a framework weakens the capacity of school principals to effectively appraise teachers as required by labour-law provisions. While in some schools, teachers and principals have engaged in developing their own criteria based on local practice, for teacher appraisal to be effective across the system it would be important that all school principals have a shared understanding of high quality teaching and the level of performance that can be achieved by the most effective teachers.

Teacher appraisal is not systematically implemented for all teachers

Given that the design and implementation of teacher appraisal is the responsibility of each individual school, teacher appraisal practices vary across the system. The quality and extent of teacher appraisal approaches in individual schools depend on the capacity and leadership style of the school principals. While school inspectors check whether teacher appraisal is implemented as part of school self-evaluation, there is no mechanism to ensure that each individual teacher receives proper professional feedback. As a consequence, there is also no guarantee that underperformance is identified and addressed accordingly.

In addition, there is relatively little peer evaluation, observation and feedback from colleagues within schools. Evidence from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007 indicates that while discussions about how to teach a

particular concept and collaborative work to prepare instruction materials are quite common practice, it is still very rare for teachers to visit a colleague's classroom to observe his or her teaching. In fact, 81% of 4th grade mathematics teachers and 88% of 8th grade mathematics teachers indicated that they never engaged in peer observation in another teacher's classroom (IEA, 2008).

There is little tradition for educational leadership in schools

While school principals in the Czech Republic have a very high degree of autonomy in the management of their staff, it appears that many of them have not been sufficiently prepared for their wide range of tasks, in particular leading teaching and learning processes in the school. It is mandatory for school principals to participate in a school management course within the first two years on the job, but this training has only a limited focus on educational leadership. School principals spend most of their time on administrative tasks and there is little distribution of leadership roles across the school. A recent McKinsey survey of 650 Czech school principals revealed that school principals spent on average about 50% of their working hours on administration, 20% on communication, 10% on teaching and only 20% on instructional leadership (McKinsey and Company, 2010). Hence, as reported by teachers and school principals during the OECD visit, school principals often lack time to ensure the systematic appraisal of all their teachers every year. School principals may also have limited competency to observe their teachers' classroom practice with an evaluative focus, provide coaching and mentoring, and plan for teachers' professional development.

There are tensions between the accountability and improvement functions of teacher appraisal

As pointed out by the Institute for Information on Education (2011), teacher appraisal has traditionally been conceived as a summative and accountability-oriented process rather than an instrument to provide formative and constructive feedback to teachers. However, there is increasing awareness of the need to use teacher appraisal and classroom observations as a way to support teachers' professional development and improvements in teaching practice. While the focus on formative appraisal is a positive development *per se*, there are risks involved in trying to achieve both the accountability aspect and the improvement aspect of teacher appraisal in one single process.

As detailed by Santiago and Benavides (2009), combining these two functions in the same process raises a number of challenges. When teachers are confronted with high stakes consequences of appraisal on their career and salary, they are likely to be less inclined to reveal weak aspects of their practice and focus on their own potential for development, which in turn jeopardises the improvement function. A strong emphasis on the checking or accountability aspect of the appraisal may lead teachers to feel insecure or fearful and reduce their appreciation of their work (Isoré, 2009). Many of the teachers interviewed by the Review Team were not quite sure about the intended purpose of teacher appraisal and there was a lack of clarity regarding the actual impact and consequences of teacher appraisal results.

The link between teacher appraisal and rewards is not transparent

As mentioned above, there are potential benefits of linking teacher appraisal to pay increments. It can allow school principals to do proper staff planning, stimulate professional development, and reward, retain and motivate teachers. However, there are

indications that the current system of performance-related pay increments does not fulfil these functions, mainly due to a lack of transparency in the way that increments are awarded. According to the Institute for Information on Education (2011), there is a high degree of discontent with the Czech teacher appraisal system as it is widely perceived as leading to unjust financial remuneration. A survey by Factum Invenio (2009) found that 64% of teachers considered the current system of appraisal to be outdated and inappropriate.

Many of the teachers the Review Team spoke to indicated that the relationship between performance and pay was not transparent. Teachers often did not know how their salary was determined and whether it was based on classroom observations or other aspects of their work. A major reason for the lack of transparency in the link between performance and pay is the absence of a clear framework for evaluating the performance of teachers. As indicated above, there are currently no profession-wide agreed competence standards for teachers or a shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching. In addition, there is a lack of agreed procedures and instruments to evaluate the performance of teachers while ensuring standards of reliability, validity and fairness. Hence, school principals may feel inhibited to establish a closer linkage between pay and performance.

In addition, according to some of the school principals we spoke to, there is in fact very little scope for school principals to award pay increments because of the limited extra money available in their budgets. Therefore, in practice, the salary differences between teachers do not appear to be large and salary increments are used predominantly as an instrument to reward additional tasks and responsibilities.

Links between teacher appraisal and professional development could be enhanced

Even though the importance of professional development is clearly recognised in national requirements, its provision appears fragmented and not systematically linked to teacher appraisal. Without a clear link to professional development opportunities, the impact of performance review processes on teacher performance will be relatively limited. As a result, the appraisal process may not be taken seriously or encounter mistrust or apathy by the teachers being appraised (Danielson, 2001; Milanowski and Kimball, 2003; Margo *et al.*, 2008).

Several of the teachers interviewed by the Review Team were critical about the supply of professional development, which did not appear to them to respond to the priority needs of the system. A survey by Factum Invenio (2009) indicates that teachers find it difficult to have a clear understanding of the training on offer. Also, there are a number of practical challenges for schools and teachers to organise professional development. It appears difficult for teachers to take their twelve days of study leave because of the limited availability of replacement teachers and also because of financial limitations faced by schools and teachers. Especially for the smallest schools, it is very rare to sign up for customised training programmes (Factum Invenio, 2009; IIE, 2010).

There is also scope to better link teacher professional development to school development and improvement. The Review Team formed the impression that professional development was predominantly a choice by individual teachers and was not systematically associated with school development needs. School principals interviewed by the Review Team rarely tracked their teachers' professional development activities and the extent of strategic planning for professional development appeared limited. There was little evidence of school-centred professional development that would emphasise the

community of learners within the school. The weak linkage between teacher appraisal, teacher professional development and school development is partly due to the limited time school principals invest in pedagogical leadership.

Policy recommendations

Develop a professional profile or standards for the teaching profession

The Review Team would strongly encourage the Czech education system to pursue efforts that are being made in preparing a professional profile or standards for the teaching profession. The process launched in 2009 to discuss a draft proposal for standards was very positive in the sense that it started out from a participatory discussion with the teaching profession and placed the development of standards among the policy priorities in the Czech Republic. Teaching standards, *i.e.* a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do are a key element in any teacher appraisal system as they provide a shared understanding of accomplished teaching and a credible reference to make judgements about teacher competence (OECD, 2005). Teaching standards should contain quality criteria or indicators for professional teaching practice and should be applied in individual performance appraisals. They should build on the work already accomplished and discussed in 2009 and be framed in the context of the overall objectives for schooling. Teachers' practices and the competencies that they need to be effective should reflect the student learning objectives that the school system is aiming to achieve.

The teaching standards should be developed in a way as to provide a common basis to guide key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher professional development, career advancement and, of course, teacher appraisal. Clear, well-structured and widely-supported professional standards for teachers can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the various elements involved in developing teachers' competencies (OECD, 2005). To this end, teaching standards should express different levels of performance and responsibilities expected at different stages of the teaching career (more on this below). Teacher standards need to be informed by research and express the sophistication and complexity of what effective teachers are expected to know and be able to do. A reference contribution in this area is Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Box 4.2).

For the teaching standards to be relevant and "owned" by the profession, it is essential that the teaching profession takes the lead in developing and taking responsibility for them. The standards should also be inspired by the good practice already happening in some schools in the Czech Republic. There are different options in which the national agencies could support this work, such as collecting examples of teacher quality criteria that are currently used in some schools or conducting a thematic inspection on teacher quality to define elements of quality in teaching practice. In addition the international body of research on effective teaching and pedagogical practice could also inform approaches.

It is also important that teacher appraisal takes account of the school context. Schools have to respond to different needs depending on the local context and face different circumstances, especially in a system with highly autonomous schools as in the Czech Republic. National teaching standards should not be seen as a template or checklist against which teachers are to be appraised (Jensen and Reichl, 2011). Otherwise, the appraisal process might become a purely administrative exercise without real impact on

local practice. Rather, the national standards can be a point of departure for reflection at the school level of what constitute locally relevant criteria in relation to national reference points.

Box 4.2 Danielson's Framework for Teaching

Danielson's Framework is articulated to provide at the same time "a 'road map' to guide novice teachers through their initial classroom experiences, a structure to held experienced professionals become more effective, and a means to focus improvement efforts". It groups teachers' responsibilities into four major areas further divided into components:

- *Planning and preparation*: demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy; demonstrating knowledge of students; selecting instructional goals; designing coherent instruction; assessing student learning.
- *The classroom environment*: creating an environment of respect and rapport; establishing a culture for learning; managing classroom procedures; managing student behaviour and organising physical space.
- *Instruction*: communicating clearly and accurately; using questioning and discussion techniques; engaging students in learning; providing feedback to students; demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.
- *Professional responsibilities*: reflecting on teaching; maintaining accurate records; communicating with families; contributing to the school and community; growing and developing professionally; showing professionalism.

Danielson's Framework can be used for many purposes. It has been developed mainly as a guiding foundation for professional conversations among practitioners. It has influenced a large number of teacher appraisal systems around the world. An example can be found in the *Professional Standards for Teachers* in England (TDA, 2007). These standards cover all aspects grouped into "professional attributes", "professional knowledge and judgment" and "professional skills". Moreover, the standards differentiate in several stages from what can be expected of the newly qualified teacher to the standard expected of excellent and advanced skills teachers (see Santiago *et al.*, 2009, for further details).

Source: Danielson (1996; 2007).

Strengthen teacher appraisal for improvement purposes (developmental appraisal)

As mentioned above, a number of tensions can emerge when trying to achieve the improvement function of teacher appraisal through an accountability-oriented approach. Linking teacher appraisal to pay necessarily entails high stakes for teachers and may prevent them from revealing weaknesses and engaging in an honest assessment of professional development needs. Hence, the Review Team would suggest strengthening regular formative appraisal with a professional development focus which is separate from the more summative appraisal processes. Teacher appraisal for improvement purposes is likely to benefit from a non-threatening evaluation context, a culture of mutually providing and receiving feedback, clear individual and collective objectives, simple evaluation instruments, supportive school leadership, opportunities for professional development and close linkages to school self-evaluation (Santiago and Benavides, 2009).

The Review Team formed the view that there is much room in the Czech Republic to further develop teacher appraisal for improvement purposes. The main purpose of this process should be continuous improvement of teaching practice. It should be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers and the school principal with a focus on teachers' practices in the classroom. The main outcome would be feedback on teaching performance and contribution to school development, which should lead to a plan for professional development. It can be low-key and low-cost and include a mix of methods appropriate to the school. Some of the elements should be individual goal-setting linked to school goals, self-appraisal, peer appraisal, classroom observation, structured conversations with the school principal and peers. It could be organised annually for each teacher, or less frequently depending on the outcomes of the previous appraisal. There should also be more regular informal feedback from peers and the school principal.

For teacher appraisal to have an impact on learning outcomes in the school, it needs to be closely connected to professional development and school development. The focus of teacher appraisal should be to contribute to a knowledge-rich teaching profession in which teachers engage actively with new knowledge and benefit from support structures to generate improvement (Santiago and Benavides, 2009). In order to meet the school's needs, the professional development opportunities of an individual teacher should also be aligned with the school's development plan.

To ensure that developmental appraisal conducted by school principals is systematic and coherent across Czech schools, it is important that the Czech School Inspectorate validates externally the school-level processes for teacher appraisal, holding the school principal accountable as necessary.

Further enhance the role of educational leadership

Effective teacher appraisal depends to a large extent on the way school leadership is established in schools. Given their familiarity with the context in which teachers work, their awareness of the school needs and their ability to provide rapid feedback, the school principal, his or her deputies and other teachers in the school are well placed to play the key role in teacher appraisal. School principals can establish performance improvement as a strategic imperative and promote teacher appraisal as being key to teacher development and broader school policies.

However, many practising school principals in the Czech Republic have not had prior training in teacher appraisal methods. The management training for new school principals is a positive development that can support principals in taking a stronger educational leadership role including the appraisal and development of staff. Going further, it would be important to focus the programme more strongly on leading the core business of teaching and learning in schools (Pont *et al.*, 2008). National authorities should also consider developing training offers that are targeted to the different stages of a school leader's career such as aspiring leader (teacher with leadership ambitions), middle and deputy leader, beginning leader and experienced leader (Pont *et al.,* 2008).

In addition, distributing leadership more among senior and middle management functions can help reduce the burden of school principals and foster leadership capacity across the school (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Hence, it might prove valuable to build capacity in appraisal and evaluation methods at the school level by preparing not only school principals but also members of the management group and accomplished teachers to undertake specific appraisal and evaluation functions in the school. To ensure that high quality candidates are attracted to leadership positions, it is also important to pay

attention to professionalise recruitment processes and provide adequate salary levels and career development opportunities for school leaders (Pont *et al.*, 2008).

Consider establishing a system of teacher certification to determine career progression

While the individualised salary provides the opportunity for school principals to relate performance to teacher rewards, it does not take place within a broader framework that allows teachers to build a career. Teachers and school principals could benefit from the establishment of a clearer career structure that applies across the country. The concept of career stages, or a career ladder, would help meet this need. Access to each of the key stages of the career could be associated with formal processes of summative appraisal that complement the regular formative appraisal.

The different career steps should match the different levels of expertise reflected in teaching standards (see above). Each career stage should be associated with certain pay levels. This would ensure a link between teacher appraisal results and career progression, therefore establishing an indirect link with pay levels. This is a desirable option given that direct links between teacher performance and pay have produced mixed results, according to the research literature (Harvey-Beavis, 2003; OECD, 2005).

Advancement in the teaching career could be organised through a system of teacher registration or certification at key stages in the career. While the process could be mostly school-based, led by the school leadership team, there would need to be a stronger component external to the school to validate the process and ensure that practices are consistent across the Czech Republic. This element of externality could be introduced via an accredited external evaluator, typically a teacher from another school with expertise in the same area as the teacher being appraised. It is important that external evaluators receive specific training for this function, in particular in standards-based methods for appraising evidence of teacher performance and giving constructive feedback to teachers. It is also essential that teachers are provided with support to understand the appraisal procedures and benefit from appraisal results.

Teacher appraisal for registration/certification could rely on three core instruments: classroom observation, self appraisal and documentation of practices in a simplified portfolio. It should also involve an opportunity for teachers to express their own views about their performance, and reflect on the personal, organisational and institutional factors that had an impact on their teaching. The portfolio should allow teachers to mention specific ways in which they consider that their professional practices are promoting student learning, and could include elements such as: lesson plans and teaching materials, samples of student work and commentaries on student assessment examples, teacher's self-reported questionnaires and reflection sheets (see Isoré, 2009). Given the high stakes of appraisal for certification, decisions must draw on several types of evidence, rely on multiple independent evaluators and should encompass the full scope of the work of the teacher.

Teacher appraisal for registration/certification would have as its main purposes providing public assurance with regard to teachers' standards of 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.

Ensure links between developmental appraisal and appraisal for certification

Developmental appraisal and appraisal for certification cannot be disconnected from each other. A possible link is that appraisal for certification needs to take into account the qualitative assessments produced through developmental appraisal, including the recommendations made for areas of improvement. Developmental appraisal should also have a function of identifying sustained underperformance. Similarly, results of teacher certification assessments can also inform the professional development of individual teachers.

Ensure appropriate articulation between teacher appraisal and school evaluation

As indicated in Chapter 2, there is a need to articulate teacher appraisal and school evaluation. The fact that inspections systematically monitor the quality of teaching in schools is a strength of the Czech school evaluation system that should be maintained and further developed. Also, as indicated above, inspections should systematically comprise the external validation of the processes in place to organise developmental appraisal for all teachers in the school, holding the school principal accountable as necessary. The appraisal of teaching quality and the appraisal of individual teachers should also play a central role in school self-evaluation in all schools. The quality of teaching and learning results at the school should be regarded as a responsibility of groups of teachers or of the school as a whole. In this light, school self-evaluation needs to put emphasis on evaluating and documenting the school's mechanism both for internal developmental appraisal and for following up on the results of appraisal for certification.

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Chapter 5

School evaluation

There are two main forms of school evaluation in the Czech Republic: school self-evaluation and school external inspection. The latter is the responsibility of the Czech School Inspectorate. Mandatory external school evaluations are conducted in a 3-year cycle. These involve, for each school in the system, a sequence of activities comprising a preparatory phase for the school; a visit by a team of inspectors including the observation of teaching and learning in the classroom; the publication of the team's report; and a follow-up phase to respond to the recommendations in the report which typically involves the organising bodies (regions and municipalities). The precise nature of school self-evaluation varies across schools as the legal requirement to undertake it does not come with a prescribed approach (but guidelines are available). Schools are required to reflect the results of self-evaluation in the school annual report. Organising bodies also inspect their respective schools but typically concentrate on compliance with financial regulations. Particularly positive features of school evaluation include the good establishment of external school evaluation; the features of best practice embodied in the external evaluation model; the follow-up support to the more challenged schools; the importance of classroom observation in school evaluation processes; and the new emphasis on schools' self-evaluation. However, the development of school evaluation is faced with a number of challenges. These include the limited emphasis on school improvement of external school evaluation; the little emphasis on student results and progress; the incipient development of school self-evaluation; the limited use of data in school development; the limited scope and impact of the evaluation by organising bodies; and the limited recognition of the role of school leaders.

This chapter analyses approaches to school evaluation within the Czech evaluation and assessment framework. School evaluation refers to the evaluation of individual schools as organisations. This chapter covers both internal school evaluation (*i.e.* school self-evaluation) and external school evaluation (such as inspections).

Context and features

Similar to experiences in other OECD countries, the topic of evaluating schools is becoming increasingly important, particularly in response to perceived poor or declining performance in international assessments such as PISA, PIRLS or TIMSS. In the Czech Republic there is concern about declining student performance (see Chapter 1) and this, coupled with relatively recent changes in the curriculum intended to provide much greater autonomy and flexibility for schools (Framework Education Programmes and School Education Programmes), has led to concerns that schools should be held more accountable for maintaining and promoting higher standards in student attainment outcomes.

In the Czech Republic school evaluation takes the form of both self-evaluation and external evaluation by the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI). School self-evaluation was made compulsory by the 2005 Education Act and is actively implemented since then. Schools are encouraged to learn more about how to evaluate different aspects of school practice systematically and how to utilise their findings when planning further development. Evaluations by the CSI are carried out through observing school practice and are conducted once every three years, but can also be triggered by stakeholders. In addition, organising bodies (regions and municipalities) also undertake evaluations of individual schools but those are fairly limited to financial matters.

External evaluation by the Czech School Inspectorate

The Czech School Inspectorate is a central control and evaluating body which is part of public administration. It is responsible for monitoring schools and school facilities, it scrutinises the conditions they set for education and results, the quality of management, the efficiency of using funds and their compliance with binding regulations, at all levels except for higher education institutions. The CSI reviews the functionality of schools' own self-evaluation systems, internal control systems and school systems of prevention. Its remit includes assessing how educational goals are met; the monitoring of innovation in delivering education programmes; and the assessment of the provisions for the professional development of teachers. The CSI also seeks to monitor the level of competence of school principals and teachers, their qualifications and options for career growth and professional development. In 2008/2009, the CSI for the first time carried out what has become one of its main functions: an evaluation of School Education Programmes (SEPs) and their conformity with the published Framework Education Programmes (FEPs). The MEYS approves CSI's Plan of principal assignments of inspection activities and validates the annual evaluation criteria for school evaluation. However, formally the MEYS does not supervise the work of the CSI.

School inspections consist of four phases and can be initiated by either the inspectorate, the public and the organising body. The first is the preparation phase in which schools and teachers need to be notified about the impending visit, however there is no set time limit within which this should happen. The norm is usually from 7 to 14 days of advance notice. The school is also informed about the specifics of the planned inspection. Each member of the inspection team is assigned an individual task and

requests the necessary pre-inspection data for his/her contribution to the inspection. This phase concentrates mainly on the SEP and whether it is in compliance with legal regulations and the FEP. The length of this phase depends on the size of the school. It will usually take at least a day. A key document analysed in this phase is the annual report that the school is required to prepare.

During the second phase (school phase) the inspection team carries out inspection activities within the school. In the course of this phase a more detailed analysis of school documentation is made. There is no minimum set of lessons to be observed by each inspector (it may vary from case to case), but it is at least three whole lessons in different grades. At the end of the school visit the head of the inspection team discusses with the school management preliminary results of the inspection activities and the date of presentation of the inspection report is agreed. This phase can take approximately from two to five days, depending on the size of the school.

Next is the completing and reporting phase. There is no time limit for completing and reporting and this may vary for each individual case. Usually, the evaluation of the information, team meetings, and the processing of the inspection report take 14 days, but the protocol from a detailed state check may take up to one month to be completed. The results of an evaluation are featured in the inspection report or protocol. The content is discussed between school inspectors and the school principal. The school principal confirms through his/her signature that the report/protocol has been discussed and taken over. The school principal may submit his/her comments on the inspection report to the CSI (within 14 days after it was submitted) or objections to the protocol (within 5 days after it was submitted). These comments are included in the final report which will be sent to the organising body and the school board. The inspection report is made available to the public (through the CSI website) and is kept for a period of ten years.

There is a follow-up phase during which schools that have been identified to be of insufficient standards should correct these shortcomings within a certain period as specified by the CSI. Based on the inspection results the organising bodies will implement the necessary measures at their schools to meet the criteria for the follow-up visits during which the CSI investigates how the school has tackled problems observed in the earlier visits.

Criteria for school inspections vary by year. Table 5.1 displays the criteria used for school years 2010/11 and 2011/12 and highlights the differences between the two.

The inspectorate also engages in thematic analyses, which are sometimes connected with the regular school inspections, sometimes carried out as specifically planned surveys. Recent examples include thematic reports on equal opportunities for foreign nationals in the Czech Republic and reading literacy as the basis for good education (see Chapter 6). Added to this is the annual report comprising a summary evaluation for the education system as a whole based on inspection analysis and evidence. The annual report provides valuable information on a system-wide basis about specific aspects of schools' work that can inform national and regional policy makers and be used to examine trends over time in specific features (MEYS, 2008; see also Chapter 6).

Table 5.1 Criteria used in CSI inspection, school years 2010/11 and 2011/12

Evaluation area	Domains covered by requirements for fulfilling criteria	
2010/11 and 2011/12	2010/11	2011/12
Equal opportunities for education	Information about offerings; admission process; account of individual needs of students; identification and registration of students with special needs; account of school environment and circumstances; systems to prevent risk behaviour.	The same with the addition of: Integration and inclusion of foreign students.
School education programmes (SEPs)	SEPs reflected in the Register of schools and School Facilities; SEPs meet requirements of the Education Act; SEPs comply with Framework Education Programmes (FEPs); SEPs focused on educational goals; SEPs involve the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the school; changes and innovation in SEPs result from self-evaluation process, goals of Education Act, and priorities stated in the Long-term policy objectives of the education system; schools creates a positive climate to achieve objectives in SEP.	The same with the deletion of: Schools creates a positive climate to achieve objectives in SEP.
School management	School management is adapted to school type and the organisation structure supports school development plan; evaluation and innovation strategies to implement SEP; participation of school employees in strategic planning and self-evaluation; provision of accurate information on its activities and preparation of annual reports; measures taken to address shortcomings identified in most recent CSI inspection.	The same
Personnel conditions	Strategies to address personnel risks; rewarding systems support SEP; support for beginning teachers; use of staff time complies with regulations; participation in professional development; professional development supports information literacy and knowledge of a foreign language; support for mobility of pedagogical staff.	The same
Material prerequisites	Safety of environment; strategies to maintain and improve infrastructure; reconstruction and development of infrastructure for the implementation of SEP in agreement with Education Act and FEPs; renewal of ICT.	The same
Financial prerequisites	Prioritisation in accordance with budget possibilities and involvement of the organising body and school board; effective use of financial resources to meet established purposes; exploration of the participation in development projects of the MEYS and European Social Funds; appropriate uses of opportunities for extra funding according to regulations; monitoring of expense in according to Long-term policy objectives of the education system and Long-term policy objectives of the respective region.	The same with the addition of: A basic school has used financial resources from the EU project "Money for Schools".
Effective organisation of education	Implementation of the curriculum according to SEP, Education Act and FEPs; instruction of compulsory subjects and development of key competencies; "free" periods, non compulsory and optional subjects in accordance with SEP and they support student learning; adequate provision for students with special needs; existence of concept of homework; strategies to remove barriers to instruction.	The same
Effective support of personality development of children, pupils and students	School and counselling services support children in their learning including when changing educational programmes; assessment of students follows school rules; use of findings of sciences, research and development; use of modern pedagogical approaches in instruction; individual and differentiated instruction; extracurricular activities.	The same
Partnership	Co-operation with legal representatives of students; measures to follow evaluation of organising body; co-operation with school board; participation of students in school management; co-operation with other partners.	The same with the deletion of: Measures to follow evaluation of organising body.

Table 5.1 Criteria used in CSI inspection, school years 2010/11 and 2011/12 *(continued)*

Effective support of development of key competencies of children, pupils and students	School evaluates results and supports the development of knowledge, competences and conduct in social literacy; scientific literacy; reading literacy; mathematical literacy; foreign languages and information literacy.	The same with the following additions: Teachers and students prepared to implement the curriculum; school achieves planned targets; school offers programmes for students with special needs; school takes an active part in development projects.
Systematic evaluation of individual and group education results of children, pupils and students	Monitoring of student success during key transitions; monitoring and evaluation of education results as they are specified in FEPs; use of possibilities to compare results; strategies to support students at risk of education failure.	The same with the deletion of: A school systematically assesses achieved results in all education areas.
System evaluation of overall results in education	Monitoring of overall success of students and whether SEP and FEP requirements are met; achievement of required outputs in given subjects of the curriculum; monitoring of the effectiveness of specific measures taken; use of external evaluation results; school publishes results; school follows career of its graduates.	The same with the deletion of: School follows career of its graduates.

Source: IIE (2011); CSI (2010); CSI (2011).

The process of hiring inspectors is regulated by labour law provisions and the Education Act. A school inspector can be a person who has completed higher education and has had at least five years of pedagogical or pedagogic-psychological experience, and who satisfies other prerequisites laid down in a special legal regulation.

Private schools are inspected in a way similar to public schools. They can also request a specific inspection to submit an application for an increase in its public financial allocation. To do so, private schools have to achieve a "standard" or "above average" level in the inspection report, and not to have made any significant infringement of legal regulations stated in the protocol.

School self-evaluation

Under the 2005 Education Act schools have a duty to draw up a self-evaluation report at 3-year intervals.[1] The school principal is obliged to discuss the design of the structure of the self-evaluation with the pedagogical board no later than by the end of September of the school year concerned. School self-evaluation is focused on three areas:

- Objectives laid down by the school in the strategic document for school development and in the school education programme, their feasibility and degree of importance.
- Assessment of the manner in which the school meets its objectives simultaneously taking into account other aims specified primarily in the FEPs and corresponding legal provisions.
- Conditions of education, the course of education, support provision by the school for students, and co-operation with parents. Attention is also paid to the employability of school leavers (for secondary schools), school management, the quality of human resource management, and the quality of continuing education of pedagogical staff.

Recent regulation changes extended the self-evaluation period to three years matching the CSI external evaluation cycle. The manner in which self-evaluation is used within the school for checking on or reporting on developments and school improvement depends on the approach taken by individual school principals.

Methods to support school self-evaluation have been introduced by the Research Institute of Education. The National Institute for Continuing Education developed courses offered to provide professional development for SEP co-ordinators and advisory centres were established in the regions. A national project, "On the Road to Quality", was also recently introduced with joint funds from the European Social Fund and the MEYS to support school self-evaluation. It provides information, advice and support and encourages collaboration and mutual support through enhanced contact between schools. It is developing a range of instruments (30 in total) to provide reliable quantitative and qualitative tools to help schools in studying their practices and outcomes (*e.g.* the Good School tool is intended to stimulate staff discussion about values and priorities of the school). Questionnaires for parents and students are examples of quantitative tools. Participation in the project is voluntary and varies by regions. It appears that, as yet, only a small proportion of schools are involved in using these instruments to support their evaluation work. As yet there has been no evaluation of the impact of the "On the Road to Quality" project instruments on promoting school improvement, enhancing quality or promoting better outcomes for students (NITVE, 2009 and 2010).

School management and leadership

There is no requirement for school principals or managers in the Czech Republic to obtain a specific initial degree before they take on their post, nor does the specific career of school leader exist. School principals are required to take specialised training courses on school management within the first two years of their appointment and the CSI monitors compliance with this. School principals in Czech schools have great autonomy in their decision making. However, it is widely recognised that too little attention is paid to leadership development and the CSI notes that its analysis of filed complaints indicates that there is a need for further professional development to support school principals in developing their "soft skills", such as resisting corruption, and improving communication with parents and the community (CSI, 2009b, p. 67).

In its 2008/2009 annual report the CSI has drawn attention to the extra demands placed on school principals linked to their new responsibilities that arose from the curricular reforms (FEPs and SEPs) and need to ensure staff in schools are prepared for their roles in developing and implementing the SEP. It notes that schools lack conceptual and strategic directions in introducing innovations in education. The CSI highlighted four areas for managerial work that needed to be improved across the school sector (CSI, 2009b).

- To improve the quality of SEPs and strategies to meet their aims and those of the FEPs;
- To better support the preparation of teachers with appropriate professional development in developing and implementing the SEP;
- To involve pedagogical boards and school boards more in school management and self-evaluation; and
- To introduce and apply in school self-evaluation the ongoing assessment of students.

The school principal is responsible for the observation and appraisal of teachers, though in larger schools other senior staff or heads of subject commissions may often undertake classroom observations of teachers' work. The principal has the power to reward teachers with extra payments in relation to extra responsibilities or work undertaken by teachers, although tight budget constraints for schools are said to limit the extent to which principals can enhance teachers' pay. It is not clear to what extent the observation of teachers is used to identify teachers' professional development or training needs or to identify and share good practice (see Chapter 4).

Evaluation by regions and municipalities

The schools are also the subject of evaluations by governing bodies – regions and municipalities. Their accountability functions, however, focus mainly on financial aspects and propriety in the use of the school's budget as noted above. Departments of education of regional and municipal authorities carry out *ex ante*, midterm and *ex post* checks concerning the effective use of public funds. The emphasis is thus not on standards of teaching and learning, attainment or progress of students, equity or school improvement but rather on financial propriety.

Nevertheless, they are supposed to play an important role in implementing improvement strategies for those schools which are identified as "underperforming" by a school inspection. School leaders are rarely changed and sanctions seem to be employed only in relation to the identification of financial irregularities. At the present moment, regions and municipalities have little scope to dismiss a school principal – conditions for dismissal are only those stated in the Education Act. Currently a change in the nature of the school principal contract is being considered with the support of regions and municipalities from a permanent contract to a fixed term contract.

Strengths

External school evaluation is established

The Czech Republic shows a clear commitment to external accountability based around school evaluation with a regular cycle of external school evaluations carried out by the CSI. The CSI is highly respected and schools, municipal and regional authorities value the availability of individual inspection reports for schools on a regular basis. Nonetheless, as in most systems that use inspection, school staff have some anxieties about the role of external evaluation and its possible consequences. In general, the external evaluations are welcomed and found helpful to identify certain kinds of problems by schools and other stakeholders and to provide a national overview of the system in terms of the specified criteria used. None of those interviewed, in schools and more widely, expressed any strong opposition to the principle of external evaluation and comments invariably focused on how it might be improved or linked more directly to other areas of policy.

The approach is one which draws appropriately on international good practice, combining self and external evaluation. There is a regular 3-year inspection cycle and the data collected during these inspections are made available through the online publications of individual reports at the school level which provide information for stakeholders including parents, municipalities and regions. These stakeholders have the ability to trigger further inspections, adding extra strength to the Czech Republic's external quality assurance system.

The external evaluation model embodies a number of features of best practice

The process of external evaluation undertaken by CSI is well structured and systematic. Each stage in the process is clear and the approach builds logically.

The importance of communicating clearly the basis upon which evaluation judgements will be made has been recognised and built into the model. A set of publicly-available criteria for external inspection is drawn up every year (with an extensive framework of related questions) with the approval by the MEYS. While inspection criteria are not fixed for a number of consecutive school years (formally their use is for a single school year), the evaluation areas and most of the criteria are fairly stable from one year to the next (in spite of possible changes to the structure of the criteria, see below). This allows for some broad comparisons of change in school conditions annually and over the inspection cycles. Although the inspection cycle is relatively new in its present form it helps to establish whether or not schools have been judged to have improved since their last evaluation in specific areas, and if any changes made have been effective.

Also, the principle of transparency in publishing the criteria for, and results of inspection, and the responsiveness to stakeholders (there are provisions that enable parents to trigger an inspection if they have concerns) are well established. The approach, procedures and instruments used in inspection are routinely available on the web and inspection reports themselves are published in paper form and digitally. The possibility for parents to trigger school inspections functions as an additional quality monitor that may help to identify potential problems and help to maintain school standards. Such transparency is seen as fairer to those inspected as well as promoting the integrity, rigour and impact of external evaluation.

Furthermore, the approach to external evaluation in the Czech Republic is designed to be evidence driven. The provision of a data profile for an inspection team, provided by the Institute of Information on Education, offers outcome information, aids efficiency by allowing the team to focus its attention on key issues and can help to benchmark and contextualise judgements. Similarly, documentation is sought and analysed as a key part of evidence gathering and a sample of stakeholders is interviewed in the course of the inspection. As a result, inspection teams have a wide body of evidence upon which to base their judgements. Moreover it appears that the inspection process seeks to take into consideration contextual factors that influence performance such as school type and location, kinds of students served, although this is not done systematically.

The CSI provides training to develop the capacity of inspectors to undertake external evaluations. It also publishes an annual analysis, and reports on key features (such as the conditions schools set for education and results, the quality of management, the efficiency of using funds and their compliance with binding regulations) of school education related to the requirements laid out in the Education Act that provide a wide range of statistical data and other information linked to the criteria outlined earlier in Table 5.1. This information helps to identify lower performing schools and to identify general areas of improvement.

In addition, the CSI conducts thematic analyses and publishes reports on a range of topics of policy and practical relevance. These reports shed light on certain problematic themes and have the potential to trigger further development in schools, if it were made a requirement that specific areas must be addressed.

Schools facing greater challenges benefit from some follow-up

In the Czech Republic, there is an expectation that schools which are identified as facing the greater challenges will be followed up. This is mostly the responsibility of organising bodies (regions and municipalities) as they have the responsibility for working with such schools to ensure that an appropriate improvement plan is developed. The CSI undertakes a follow-up inspection to assess whether improvements were undertaken to address the challenges previously identified. The official follow-up of schools' responses and actions to address matters raised in the inspection is deemed helpful as it forces schools to actively implement strategies to improve the areas which have been identified to be sub-standard.

Classroom observation is part of school evaluation processes

Inspection includes provision for classroom observation which is important to emphasise the importance of the quality of teaching and learning and can thus address pedagogical matters but is seen as relatively low threat by teachers as they are not assessed individually by inspectors. Placing learning and teaching at the heart of the evaluation process sends clear signals about what matters. Because classroom observation is undertaken during inspections it can also provide evidence on good practices.

There is a new emphasis on schools' self-evaluation

The emphasis on promoting schools' self-evaluation has the potential to encourage schools and principals to place a greater emphasis on school improvement and development planning. Combined with external evaluation through the work of the CSI and regular publication of school reports the emphasis on institutional self-evaluation makes it a more balanced approach to school evaluation than one relying only on external evaluation. The introduction of self-evaluation is explicitly linked to the Czech Republic's intention to encourage flexibility and greater autonomy at the school level in curriculum offer via the FEPs which allows flexibility for institutions to develop their own SEPs and quality criteria. The inspectorate also seeks to support schools in developing their capacity to undertake school self-evaluation. Increasing schools' self-reflective abilities will support internal quality assurance and will help maintain quality across the board.

Schools' self-evaluation provides an important source of evidence for the external evaluation of individual schools by the CSI through the school's annual report. Information from school self-evaluations (as reflected in school annual reports) is analysed and included in the annual reports on the school system published by the inspectorate.

Schools are offered support in carrying out self-evaluations with the availability of tools/guidelines through the "On the Road to Quality" project which has been designed to help schools with the self-evaluation process.

School leadership is promoted in school evaluation

There is an explicit recognition that the process of self-evaluation is hugely dependent on a principal's capacity to stimulate engagement, to mobilise resources and to ensure appropriate training and support. The approach to inspection has, in turn, reinforced the importance of such leadership. School principals are seen as important actors in the course of an inspection, have direct accountability during the self-evaluation and external

evaluation processes and have the main responsibility for ensuring that the results of the inspection are communicated and its recommendations taken forward. This is part of the school principal's responsibility in the wider context of the considerable autonomy of schools. Inspection criteria relate specifically to school leadership and management with a separate section.

Challenges

External school evaluation seems to have limited emphasis on school improvement

A challenge for the Czech Republic is that currently external school evaluation by the CSI is predominantly an assessment of how legal requirements are met, or how the School Education Programme is being fulfilled and how it adheres to Framework Education Programmes. The accountability function tends to emphasise compliance with legislation rather than the promotion of school improvement. It is thus compliance rather than improvement driven and this reflects the specific role ascribed to the CSI in evaluating schools outlined in the Education Act and associated regulations. Advice is only given to "weaker" schools which are identified as those that do not meet the minimum standards as set by law. There is not enough focus on strategies for promoting improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and better outcomes for students including better progress and attainment for those schools that need it the most. There also seems to be an uneven capacity of schools to use the results of school external evaluation. It appears that in general there are few consequences of negative external evaluations overall. This means that even when schools are identified as lower-performing, there is little pressure or incentive for them to actively work on improvement.

In addition there is not enough guidance from the CSI or the MEYS about what will lead to school improvement and little attention is paid to identifying and disseminating best practice in teaching, which could be used as examples to support improvement of teaching in lower performing schools. This is reinforced by a lack of communication amongst the schools. In addition, there is little evidence that current research on effective teaching, school effectiveness and improvement is used to inform the inspection criteria or to provide guidance for teachers and schools. There is a need to encourage greater professional development focussed on using evidence including research results and other data on student outcomes to inform school development and improvement planning. Schools should receive guidance on how to monitor and reduce within school variation in the quality of teaching, in student attainment in different subjects, or for different student groups. Also, external accountability mechanisms should seek to identify schools where student outcomes are poor and where the equity gap in student attainment is wide as a basis to focus attention to improve standards.

There are a number of limitations in external school evaluation

In the current external school evaluation process it is difficult to take account of the socio-economic context of the school because this is not required by the Education Act and no national data are available to promote this (*e.g.* that links attainment data with data about student characteristics). Although there are current proposals to introduce some forms of national tests for particular grades, unless such data are also linked to information about student backgrounds it is likely that any comparisons between schools will be of little utility because they will not be conducted on a "like with like" basis.

It also appears that there is not enough emphasis on pedagogical aspects particularly on identifying the main features of effective or high quality teaching using evidence from international studies and research. For example collaborative research by the Dutch and English inspectorates has been used to develop and test observation protocols to study and measure the quality of teaching in a number of European countries (van de Grift, 2007). Similarly an international instrument for teacher observation and feedback (ISTOF) has been developed by educational effectiveness researchers in 19 countries (Teddlie *et al.*, 2006).

The external evaluation processes by CSI raise a range of other concerns. The criteria used in the CSI external evaluations are not stable enough from year to year and as a result comparison across years might not be assured in all areas. While there is a great degree of stability of inspection criteria from 2010/11 to 2011/12, as shown in Table 5.1, substantial differences in structure for the inspection criteria were observed from one year to the next in previous years, alongside some differences in specific criteria. Table 5.2 shows the structure of inspection criteria for the 2009/10 school year as well as the main evaluation criteria. A comparison with Table 5.1 shows considerable similarities in evaluation areas/criteria but a marked difference in the structure for the criteria.

Also, there is lack of clarity for schools about the role of thematic reviews by inspectors. Some schools did not dissociate these from the regular external evaluation cycle and some felt they were inspected too frequently as a result.

Table 5.2 Criteria used in CSI inspection, school year 2009/10

Evaluation area	Evaluation criteria
Equal opportunities in education	1. Equal opportunities in admission to education 2. Emphasis on individual needs 3. An equal approach during completing education 4. School counselling
Management of a school/school facility	5. The School Education Programme / content of education 6. Strategies and planning 7. A head teacher of a school/school facility
Requirements for the proper functioning of a school / school facility	8. Personnel conditions 9. Material and financial conditions
Course of education	10. Organisation of education 11. Pedagogical worker's support for children's, pupils', and students' personality development 12. Evaluation of children, pupils and students in the course of education
Partnership	13. Development of relations between schools/school facilities and partners
Level of key competencies achieved through the educational content	14. Evaluation of support for the development of functional literacy (knowledge, skills, attitudes) of children, pupils and students 15. Evaluating the level of knowledge and skills in selected subjects according to the FEP curriculum
Educational outcomes of students	16. Successfulness of children, pupils and students
Overall evaluation of school	17. Compliance with the school/school facility's inclusion in the Register of Schools and School Facilities 18. Ensuring the safety and health protection of children, pupils and students 19. Effective use of resources and funds for implementation of the SEP 20. Adherence to principles and objectives of the Education Act, in particular equal access to education during implementation of the SEP 21. Adherence to set rules for the assessment of learning outcomes of children, pupils and students 22. Level of educational results in relation to the requirements of the FEP

Source: CSI (2009a).

There is little emphasis on student results/progress

The current system of school evaluation has insufficient emphasis on studying student outcomes and establishing the extent that appropriate standards are achieved as has been discussed earlier. It shows limited ability to assess quality of learning and student progress. Though objectives for assessing student achievement are described in the FEPs, these are very vague and are likely to create substantial differences in student outcomes depending on the approaches adopted by individual teachers and schools (see Chapter 2). Furthermore the school rules for student assessment in SEPs differ from school to school. Teacher-based assessment is also not moderated within and across schools which exacerbates the challenges in comparing student outcomes across schools (see Chapter 3). The absence of a nation-wide (or even region-wide) systematic approach to student achievement is problematic as it makes evaluation against reference standards very difficult.

School self-evaluation needs to be strengthened

Although the importance of school self-evaluation has been recognised as a policy imperative over the last few years, its penetration across the school system remains at an early stage of development. It appears to the Review Team that schools have only a limited understanding of the contribution which self-evaluation can and should make to improving practice and no clear models have emerged generally. There seems to be limited capacity amongst school staff and principals to engage in self-evaluation and ultimately school self-evaluation seems to lead to little change of school practices. As a result, although some form of self-evaluation can be identified generally, its rigour and impact on practice remains incipient. The potential of self-evaluation to engage parents in the work of the school has also not been sufficiently exploited. The work of the "On the Road to Quality" project offers an opportunity to enhance capacity in the future. Synergies between school self-evaluation and external evaluation seem not yet to achieve their potential, and further clarification is needed as to how these two can best interact and promote improvement.

More consideration could be given to proportional reviews

Now that two full cycles of inspection have been conducted by the CSI the possibilities of differentiated or proportional external school evaluation could be considered further. Schools that are judged to have strong capacity for school self-evaluation and face fewer challenges could receive less frequent and/or less detailed external review provided that there was evidence of good student progression monitoring and good practice in ensuring high quality teaching and learning from observation and other evidence. Those judged to face greater challenges could receive more detailed and perhaps more frequent external review as occurs in some other education systems that favour diagnosis and proportionality in the role of external accountability in relation to need (especially the school's internal capacity to improve). This also relates back to an earlier point that there are few repercussions for low-performing schools in the current system and so little pressure or incentive to improve. More frequent follow-up inspections would require more challenged schools to actively work on improvement and to show dedication to raising standards. A greater emphasis on the quality of teaching and of school leadership and management in the CSI criteria would help to identify schools that required closer supervision or monitoring and greater support to stimulate improvement.

The use of data for school development is limited

The MEYS and the CSI currently do not have the benefit of national data on student achievement, including linked data on the characteristics of the student intakes of schools. This means that the CSI cannot use such data to comment on overall school standards of achievement, to monitor the equity gap in attainment or to study student progression across specific grades. Also, although most schools engage in regular testing and assessment of students internally, and may pay for external tests from private companies, there is little evidence that staff have much access to professional development on the use of assessment data or undertake the systematic analysis of students' results or monitor the achievement of different student groups. This leaves staff with a more limited understanding of differences in students' academic performance which could be an important factor in developing strategies for tackling differences in student achievement. Many schools seek to obtain systematic data and pay for external standardised tests from private-companies that often analyse tests results for the schools. However, this does not allow comparisons with national standards, nor are these data necessarily made available to external stakeholders such as parents (see Chapter 2). Moreover, there is little evidence that equity issues are given a priority in identifying variations in patterns of student attainment. Yet, as noted previously, international surveys reveal very wide variation in student attainment levels in the Czech Republic and a wide equity gap by socioeconomic status (see Chapter 1). Moreover, there are concerns about very poor attainment levels for Roma students but no national data to study this at the school level are available.

It is thus not possible to assess the performance of individual schools against reference standards, or to establish differences between types of schools or between regions in the quality of educational experiences (especially of teaching and learning), or the attainment levels and progress made by students, or to monitor equity gaps in attainment and progress over time.

The evaluation by organising bodies has a limited scope and impact

Evaluations carried out by school organising bodies – regions and municipalities – are limited in scope and seem to lack impact in terms of promoting improvement. This may be because they mainly take into account the financial results of schools and the evaluation report by the CSI. The results are not published and therefore cannot be used as a reference point for improvement. As such these evaluations are likely to be of limited use for schools in promoting improvement. There is also limited follow-up to CSI inspections by organising bodies and the evaluations that are carried out by organising bodies are generally undertaken with little capacity.

There is no full recognition of the role of school leaders and their appraisal is limited

Despite the research evidence demonstrating the importance of school leadership this does not seem to be yet fully recognised in the Czech Republic (Leithwood *et al*., 2006; Robinson *et al*., 2008; Sammons *et al*., 2011). There is little evidence of a culture of instructional/educational leadership (as opposed to administrative and managerial leadership) and while the school principal has a key role in the system and considerable responsibilities, this has not as yet been translated into a dedicated career structure (see also Chapter 4). There is also limited preparation for the role of school principal and little recognition and financial reward. The CSI seeks to evaluate certain features of school leadership and management but these focus mostly on compliance with regulations and

limited attention is given to the principal's pedagogical leadership abilities or professional development needs. The evaluation of school principals, conducted by organising bodies, is largely absent except in terms of the financial aspects of budget management. There is no link made between the evaluation of school leaders and evidence on student outcomes or the quality of teaching and learning. This is likely to have a negative impact on school improvement since research indicates that school principals can play a key role in core areas such as setting directions, redesigning their organisation, developing staff and managing teaching and learning (Leithwood *et al.*, 2006). Municipalities and regions also have little power or capacity to support school leaders.

Policy recommendations

On the basis of the previous analysis of strengths and challenges the Review Team proposes the following directions for policy development.

Strengthen external school evaluation

The CSI external school evaluation process should strengthen its focus on school improvement and move away from the current "compliance" driven model. This would imply providing advice for improvement to all schools evaluated, rather than just focusing on lower performing schools. This would show a commitment to excellence rather than a commitment to what is "acceptable" or legally required. The school evaluation framework, the criteria and questions governing judgements and the methods employed should all focus much more directly on the quality of learning and teaching and their relationship to student outcomes.

The CSI external school evaluations would also benefit from a greater focus on monitoring student outcomes if appropriate national assessment data become available. This could include discussion of the standard of academic results in relation to national and school norms, and in relation to school type. Such analyses should also take the schools' socio-economic and other features of context into consideration. In addition to academic results, of course, other important student outcomes should be evaluated including motivation and engagement in learning and wellbeing. Also, as noted previously, attention should be paid to issues of schools monitoring and promoting equity by the CSI criteria (and in the requirements for school self-evaluation). This should be accompanied by judgments made on how well schools address equity, to be published in individual school reports and in overview reports at a national and regional level. The CSI should report explicitly on school performance in relation to outcomes achieved for disadvantaged and minority students (particularly Roma students) and provide advice to support improvement.

Also, it is suitable to ensure stability in inspection criteria across a wider range of areas for a longer period of time. This will allow for better comparisons to be made of change in the system across several inspection cycles and it will help to evaluate the impact of policy changes and system-level improvement more meaningfully.

Attempts should be made to make the post-evaluation reports more user-friendly, and in general a more proactive communication strategy is advised as a lever for improvement, for example succinct summaries for parents and students could be used highlighting key findings from inspections and priorities for improvement. Another possibility that could be considered is engaging in differentiated/proportional reviews depending on the results of the previous school inspection. However, because part of the

variation in student performance in the Czech Republic lies within rather than just between schools, just focussing on the identification of poorly performing schools will not be enough to raise overall standards or reduce inequity in educational outcomes, although this will undoubtedly be helpful as part of a wider strategy to drive up standards. Hence, any strategy of proportional reviews will need to ensure that the schools facing fewer challenges do not become complacent.

Improve the alignment between external and self-evaluation and raise the profile of self-evaluation

The Review Team also recommends establishing better synergies between external and schools' self-evaluation, especially concerning the alignments of the aspects assessed. Better alignment is needed between external evaluation and self-evaluation. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the criteria used in both processes are sufficiently similar as to create a common language about priorities and about the key factors which influence high quality learning and teaching. Lack of clarity about what matters is likely to reinforce confusion and continue to relegate self-evaluation to something which serves inspection rather than creating a platform for an exchange based on reliable and comparable evidence.

New Zealand provides a model for a collaborative school evaluation. Schools' self-evaluation is followed by a visit of the external team during which both parties 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. They rely 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 picture (Nusche *et al.*, forthcoming). It is further recommended that inspectors examine both the leadership and management of the school and the role played by school leadership in enhancing organisational capacity to improve, as well as on the quality of teaching and learning.

Give stronger emphasis to the follow-up to external evaluation

As mentioned earlier the Review Team recommends a stronger emphasis on the improvement function of school evaluations. In this sense, follow-ups should be strengthened (and generalised) as they require schools to establish an improvement plan regardless of the results of the school evaluation. All schools should be provided with feedback and recommendations for improvement. A programme of follow-up visits, suitably differentiated on the basis of the original report, would give added impetus and credibility to the overall evaluation process. Sweden offers a good model. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has clear and well-established criteria for school evaluation. After each evaluation all schools are given a "to do" list which is monitored through follow-up evaluations. Furthermore, the schools are provided with rich qualitative and quantitative feedback on a range of aspects (Nusche *et al.*, 2011). In addition, the Dutch and the English inspection systems could be reviewed for comparison. There is growing evidence that external accountability including inspection can act as a catalyst for school improvement especially for the most challenged schools (as revealed in comparative research on the features of successful educational systems by Döbert and Sroka, 2004) and evidence from England has pointed to the combined role of external national assessment and inspection linked with a national curriculum in raising overall attainment standards and in reducing the numbers of poorly performing schools (Sammons, 2008).

An important aspect of providing advice to schools consists of identifying good practice in the school system. Systematic analysis of key features and sharing examples of good practice would be useful, especially for those schools which are identified as having lower performance and could support the school self-evaluation process. Overall, it seems that the identification and sharing of good practice is still fairly uncommon in the Czech Republic and the CSI should reinforce its role in this function. Cases in which schools use CSI reports in a formative way could also be used as examples for other schools. The idea is that high quality schools and examples of good practice in specific areas (*e.g.* the achievement of minority or students from a disadvantaged background) are identified, and showcased to other schools as exemplars.

Improve the capacity of schools to engage in school evaluation

The recent initiative "On the Road to Quality" is a positive development to promote self-evaluation and share good practice and appropriate materials. Nonetheless, it does not as yet provide resources to encourage schools to monitor student attainment and progression or address the equity gap in attainment or progression. Moreover, only a small number of schools participate in this initiative. Schools would benefit from further assistance in developing their capacity for self-evaluation. School leaders and staff require time, resources and professional development to enhance their capacity to undertake self-evaluation and promote improvement.

It is also recommended that the CSI adopts a stronger focus on evaluating the internal quality assurance process in schools. As noted earlier, better articulation between external and internal school self-evaluation is also desirable. New Zealand's collaborative model could be used as a point of reference for this.

Improve the instructional leadership skills of school principals

Though administrative leadership is important, school leadership which aims to improve pedagogical practice has been shown to have the largest impact on improving student outcomes (Robinson *et al.*, 2008). The McKinsey report on the Czech Republic advocated that school leaders need to rebalance their workload in order to spend more time on instructional leadership (McKinsey and Company, 2010). The Review Team also concludes that school leaders need more professional development to enhance their leadership capacities especially in promoting school improvement, and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, using relevant research results to support this. In addition, a well-formulated and graduated programme of training and professional development for school leaders is advised. It is further recommended that part of this training is tailored to helping school leaders develop their skills for effective institutional self-evaluation. An example of this can already be found in Sweden where school leaders receive compulsory training of which a significant part is focused on evaluation (Nusche *et al.*, 2011).

An important and welcome feature of the principal's role in the Czech Republic is that it does include the regular observation of teachers' work and appraisal including the ability to set different pay through allocation of tasks. But it appears that in most schools staff observation is not linked with priorities and plans for school improvement or raising the quality of outcomes for students (see Chapter 4). However, in a study exploring the impact of school leadership on student outcomes in England, school leaders identify teaching school policies and programmes and monitoring of departments and teachers to be amongst the most effective strategies for increasing students' results (Sammons *et al.*,

2011). The Review Team recommends enhanced training and professional development for school principals in these areas.

Also school principals should be expected to engage in monitoring and evaluating the quality of student outcomes in their school compared with results in similar schools. Doing so encourages schools to reflect on their own practice and to establish collaborations with other schools to share examples of best practice for further improvement. In addition, school principals should be supported to place a greater emphasis on evaluating and promoting the quality of teaching, and focussing on the professional development needs of staff to support the school's improvement needs and priorities.

Plan to use data on student results effectively

As noted earlier there is as yet no national system for measuring student attainment or progress across different grades although there are proposals to introduce tests at grades 5 and 9 and to publish certain examination results at the school level (see Chapters 3 and 6). Nor is there a clearly defined set of expected standards for student attainment or for school performance (see Chapter 2). Due to the strong associations between school performance and student intake evident in educational effectiveness research conducted in many countries, it is recommended that any publication of results of school performance in students' school-leaving examinations and/or national tests should be presented in ways that take account of intake differences including, for example, the socio-economic background of students. The dangers of using raw league table rankings to compare the performance of schools should be recognised and avoided (see Chapter 6, and Rosenkvist, 2010). In some systems data on student attainment and progress are presented for "like" groups of schools (sometimes termed families of schools that have similar intakes) or contextualised value added measures have been adopted (*e.g.* in England). Also these data should only be published at school level if based on robust exams/tests that are focussed on important skills and competencies.

Good guidance and support should be developed to help inspectors, principals and teachers to make appropriate use of any performance data to promote school improvement and such data should be included in schools' self-evaluation processes.

Strengthen the evaluation of school principals

School principals have great autonomy in the Czech system and financial irregularity seems to be the main criterion used in their evaluations at present. This specific focus seems to reflect the fact that, at present, school leaders on average spend most of their time on administrative duties. However, it is recommended that school leaders should be given more time and resources to focus on developing their instructional leadership and promoting more attention to pedagogical issues, and school improvement in order to promote higher standards of student attainment and progression. Therefore it will be important for these aspects to be reflected in school principal evaluations in the future.

In general there is a need to re-conceptualise the overall approach to evaluate school principals by school organising bodies so that the role of the school principal as a pedagogical leader is reinforced.

Improve the scope and role of organising bodies in school quality improvement

The regional and municipal authorities should strengthen their role in supporting school improvement. Also, collaboration and networking amongst schools could be encouraged to help develop and spread good practice and enhance teachers' professional skills at local and regional levels. There should also be a greater focus on regions' and municipalities' efforts to promote quality improvement and follow-ups to avoid unnecessary duplication of the work of the inspectorate. Regions and municipalities should be supported to further improve their capacity development (see also Chapter 6).

Notes

1. Subsequently to the visit by the Review Team, an amendment made to the Education Act determines that "self-evaluation will be carried out and will serve as a basis for the school annual report". However, schools are no longer required to prepare a self-evaluation report, which no longer serves as an input for school inspections.

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Chapter 6

Education system evaluation

A range of tools are used to monitor performance of the education system. The monitoring system includes a range of statistics on education based on snap-shot data collected from schools on a standardised format. Also, international benchmarks of student performance provided by international student surveys such as PISA and TIMSS have been influential in driving policy development at the system level. At the moment, no national-level information on student learning outcomes which is comparable across schools and regions and over time is available but the Ministry is currently developing national standardised tests in grades 5 and 9 in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics to address this gap. In addition, there has been a growing interest in undertaking studies of the impact of policy initiatives and in preparing thematic reports which can inform policy development. Particularly positive features of system evaluation include the well-established education indicators framework; the concern to assess the progress of the education system towards pre-established objectives; the qualitative analysis undertaken in thematic reports; and the participation in international student surveys. However, system evaluation is faced with a number of challenges. These include the little emphasis on the evaluation of the education system; the absence of student performance data for system monitoring; the lack of measures on students' socio-economic background; the little emphasis on investigating inequities in the system; the limited information on the teaching and learning environment; the challenges faced with monitoring at the region and municipality levels; and the room to better exploit system-level information.

This chapter looks at system evaluation within the Czech evaluation and assessment framework. System evaluation refers to approaches to monitor and evaluate the performance of regional and local education systems as well as 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

Responsibilities for evaluation of the Czech education system

According to the 2005 Education Act, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) is responsible for the overall monitoring of the education system. The MEYS undertakes the evaluation of the overall education system which is then reflected in the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic* (the MEYS Annual Report). The annual reports focus on evaluating how the objectives set out in the Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system are being fulfilled. The Ministry also monitors quality in the education system via school inspection, a central element in system evaluation. In fact, the Education Act specifies that the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) is required to develop a system of evaluation for the education system. As a result, the CSI includes its analysis of the education system in its annual report and thematic reports. The analysis is based on the overall picture provided by the external evaluation of individual schools. Other agencies directly managed by the MEYS which contribute to the evaluation of the education system include the Institute for Information on Education (with statistics, analysis, surveys, and diagnoses), the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (with analysis on the impact of technical and vocational education policies), and the Research Institute of Education (with analysis on the impact of policies in basic and general education).[1]

In addition, each region is required to evaluate its own education system to be reflected in the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System of the Region* (annual report for each region). Mirroring the procedures at the national level, the annual reports focus on evaluating how the objectives set out in the Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system of the respective region are being fulfilled. The Long-term policy objectives are required to contain an analysis of the current situation of the educational system of the concerned region, and an analysis of the changes made since the previous set of Long-term policy objectives.

Major tools to monitor performance of the education system

National assessments of student performance

In the Czech Republic, no national assessments of student performance provide information on student learning outcomes which are comparable across schools, regions or over time limiting the ability for educational authorities to assess whether student learning objectives are being met. This limitation is being addressed as the MEYS announced in 2010 the objective of introducing national standardised tests in the 5th and 9th grades of basic education in three curricular areas: Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. While intended to provide feedback to students and their parents, as well as possibly being a basis for enrolment into a higher level of education, the MEYS has also indicated that the results of standardised testing will be used to evaluate the work of individual schools and to monitor the performance of the Czech school system as a whole and the differences of performance across regions of the country (see Chapter 3).

As described in Chapter 3, several private companies operating within the Czech education system offer to both basic and secondary schools tests in the majority of the subjects for different grades and levels. The use of these tests by the schools is frequent as a means for them to get feedback on the performance of their students. However, these tests cannot be used to monitor performance at the system level given that only a subset of schools use them, the tests are not closely aligned with national learning goals (Framework Education Programmes) and the conditions for the administration of the tests are not comparable across schools. Some regions have also taken the initiative to develop standardised tests to assess student performance. For example, in the Moravian-Silesian Region, the regional authorities in collaboration with Ostrava University administer standardised tests in Czech language, mathematics and a foreign language to students attending the 10th and 12th grades (1st and 3rd grades of secondary education) with the participation of the large majority of secondary schools. The results of the standardised tests are received by schools but are not published. The main purpose of the tests is to provide feedback to schools and teachers to improve learning in schools but might also be used by regional authorities to evaluate school principals.

Another national assessment with the potential to inform system-level evaluation is the exit examination at the end of secondary education. As described in Chapter 3, these refer to the school-leaving examination and the final examination to acquire the apprenticeship certificate. Traditionally, the organisation and assessment of the final examination has been the responsibility of individual schools. Hence, given that assessment criteria as well as their application might differ across teachers and schools, results of school-leaving examinations are not reliable to inform system evaluation both at the national and regional levels. However, in 2011 a common standardised component to the school-leaving examination was introduced with the central administration by the MEYS (see Chapter 3). On the whole, this standardised component, by its very nature, has the potential to be used for system-level evaluation and to inform the system about performance differences across schools. Also, it should be noted that for courses leading to an apprenticeship certificate, standardised common examination assignments have been developed so a certain level of standardisation is reached across schools (see Chapter 3).

Overall marks given by teachers in their summative assessment of students are not reported at the school level and would not in any case provide consistent information of performance at the national or regional level given that there is little guarantee that marking approaches are consistent across teachers or schools (see Chapter 3).

System-level indicators

For the purpose of system-level monitoring, a wide range of demographic, administrative and contextual data are collected. The MEYS, through the Institute for Information on Education (IIE), collects statistical snap-shot data from public and private schools. Schools are requested to periodically send their data in a standardised format to the IIE. The dataset includes information on students (number; type of enrolment; graduates; dropouts; age; gender; transition of year including repetition), teachers (number; age; gender; areas/subjects taught; level of education; remuneration), and schools (number; type; level of education; number of classes; use of ICT; use of counselling services). The IIE also compiles data on funding to schools and school facilities but does not collect these directly from schools. All these data are brought together into an education database maintained by the IIE on its website along with web applications to generate time series and aggregated data. The IIE also carries out *ad hoc* surveys and enquiries into the education system. An example is the "Quick Surveys"

project which is based on collecting the views of school principals on a range of aspects faced by Czech schools.

The MEYS, through the IIE, brings together the basic education statistics described above into publications with indicators on education. The annual *Statistical Yearbook on Education* covers student age distribution, enrolment, transition and completion rates (by level of education, school type, gender, organising body and region), teacher numbers and remuneration (by level of education, school type, gender, subject taught, organising body and region), number of schools and classes (by level of education, type, organising body and region), use of counselling services, learning of foreign languages and use of ICT in teaching for a given school year. It also includes indicators on expenditure in education at the national and regional levels and by level and type of education, organising body, and type of expenditure. The IIE also publishes selected indicators in thematic reports addressing issues such as the teaching of foreign languages, education of students with special needs, gender differences, or the education of foreigners. Other publications providing indicators on education include regional Statistical Yearbooks, *Development Yearbook on Education*, *Czech Education in International Comparison* (selected indicators from OECD's *Education at a Glance*), *Education in Focus*, and *Statistics on Education in your Pocket*. In addition, the MEYS produces the annual *Status Report on the Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic*, which draws on a set of indicators specifically designed to assess progress towards the Long-term policy objectives of the Czech Republic (see list of indicators for 2005 Long-term policy objectives in Annex 3 of IIE, 2011, these are based on the basic statistics described above complemented with *ad hoc* dedicated surveys). The report sums up the main organisational and legislative changes that occurred in the given year and presents statistical indicators describing the situation and development in pre-primary, basic, secondary, and tertiary education. The report contains information about educational staff in the system, the funding of schools and the labour market situation of school leavers. These data constitute a basis for the development of education policies. This report also typically includes an area of specific focus (*e.g.* in 2007 and 2008, the implementation of the curricular reform). Individual regions also produce their own Status Report in Education to assess progress towards their own Long-term policy objectives.

The MEYS, through IIE, has also the major responsibility for developing international indicators on the basic and secondary education system, as part of the joint UNESCO-OECD-EUROSTAT annual data collection on enrolment, graduation, finance and personnel.

Information systems

In addition to the education database managed by the Institute for Information on Education and the schools' individual information management systems, a number of other information systems have been recently developed within the Czech education system. An example is the Education Portal (*www.edu.cz*), which offers a range of useful resources on education such as links to a variety of agents in education (*e.g.* relevant MEYS departments or agencies, stakeholders such as teacher unions, public administration, non-governmental resources), access to relevant legislation, and basic information about individual schools in the country (including access to the Register of Schools and School Facilities and the Register of Legal Entities Performing Activities of Schools). It also includes an online counselling service. A number of regions such as the city of Prague, Hradec Kralove, Olomouc, South Moravia, Vysočina and Zlín also provide their own education portal. Another relevant information system is the

Methodology Portal (Metodický Portál, *www.rvp.cz*), which targets school directors and teachers and offers methodological support to implement educational programmes. This includes the development of School Education Programmes and approaches to assess key competencies. The portal aims to generate a forum for teachers to share their views and experiences. Other resources are offered by groups external to the MEYS such as private companies (*e.g.* Škola OnLine, Česká škola).

Thematic evaluations and policy evaluation

The *Annual Report of the Czech School Inspectorate* (CSI) contains overall findings on the current state of affairs in education and the education system as identified during inspection activities undertaken in the previous school year. Some information is gathered as part of thematic inspections that focus on certain specific aspects of the education system in accordance with the Plan of principal assignments of inspection activities in the relevant school year. These inspections lead to thematic reports in areas such as the quality of ICT in basic schools, foreign language education, safety and health procedures in schools, the development of school education programmes, conditions for admission into secondary schools, and the graduation process in secondary schools.

The MEYS as well as the agencies it manages conduct studies in a range of educational areas including the implementation of specific policies. Examples include 2008 studies about the needs of teachers and the attitudes of parents, and the educational path and the condition of education of Roma students. IIE conducts studies about issues such as the achievement of Czech students in international surveys while the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education publishes reports on issues such as the labour market situation of school leavers, the requirements of employers against school leavers' skills, unemployment among school leavers and the distribution of various qualifications and specialisations. In turn, the Research Institution of Education has recently delivered reports on the implementation of the curricular reform.

Participation in international student surveys

The Czech Republic attributes much importance to international benchmarks of student performance and has participated in most major international studies providing trend data on outcomes at different stages of education in the Czech Republic since 1995. It has participated in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 15-year-old students since its inception in 2000, testing students' knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics and science at the end of lower secondary education. The Czech Republic has also administered tests to students in grades 4 and 8 as part of the International Association for Educational Achievement's (IEA) Trends in Mathematics and Science Skills (TIMSS) studies in 1995, 1999, 2007 and 2011. Participation in the IEA's Progress in Reading Literacy Skills (PIRLS) study also provides an international benchmark for grade 4 students' reading literacy over time, with the participation of the Czech Republic in 2001 and 2011. As such, the Czech Republic has a wealth of information on students' core skills in reading, mathematics and science at major points in school education to compare the system internationally. Furthermore, the Czech Republic will participate in the 2013 IEA's International Computers and Information Literacy Study (ICILS). The Czech Republic also supports international comparisons on non-cognitive outcomes, including its participation in the 1999 Civic Education Study (CIVED) and the recent 2009 IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS). The Czech Republic will also participate in the second round of the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2013, which

provides information on teachers' perceptions of various aspects of the school environment including their profession.

Strengths

An Education Indicators Framework is established

An Education Indicators Framework is in place to assist decision makers analyse the state of the education system, monitor trends over time, compare regions and provide information to the general public. The framework includes four core components (students, teachers, schools and funding) and covers, as main areas, student enrolment, transition and completion, teacher numbers and remuneration, school numbers and classes, and expenditure in education by type of provider. It involves well-established procedures for data collection in close articulation with schools. More limiting aspects include some important gaps in the data collected and the rigidities which exist for the Institute for Information on Education (IIE) to develop a strategy for the development of basic statistics in education (see below).

Education statistics are widely disseminated. The Indicators Framework is the basis for statistical reporting on the education system in forms such as the *Statistical Yearbook on Education* (as well as the regional versions), *Education in Focus* and *Statistics on Education in your Pocket*. Education statistics are also available on line at the IIE's website (*www.uiv.cz*). The education database is open to all audiences and brings together a wide range of information including demographic and contextual information, and statistical information on educational participation and completion. Moreover, IIE publishes indicators based on OECD's *Education at a Glance* with comparisons across regions. IIE also makes its data available for evaluation activities such as those carried out by the CSI through dedicated co-operation agreements. These involve providing the CSI with school specific data for external school evaluation.

There is a concern to assess the progress of the education system towards pre-established objectives

A strength in system evaluation in the Czech Republic is the principle of establishing educational objectives and the subsequent monitoring of the progress towards achieving them. Every four years, Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system are established alongside a strategy to monitor results, both at the national and regional levels. A set of indicators is developed to assess progress towards achieving the objectives. Subsequently, the assessment of progress towards the Long-term policy objectives is reported in the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System*, at the national and regional levels, on the basis of an analysis of the dedicated indicators. As explained elsewhere in this report, the application of this approach has its limitations as with the narrow scope of the Long-term policy objectives (see Chapter 2) and the inadequacy of the indicators to assess educational progress (see below).

The establishment of Long-term policy objectives alongside indicators to assess progress presents a number of advantages. It provides goals for the education system and tools with which the effectiveness of education policies can be assessed. It also grants greater focus of education agents on the main policy challenges for the education system as well as an opportunity for reflection on strategies to address the challenges. Finally, it

strengthens the importance of system-level evaluation and the need to have a strategic approach to it.

The qualitative analysis of thematic reports provides valuable information for system monitoring

Quantitative measures for system monitoring such as those provided by the indicators framework are essential for system monitoring but without doubt can only cover a subset of student learning objectives and do not provide the richness of contextualised qualitative analysis. In this sense, it is a strength that external school evaluation is relevant for the monitoring of the education system through reports by CSI including its annual report in which an analysis of school performance across a range of qualitative aspects is provided. The same applies to its thematic reports which cover aspects which are relevant to policy development such as the learning of foreign languages, reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, and equal opportunities in education. Such qualitative analyses provide complementary evaluative information which potentially broadens the base of evidence and provides more explanation of the factors which might influence performance.

Similarly, the reports published by the MEYS and its agencies add considerably to the national information base which informs policy development. These involve for example regular in-depth analyses of vocational and technical education or progress with the implementation of education reforms, or one-off reports on issues such as students with special needs. These analyses have also allowed the education research community to contribute to the development of education policy.

The participation in international surveys is instrumental for system evaluation

In the absence of national data on student learning outcomes, international surveys have provided – in spite of their lack of alignment with student learning objectives in the Czech Republic – unique information about student learning in the Czech Republic. Participation in international surveys 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 PISA from 2000. Outcome measures offered by participation in international studies have been among the major indicators of performance in school education in the Czech Republic. PISA results have also been used for comparisons across regions: in 2003 and 2006 the sample of students was constructed so results for students attending the 9th grade of basic schools could be compared across regions. In addition, schools which participate in international surveys typically receive a report with an analysis of their results. The PISA results have been very influential in driving educational policy deliberations and pushing for a national student testing system to be introduced in the country.

Challenges

There is little emphasis on the evaluation of the education system

The Review Team formed the impression that the evaluation of the education system as part of the evaluation and assessment framework has received limited policy attention thus far and there is no comprehensive strategic approach to it. While the 2005 Education Act determines who takes responsibility for system evaluation, it does not define the objectives of system evaluation and what it should achieve. As it stands, system

evaluation draws mostly on the evaluation of schools complemented with a set of indicators on education. Even if there is the concern to establish Long-term policy objectives and develop indicators to assess progress towards achieving the objectives, it can be said that the policy objectives are narrow and do not adequately capture student learning objectives (see Chapter 2). Also, as explained below, the available data on student learning outcomes is scarce and major gaps exist in the indicators framework. This places great difficulties in ensuring that system evaluation assesses the extent to which student learning objectives in the Czech Republic are being achieved. The MEYS' annual report (*Status Report on the Development of the Education System*) as well as the equivalent reports by regions include considerations about achieving Long-term policy objectives but do not focus on student learning objectives as reflected by the fact that little performance data are analysed. Similarly, the way system evaluation has been conceived has not yet allowed in-depth investigations of the factors underlying student performance in Czech schools. The current narrow approach to system evaluation does not allow a broad enough assessment of the extent to which student learning objectives are being achieved. Also, there is still a limited use of system-level data to inform policy development and educational planning and little evaluation of the impact of policies takes place (see below).

The purpose of system evaluation varies among countries and indeed may evolve over time to adapt to different needs. In general, six major purposes can be distinguished: *(i)* to monitor student outcomes at a given point in time, including differences among different regions within the education system and given student groups (*e.g.* by gender, socio-economic background or minority status); *(ii)* to monitor changes in student outcomes over time; *(iii)* to monitor the impact of given policy initiatives or educational programmes, such as the introduction of a new curriculum; *(iv)* to monitor demographic, administrative and contextual data which are useful to explain the outcomes of the education system; *(v)* to develop means through which the relevant information is provided to the different agents in the education system; and *(vi)* to use the generated information for analysis, development and implementation of policies. In the Czech Republic, there are challenges in achieving some of these purposes. These are explored below.

The absence of student performance data is a major gap in system monitoring

The national monitoring system for school education is considerably weakened by the absence of national data on student performance, *i.e.* there is no information on student learning outcomes which is comparable across schools, regions or over time. Presently there is no mechanism for the Czech Republic to monitor at a national level the achievement of its students against learning objectives specified in the Framework Education Programmes. Much reliance is placed on international surveys, such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS to monitor student learning outcomes of Czech students. While these studies provide valuable sources of information for monitoring aspects of the achievement and progress of students in the Czech Republic, they are not designed to be sensitive enough to student learning objectives in the Czech Republic or to provide a deep understanding of Czech students' patterns of achievement, their attitudes and motivations, nor an understanding of students' learning in relation to the cultural and socio-economic factors that students bring to their learning, or what is provided by schools (such as the learning opportunities and the quality of teaching).

The national standardised tests proposed for grades 5 and 9 provide a mechanism for measuring students' achievement in the specific areas of Czech language, foreign

language and mathematics in closer alignment with student learning objectives in the Czech Republic. As such, they have the potential to become the most comprehensive national indicators available for monitoring student results in basic education and play a key role in broadening the national debate beyond results in international assessments.

The Czech Republic's efforts to complement the international evidence on student outcomes with national measures of outcomes are commendable. However, the development of the standardised tests will need to address two key aspects. First, it will need to recognise that student tests will measure a limited range of learning outcomes. The information generated will be limited to the curricular areas of Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. Other curricular areas, such as sciences or ICT, will not be externally assessed in a way that grants a comprehensive national picture of student mastery of the national curriculum in a broad range of subjects. Not including other curricular areas in the national monitoring system risks to signal that they are not as important with potential detrimental effects on the corresponding learning. Also, student tests will only be able to measure outcomes which can be marked electronically/ automatically as planned in their current design.

Second, the development of national standardised tests will need to ensure that they do not lead to detrimental effects on classroom teaching and learning, in particular as a result of attaching stakes for students or schools to test results. Indeed, externally-based student tests can produce a number of undesired effects, including adverse educational practices, if results are high-stakes for students or schools (as currently planned with the publication of test results at the school level). For instance, the publication of test results at the school level may lead to a possible narrowing effect on the curriculum and wider achievement with an overemphasis on that which is assessed through the tests; time diverted from regular curriculum for special test preparation; schools which perform satisfactorily may become complacent as the spotlight falls on those schools which perform least well comparatively; negative effects on teacher-based assessments and student engagement in rich curriculum tasks through which teachers can genuinely understand student learning, among others (Rosenkvist, 2010; Morris, 2011; Santiago *et al.*, 2011).

Similarly, the development of a common part to the school-leaving examination provides another opportunity to obtain information on student learning outcomes which is comparable across schools, regions and over time. Finally, it is not clear to what extent future national measures of student learning will be assessing higher-order thinking skills and cross-curricular competencies given that national examinations and the development of standardised student tests closely follow the respective curriculum.

There are key information gaps at the system level

There are no measures on students' socio-economic background

While there has been significant progress in strengthening the availability and quality of demographic, administrative and contextual data, a significant gap is the unavailability of measures on students' socio-economic background. Currently the collection of data from schools does not include any information related to socio-economic status at either student or school level. The only information available at the school level concerns the age, gender, nationality, and special needs status of its students. The absence of good information about the socio-economic background of students hinders the ability to conduct good research about its impact on student performance, and therefore limits the

ability of the system to assess whether it is achieving its equity objectives. Another area which could deserve some attention refers to the first language/language spoken at home by students. Considering the importance of the language of instruction mastery level, it could prove useful to gather such data not only to improve decision making at the school level, but also to determine a national strategy and teachers' guidance for populations whose mother tongue is not Czech.

There are additional gaps in the data collected from schools

A major problem in the collection of data from individual schools undertaken by the Institute for Information on Education is that data are not provided at the individual student level. Instead, schools report aggregate numbers (*e.g.* number of students who are female per grade). This prevents, as described above, the availability of information on the background of individual students. Another example of a major gap is the unavailability of information on student assessment (*e.g.* marks at the end of each term) for individual students. This includes the marks at the school-leaving examination administered by schools. Overall, the absence of individual level data prevents any analysis at the student level, including studying students' trajectories in the education system. Data on teachers also has considerable gaps, such as their qualifications and professional development activities. In general there seems to be little flexibility to implement a long-term vision for the development of basic statistics and indicators as the IIE is constrained by what is dictated in the law.

There is no emphasis on investigating inequities in the system

Equity is not a high priority in the current national agenda for education (see Chapter 2). The education system does not provide for specific targets for reducing educational disadvantage for particular groups such as students from disadvantaged families, Roma students, students with a disability, living in a remote area or with an immigrant status. The data collection from schools only permits to determine the number of special education students according to the different types of schools. As a result system evaluation does not include measures to assess whether or not equity objectives are being achieved. This prevents any systematic and comprehensive strategy to monitor inequities in the school system.

There is limited information on the teaching and learning environment

There is a lack of information on key stakeholders' perceptions of the teaching and learning environment. The information currently available comes from surveys to students, school principals and parents administered during international studies (such as PISA). An exception is the "Quick Surveys" project organised by the Institute of Information on Education through which the views of school principals on a range of aspects are collected. There is no collection of information from students on their attitude to learning and assessment. Measures of students' views on their well-being, engagement, motivation and co-operation could be of significant policy and research interest to analyse the association between student performance and many qualitative aspects of school life. Confident and motivated students are more likely to go on to follow further education and to continue learning during their lives. Student views on the learning environment could be complemented with teacher and parent views. This could include teachers' views on behaviour and discipline in the classroom and parents' views on their interaction with the school and teachers.

It is not possible to monitor student outcomes over time and across schools

Currently, mostly due to the absence of national data on student performance, it is not possible to monitor changes in student performance levels over time. The only trends available result from the participation in international surveys. The ability to analyse outcomes over time is an aspect to take into account in the development of national standardised tests. This will require a stable, confidential test item bank to allow the linking of results across years, to ensure that the degree of difficulty will not vary from year to year. Also, the possibility of exploring the longitudinal analysis of student performance (*i.e.* for given cohorts of students) should be considered, linking the results of the same students in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics in the 5th and 9th grades and upon completion of secondary education.

Another difficulty concerns the comparison of student outcomes across schools. At present, the Government is planning the publication of the results of student standardised tests in the 5th and 9th grades at the school level, when these become available. However, as indicated earlier, no information on the socio-economic context of each school (or the characteristics of schools' student population) is available. This means that school-level results would be disclosed with no account for schools' particular contexts. This can considerably distort considerations about the effectiveness of each school as average results do not reflect the value added by schools to student results. Also, at this stage it is not possible to use aggregated teacher-based student summative assessment (*i.e.* end of term student marks) as measures of school, region and national performance as there are issues of consistency and fairness of marks across teachers. Differences across schools and over time may simply show variation in teacher marking practices and not real differences in student performance. This is the case because there are no procedures in place to ensure that assessment by teachers is consistent within and across schools (see Chapter 3).

Monitoring at the region and municipality levels is faced with considerable challenges

There are considerable differences in how regions monitor their education systems. They build on the data developed at the national level and the comparison across regions that it involves. But regions are also limited by the unavailability of student performance data. Some try to overcome this gap by developing their own standardised student testing as is the case with the Moravian-Silesian Region (tests for students attending the 10th and 12th grades, administered in collaboration with Ostrava University). Regions draw considerably on the outcomes of the school external evaluation carried out by the CSI, which ensures a certain consistency of approaches to quality assurance in schools across the country. Some regions have developed some quality initiatives complementing the role of the CSI, with specific indicators and some feedback from municipalities. But these are typically incipient, lack resources and are not among the priorities for the allocation of educational resources in the region. It can be said that regions have a limited intervention in quality assurance with their main tool being the evaluation of school principals as well as decisions on their recruitment and dismissal. Also, the national level does not seem to have an overview of the different quality assurance systems in the regions, including strategies for school improvement.

In addition, there seems to be limited articulation between a specific region and its municipalities in managing the quality of schools. For instance, each municipality is typically not required to deliver an annual report on the basic schools it manages to the

respective region. Individual regions take direct responsibility for school improvement strategies in secondary schools but the equivalent role in basic education is mostly left to the municipalities. Some concerns exist about the role of municipalities in school improvement. During the Review visit, it was pointed out several times that there are many smaller municipalities that lack the capacity to develop robust school improvement strategies, manage these and follow up schools' initiatives to improve their practices. Quality assurance is left to the CSI and school leadership with municipality intervention more limited to financial matters. Further the background and qualifications of municipal officials responsible for school improvement vary significantly. In general, there is little understanding at the region level of how municipalities fulfil their education-related tasks. In the current national reporting system, there is also minimal attention paid to municipality differences.

System-level information is not fully exploited

There have been considerable efforts over the past few years to provide information on the education system, including reports describing the development of the education system and assessing progress towards achieving policy objectives. Large amounts of data and statistics at the system level are now available in the Czech Republic. A challenge is then to ensure that stakeholders throughout the system make effective use of the available data and information about the Czech education system.

Little analysis to inform educational planning and policy development

The Review Team formed the view that system-level data are not used to their full potential in analysis which could be useful to inform policy development. Comprehensive statistical analysis of student outcomes such as an assessment of the factors influencing student performance or a study about the impact of socio-economic background on student performance does not seem to be available. Also, the Institute for Information on Education, which collects most of the statistics on education, dedicates few resources into the analysis of the education data it publishes. It concentrates on the development of statistics and indicators. System-level reports such as the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System* contain little analysis of student performance and mostly present descriptive statistics. As a result, the extent to which results and analysis of system-level data feed into policy for school improvement is limited. While there is some concern to assess the implementation of specific policy initiatives such as the curricular reform, there is considerable less attention to undertake research which could more broadly inform policy development.

Limited use to inform school management

One more area in which improvements are needed is to ensure schools are provided with useful information for their own management. While schools report the data for the national education database, they in turn do not receive a statistical analysis of their profile from the Institute for Information on Education in a way to support them in their internal analysis and further planning. While there are data on school resources, teacher remuneration, student enrolment and completion, it is not currently possible for schools to compare their own data with indicators aggregated to the municipal (or regional) level or for "similar" schools. The education database (as well as the Education Portal) has potential as a platform for schools to benchmark each other but at present they have very limited information for each school.

No comprehensive information system for the use of education agencies

Another difficulty seems to be the sharing of information on the education system between the main agencies. When given agencies such as the CSI need access to school-level data from the education database to conduct their own activities, they need to establish a specific agreement with the IIE to obtain the data. This is the consequence of the non existence of an information platform integrating all data available on education whose access conditions would be defined in a single agreement with all the agencies in the education system. The existence of such a platform would greatly facilitate the use of the available data by the different agencies.

Systematic sharing of data between schools is limited

School-level data information systems in the Czech Republic appear to be underdeveloped and involve a diversity of approaches across schools. This creates challenges in ensuring the follow-up of students across transitions from one school to the other. 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.

Policy recommendations

Raise the profile of system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework

The profile of system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework needs to be raised. An initial priority is to broaden the concept of system evaluation as the wide range of system-level information which permits a good understanding of how well student learning objectives are being achieved. It should include a varied set of components such as broad measures of student outcomes; demographic, administrative and contextual data; information systems; and research and analysis to inform planning, intervention and policy development. A strategic approach to system-level evaluation would benefit from clear national objectives and priorities so progress against these can be assessed (see Chapter 2). System-level evaluation should include the production of an annual report with an assessment of whether or not the education system is achieving its objectives. Relative to current practice, whereby the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System* focuses on assessing progress towards the narrow Long-term policy objectives, there is a need to move to a more focussed national monitoring of the level and equity of student performance.

The Czech Republic needs to be able to monitor the relative impact of educational policies and initiatives for improving students' outcomes by collecting evidence from a range of sources in order to inform decision making in relation to these initiatives, and others that may emerge as important. Both quantitative and qualitative measures need to be developed. The challenge for system-level evaluation is to ensure that the measures of system performance are broad enough to capture the whole range of student learning objectives. An important consideration is that policy making at the system level needs to be informed by high quality data and evidence, but not driven by the availability of such information. This points to the need to go beyond quantitative measures and to undertake an analysis of the data available. In this context, the Czech Republic could consider ways to more fully exploit the data it collects, including the future measures of student outcomes. Another key aspect is to develop competencies and build capacity within the

MEYS and the agencies it manages to analyse information available at the system level so better connections to policy development are secured.

Develop national student performance data for system monitoring

Design national standardised tests for national monitoring and as a pedagogical tool

A clear priority in the Czech Republic for system evaluation is the development of measures of student learning outcomes. This effort has now started with the development of national standardised tests for students in grades 5 and 9 in the curricular areas of Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. This is a valuable effort with the potential to provide national data on student performance which are comparable across schools, regions and over time, which is crucial information for the national monitoring of student performance. The Review Team supports these efforts but expresses cautions in three specific areas. First, as explained in Chapter 3, standardised tests need to be closely aligned with student learning objectives as stipulated in the Framework Education Programmes. There are concerns that the standardised tests are driving educational standards (specifically developed to serve as a reference for the tests) while the opposite should be happening with student learning objectives guiding the development of the standardised tests (see Chapter 3). Second, it needs to be recognised that standardised tests to be marked automatically covering only Czech language, foreign language and mathematics, inevitably measure a limited range of student learning outcomes. Hence, other instruments need to be developed to measure a broader set of outcomes (see below).

Third, the Review Team believes that the national tests at this stage should be conceived for dual purposes: to provide a powerful pedagogical tool to teachers against testable areas of the Framework Education Programmes; and to monitor national student performance and allow regions and municipalities to monitor their school results against it. The Review Team believes that the current government plan to publish national test results at the school level is premature. As explained earlier, making the tests high stakes for schools risks to have adverse educational effects, especially at a stage in which the value and rationale of the tests is not yet understood by school agents. The priorities should be to validate the national tests and to support and promote capacity building to ensure the effective use of national test results by key stakeholders: by teachers as diagnostic tools to assess individual student, student group and class progress and to monitor the impact of different instructional interventions; by regions, municipalities and school principals as a key part of their own quality monitoring systems. Rosenkvist (2010) conducted a detailed review of different uses of student test results in OECD countries and highlights that to bring about positive effects of national student tests "necessitates that schools and teachers have the capacity to interpret and use student test results". Strategies to develop the tests should also concentrate on maximising the monitoring potential of the national tests at the system level ensuring their reliability as a monitoring tool and designing ways to communicate the results to schools and teachers which maximise the pedagogical value of the tests.

Develop strategies to monitor a wider range of curricular areas and broader outcomes

The implementation of the full-cohort national standardised tests in the 5th and 9th grades together with the common part of national school-leaving examinations, offers the possibility to monitor student outcomes in the areas of Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. To have reliable national measures of performance across broader curricular areas the Czech Republic could consider introducing sample-based national monitoring surveys. The sample-based surveys test a statistically representative sample of students at target grade levels in a given set of curricular areas. A possible approach is to test a small number of subject areas each year for given grades in 3- or 4-year cycles with different subject areas every year. Such sample-based surveys would allow the assessment of a broader range of curricula content and allow benchmarking of different regions or specific student groups on an externally validated measure.

Sample-based surveys are designed to describe the learning, attitudes, engagement and educational experiences of the Czech Republic students at a system level. They should seek to: *(i)* measure change over time in educational outcomes for students; *(ii)* assess strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum; *(iii)* report findings to various audiences including the MEYS and the informed public; *(iv)* provide high quality data for research and policy development; and *(v)* provide high quality resources and professional experiences for teachers. If well designed, a sample-based survey has many advantages. Because not all students are assessed, the survey is low stakes and will not have distorting influence on classroom practices. A wide range of subjects and competencies may be assessed using a variety of assessment approaches. It would provide valuable national-level information for policy makers, but could also provide a valuable assessment resource that would benefit the work of classroom teachers. As summarised by Green and Oates (2009), sample-based surveys offer "stability in measures (allowing robust measurement of standards over reasonable timeframes), fuller coverage of the curriculum, lack of distortion deriving from 'teaching to the test' and comparatively low cost". There are many examples of sample surveys in several OECD countries and the use of such national monitoring surveys is well established in countries such as Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and United States. Box 6.1 presents the examples of Australia and New Zealand.

Ensure that national monitoring covers broader outcomes

Consideration should be given to developing the national standardised tests and the national school-leaving examinations to better assess higher-order thinking skills and cross-curricular competencies. In the longer term, the Czech Republic may also wish to use the introduction of sample-based student surveys to obtain trend information and monitor a broader range of student knowledge and skills. For example, in Australia the triennial sample assessments include an assessment of civics and citizenship skills and in New Zealand sample-based tests include an assessment of information skills (see Box 6.1). Similarly, in Finland a survey is used to monitor students' "learning to learn" skills.

Box 6.1 Sample surveys in Australia and New Zealand

Triennial sample assessments in Australia

The Australian National Assessment Program includes cyclical sample surveys to monitor student outcomes in science, ICT, civics and citizenship. These tests draw on a statistically representative sample of students at target year levels (equivalent to about 5% of the corresponding population). Each area is an agreed national priority and is tested once every three years. The first survey was run in 2003 for science, in 2004 for civics and citizenship and in 2005 for ICT. Each assessment results in a national report showing student average performance and proportion of students at the set "proficient standard" for each State and Territory, each school sector and for selected student subgroups (*e.g.* Indigenous, socio-economic background) and allows a reporting of progress over time, as each subject is assessed every three years. For both ICT and civics and citizenship students are assessed in Years 6 and 10. Scientific literacy is assessed for Year 6 only. These assessments are designed primarily to monitor national and jurisdictional progress; however participating schools receive their own students' results and the school's results. These can provide useful information to classroom teachers and assist with curriculum planning

Sources: Santiago *et al.* (2011); *www.acara.edu.au*.

The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) in New Zealand

In New Zealand primary schools, progress towards the achievement of national curriculum goals has been measured via the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) since 1995. No full-cohort national tests exist. NEMP intends to provide a national picture of student learning outcomes at key stages (grades 4 and 8) rather than to report on individual students, teachers or schools. NEMP covers all curriculum areas in a 4-year cycle. The four cycles are as follows:

(i) Science, visual arts and information skills (graphs, tables, maps, charts, diagrams)
(ii) Language (reading and speaking); aspects of technology and music
(iii) Mathematics, social studies and information skills (library, research)
(iv) Language (writing, listening, viewing), health and physical education

NEMP is conducted every year, but assesses a different set of disciplines (according to the cycles above). Each discipline, therefore, is tested every four years. About 3 000 students from 260 schools are selected randomly each year to take part in the assessments. 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 so that longitudinal data can be obtained. 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. NEMP uses tasks which are meaningful and enjoyable for the students to help gain a rich picture of their capabilities. It includes a wide range of activities, from those the majority of Year 4 students are likely to have mastered to those which show the highest achievements of the most capable Year 8 students. It also takes a full account of differences of language, culture, gender, ability and disability in the design and administration of assessment tasks.

NEMP is based on a number of principles:

(i) Trustworthy information
(ii) Focus on national change over time (no information about individual students, teachers or schools)
(iii) Assessing a broad range of achievements (knowledge, skills, motivation and attitudes)
(iv) Involving practising teachers (development, trialling and administration of tasks, analysis of responses)
(v) Best assessment practices (used in the choice and design of assessment tasks)
(vi) Information used for improvement

Sources: Nusche *et al.* (forthcoming); *http://nemp.otago.ac.nz*.

Prioritise efforts to meet information needs for national monitoring

A key priority within the evaluation and assessment framework is to develop indicators and measures of system performance that permit a good understanding of how well schooling is being delivered. The emphasis is generally on starting with high level objectives for the education system and then mapping out the feasibility of measurements in each area. Other phases include ensuring systematic collection to agreed definitions of existing information at different levels in the system; promoting data quality improvement; undertaking research to shed light on some of the "gaps" where systematic collection is too costly/not feasible; and developing a long-term strategy to improve measurement tools for future information needs. An important issue to address is to ensure that agencies which take responsibility for the development of statistics in education benefit from enough autonomy to define priorities for the development of indicators and have the resources to fill in the gaps in the education indicators framework. Below, the major information gaps are highlighted and priorities for data development are suggested.

Develop measures of the socio-economic background of students

An immediate priority for meeting information needs to adequately monitor student outcomes in the Czech school system is to strengthen the information on the student socio-economic background, including parental level of education, occupation and income level; immigrant or minority status; and special needs. The absence of socio-economic background data prevents the monitoring of educational disadvantage in the system. The approach would be based on collecting data from schools at the individual student level and could consist of collecting information from the student on his or her background at the time of enrolment so it becomes part of the school's records. These data could also be collected during the administration of the national standardised tests and the common part of the national school-leaving examinations. This would considerably strengthen the potential for the analysis of student results, particularly in view of monitoring whether equity objectives are being achieved. The Ministry could also consider gathering 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.

The data collection from schools needs to be improved

Moving to data at the individual student level would be a considerable improvement to the collection of data from schools. This could be facilitated by the development of information management computer applications in schools in which information at the student level would be recorded. Schools would be required to periodically enter the original data into their information management in a standardised format proposed by IIE in such a way it can be automatically collected by IIE. Such enlarged database could then contain richer data such as the socio-economic background of students, the results of students' assessments, more detailed information about the teaching staff, and some information about non-teaching staff in the school.

Give more prominence to the analysis of inequities in the system

The monitoring of student performance across specific groups (*e.g.* by gender, socio-economic or immigrant background, minority status) as well as the analysis of student performance across regions needs to be strengthened. The value of the national tests and the common part of school-leaving examinations in monitoring national progress in discrete areas could be enhanced by reporting the national performance profile by gender and by student background (socio-economic, immigrant, minority status) to allow the tracking of improvement for these key groups over time and permit the investigation of the impact of student background on performance.

Improve the information on the teaching and learning environment

There needs to be consideration on how best to include stakeholders' perceptions of the teaching and learning environment in the national monitoring system. Several options exist. There could be a national-level questionnaire to a sample of students, parents, school principals and teachers in the system to collect views and perspectives about a range of aspects such as attitudes to learning and assessment, perceptions on the implementation of policies, well-being, engagement, satisfaction, etc. This could draw on the experience with the "Quick Surveys" project by IIE through which the views of school principals are collected. Norway introduced a student survey in 2005 and this forms a key part of the national reporting on the education system. In the annual summative report on education in Norway (*The Education Mirror*) there is always a clear presentation and analysis of results from the survey and these feed into the national policy debate (Nusche *et al*., 2011). This is one way to ensure the systematic inclusion of student perceptions at the political level. Another option is to include a questionnaire to students during the administration of the national standardised tests or the common part of school-leaving examinations. Certainly, the collection of information from students, school principals and teachers during the administration of international surveys has led to informed analysis of how different reported factors relate to student performance, *e.g.* classroom climate factors such as discipline and student-teacher relations have shown strong correlation with student achievement (*e.g.* OECD, 2004). The use of student and parental surveys could also be encouraged at the school level through the development of a template at the national level to which schools could add issues more related to their specific circumstances.

Explore ways to more reliably track educational outcomes over time and across schools

Enhance the monitoring of changes over time and progress of particular student cohorts

System evaluation in the Czech Republic needs to place as good emphasis on the monitoring of "progress" of students as emphasis on the achievement levels at a given point in time. The national standardised tests represent a significant investment and do offer the possibility to track overall progress on national measures to complement evidence from international studies, and also importantly, at different stages throughout basic education. To assess student "progress", the strategy should involve the monitoring of both student results over time and the progress of particular student cohorts.

First, it would be useful to ensure the comparability of results of national tests over time by keeping a stable element of items in the tests and releasing only a proportion of

the items for use by teachers after the tests. Importantly, there should be a strategic releasing of items distributed at different difficulty levels and a replacement with new items at the same levels of difficulty. With a stable difficulty level for each test from year to year, national tests results would provide a useful indicator on changes in student performance over time – one which will complement the international trend measures. The same approach should be followed for sample-based surveys if these are introduced to monitor a greater set of curricular areas.

Second, a more strategic use of the national test results (and the common part of the national school-leaving examinations) could provide indicators on the progress of particular student cohorts through education in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. With individual student identification numbers, results from the national tests could be linked across cohorts to report on the success of a given cohort on national tests in grades 5, 9 and final year of secondary school. Australia provides an example of building in the measure of progress in the design of the national test measurement scale. A set of standardised national tests in literacy and numeracy, the National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), was introduced in 2008. The major feature of the tests is the fact that items are linked on a common scale of difficulty to allow documentation of student progression in each of the core areas (reading, writing, language conventions [spelling, grammar and punctuation]) across the four key educational stages that each student sits the test (grades 3, 5, 7 and 9). In this way, it is possible to gauge student progress in the national tests on a subsequent year, for example, it is possible to see how well a student performs on the common NAPLAN reading scale at four different stages of his or her schooling (in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9) (for further details see Santiago *et al.*, 2011). Taking a more longitudinal approach to analyse student results could provide additional useful information that allows analysing student pathways. This could include looking at how groups of students with different characteristics and academic profiles succeed in education.

Make meaningful comparisons across schools if test results are published at the school level

If student test results become published at the school level, an imperative is to make comparisons of student results across schools meaningful. In some countries, average results of national tests are published at the school level with no correction for the socio-economic context of the schools. Improving the data on the students' socio-economic background, as suggested earlier, and developing the associated indicators at the school level would permit the comparison of student results for "similar" groups of schools (schools with students from similar backgrounds).

Also, the longitudinal dimension of national student assessment in the Czech language, foreign language and mathematics provides some potential for measures of the value added by the school to be developed. This possibility should be explored if the objective is to meaningfully compare the contributions of schools to student learning. In England, schools are expected to meet targets for student expected progress between specified key stages of schooling. Such progress measures are complemented by a statistical indicator of "Contextual Value Added (CVA) score". Such scores show the progress made by students from the end of a key stage to the end of another key stage using their test results. CVA takes into account the varying starting points of each students' test results, and also adjusts for factors which are outside a school's control (such as gender, mobility and levels of deprivation) that have been observed to impact on student results. Several systems in the United States also attempt to measure "adequate

yearly growth". Various models have been researched and used in practice. In value-added models, students' actual test scores are often compared to the projected scores, and classroom and school scores that exceed the projected values are considered as positive evidence of instructional effectiveness. In this way, value-added models can be used to identify teachers and schools that have met above expected growth despite various challenging circumstances. It is important to note that value-added models are still under development, and therefore they are prone to error (Koretz, 2008), though they are considered fairer than the use of raw results in terms of school averages. It is not appropriate to produce school rankings using value added measures, rather only schools where students make significantly better or poorer progress can be identified.

Strengthen the role of regions and municipalities in quality improvement

The Review Team formed the view that there is room to strengthen the role of regions and municipalities in quality improvement. Appropriately, regions and municipalities draw considerably on the external evaluation of schools performed by CSI to monitor the quality of the schools they supervise. However, they tend to limit their role in quality assurance to school compliance with administrative procedures, financial matters and the evaluation of school principals. The Review Team believes that regions and municipalities should considerably strengthen their capacity for educational leadership and develop school improvement frameworks. This could involve approaches to identify school needs and resources to support and sustain the improvement of individual schools (possibly as a result of inspections by the CSI).

One relevant aspect relates to the articulation between each region and its municipalities. There needs to be a closer communication between the two levels. For instance, each municipality could be required to prepare an annual report describing the performance and context of its schools to be delivered to the region in which it is located. The idea is that each region not only supervises its secondary and special schools but also monitors how municipalities fulfil their responsibilities in education. Another priority is to build the capacity for municipalities to supervise their schools and develop improvement strategies. A possibility is to formulate competency profiles for municipal officials carrying responsibilities over schools and supply the corresponding training. There is also the option of fostering networks of municipalities around quality assurance and school improvement which would increase capacity and promote the sharing of good practices. In Ontario, Canada, there is a shared research-based leadership framework for school principals and school district supervisory officers, which was developed collaboratively by the Ministry of Education and professional associations for school principals and school districts. The five major areas for leadership competencies in the framework are: setting directions; building relationships and developing people; developing the organisation; leading the instructional program; and securing accountability (see *www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/content/framework*).

At the national level, it could prove useful to develop an overview of approaches to quality assurance in the different regions. This would support the identification and sharing of good practice. Also, the national tests which are currently being developed may serve as a robust measure to compare performance across regions and municipalities. Careful monitoring of such results can aid investigation into both potential performance concerns and examples of performance improvement. It follows that this would be critical information in prioritising interventions in specific municipalities. The CSI as well as regional educational authorities should also identify municipalities that are producing and

sustaining improved student performance, learn from these examples, and spread this knowledge throughout the system.

Optimise the reporting and use of system-level data

The amount of existing information on schools and system performance offers many opportunities to engage stakeholders in supporting improvements across the school system. While large amounts of data are collected from schools and comparable student results will soon become available, there is room to strengthen the analysis and mobilisation of such information for system monitoring and improvement.

Strengthen the analysis for educational planning and policy development

A priority should be the strengthening of the analysis for educational planning and policy development. It is clear that considerably more analysis and research can be conducted with the available data. The MEYS as well as its agencies should promote more analytical studies and innovative research about key issues such as the factors which explain student performance and the impact of the socio-economic background on student results. This would imply the strengthening of the analytical role of the IIE with more resources dedicated to exploring the analytical potential of the education database. The MEYS could also sponsor research undertaken by independent researchers which is deemed useful for educational policy. Another priority should be to strengthen the analysis of student performance in the *Status Report on the Development of the Education System*. What is clear is that it is crucial to build the analytical capacity in the MEYS and at the agencies it manages to fully exploit existing information by ensuring statistical, analytical and research competencies.

Improve feedback for local monitoring

The MEYS should devise a strategy to optimise the use of system-level data by key stakeholders at the local level such as regions, municipalities and schools. In this context, an Internet portal could become a powerful tool for school management. It would involve the availability of major indicators for individual schools and the access to information about all schools within a municipality or region. To encourage the use of such information systems for monitoring progress at the local level, such a system may include some benchmarks set nationally to serve as a springboard for regions, municipalities and schools to set their own local objectives and targets. Reporting should have a strong focus placed on developing benchmarking analyses which are trusted and valued by school leadership. This means they must be based on reliable data but also that they should facilitate "fair" comparisons between schools ("value-added" or "similar schools" comparisons, as suggested above). Alongside creating more user-friendly and sophisticated forms of benchmarking data, made available at the right time and with more help for non-technical users in interpreting it, effort should also be directed towards increasing the skills of school staff in the use and interpretation of data for the purposes of school improvement. The potential of such approach is greater once the results of national standardised tests become available and richer data are collected from schools at the student level.

The regions and municipalities could see their feedback role strengthened. They could use school reporting data as a basis for engaging in meaningful discussions with schools and their leadership. Also, 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 MEYS but that feedback would also flow from MEYS back to schools.

Integrate available data and facilitate access by key agencies

Further steps can be taken to more effectively integrate the available data and results from the national monitoring system to facilitate the access by key agencies. There needs to be greater consultation between interested stakeholders and agencies on how to best manage, present, and share data for optimal use. One option to ensure the more effective use of existing information by key agencies in system evaluation is to establish a protocol to share data among them – this may include data that are not available to the public, but that can be analysed and used for example for school inspection. There also needs to be clear and timely reporting of results to different audiences. Giving high quality feedback on system results is one way to maximise the use of results by stakeholders throughout the system. Accessibility of information is another crucial aspect. An Internet portal has the potential to become the key tool to make accessible the major results from the national monitoring system. It would provide a flexible, interactive option for giving different users easy access to data relevant to their interests. It should be an intuitive, easy-to-use system that includes clear documentation on how to interpret the results. Further, the use of different secure access areas for different users could offer the possibility to provide a better adapted set of results to each user's needs. This would be particularly useful to facilitate the use of education data by the different agencies such as the CSI.

Facilitate the sharing of student information across schools

To smooth transitions of students from one level to the next and across schools, educational authorities should explore how they can best support the sharing of student information across schools and teachers. This is most likely to involve the development of a data information system with information at the student level through a unique student identifier and schools following the requirement of recording student information such as the results of student assessment, absenteeism, grade completion or repetition on the system. This would permit schools to better follow student transitions between schools and would save a lot of time in the 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 their students for future learning. Good reporting on student previous accomplishments can help create coherence in students' educational trajectories. Such system would also allow an analysis of educational pathways, with the identification of success and risk factors for students in the Czech educational system.

Notes

1. As explained earlier, subsequently to the visit by the Review Team, a major restructuring of these agencies took place. The Institute for Information on Education was integrated in the Czech School Inspectorate as of 2012. The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education and the Research Institute of Education were merged into the National Institute for Education, as of July 2011.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Education system context

Student learning outcomes are around the OECD average but have declined significantly

Student learning outcomes in the Czech Republic are around or slightly below the OECD average, depending on the skills assessed. In 2009, achievement levels of Czech students in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were not statistically significantly different from the OECD average in mathematics and science and were just below the OECD average with statistical significance in reading literacy. However, trend analyses of PISA results have shown a serious decline in student learning outcomes, among the most serious in the OECD area – for instance, the Czech Republic is among the four OECD countries for which performance in reading literacy between 2000 and 2009 decreased significantly.

There are concerns about the strong social selectivity and inequities in the education system

There is evidence that performance as well as choice of educational track is strongly influenced by family background. An issue often debated is the fact that the 6- and 8-year *Gymnasium* has potentially far reaching effects on equity as it tends to favour a minority of students into elite publicly-funded schools. Another concern relates to the basis for attending a special school. It is well known in the Czech school system that a good proportion of students who attends special schools do so as a result of learning difficulties and/or a social disadvantage and not following the identification of a learning disability. This is particularly the case of Roma children whose attendance of special schools is still very high in spite of the decision to progressively integrate disadvantaged students into mainstream schools.

Increased autonomy for schools reinforces the role of evaluation and assessment

Prior to 1989, the Czech education system was characterised by a strong central direction and the standardisation of processes. Instruction was based on a detailed syllabus, specified textbooks, detailed guidelines for teachers and standardised procedures for the preparation of teachers. The approach radically changed following the 1989 Revolution. Schools benefit from the free choice of textbooks and considerable autonomy over the content of instruction, namely through the development of their own school education programmes (in accordance with the national Framework Education Programmes). Teachers can choose their teaching methods in agreement with the school strategy and the requirements set in the School Education Programme. In this context, the role of evaluation and assessment as key tools to achieve quality and equity in education was reinforced.

Strengths and challenges

There is a range of initiatives to strengthen the evaluation and assessment framework which nonetheless remains incomplete and not integrated

There is clearly the perception in the education system that the evaluation and assessment framework needs to be strengthened and that there needs to be a greater focus on improving student outcomes. This is reflected in current initiatives. National student standardised tests in grades 5 and 9 are in the course of development, the common part of the school-leaving examination was launched in 2011, external school evaluation is consolidated and increasingly focuses on the improvement of student outcomes, school self-evaluation is mandatory, Framework Education Programmes are formulated as competency aims, the availability of national indicators on education has considerably expanded, and there is the intention to introduce teaching standards. These developments clearly communicate that evaluation and assessment are priorities in the school system and reveal a broad agenda to develop an evaluation culture among school agents. However, at the present time, there is no integrated evaluation and assessment framework. As in other OECD countries, the different components of evaluation and assessment have developed independently of each other over time. There are provisions for student assessment, school evaluation, teacher appraisal and system evaluation, but these are not explicitly integrated or aligned. The existing framework is not perceived as a coherent whole and it does not connect all the different components.

There are common references at the national level but Framework Education Programmes lack descriptions of expected performance

There are some common references to provide the basis for evaluation and assessment. At the national level, the central government in office establishes priorities for educational policy, which provide the framework for policy development. These are expressed in the 4-year Long-term policy objectives of education and development of the education system. These are relevant references to shape the evaluation and assessment framework. However, these policy objectives tend to be somewhat short-sighted and associated with single policy initiatives. Also, there are no clear national goals for education aligned with broader social and economic goals. By contrast, at the level of student learning goals, there is a good basis for common expectations of outcomes from schooling. Both in basic and secondary education, there are national Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) in a range of educational areas. These establish competency aims for students at key stages in the education system and broadly specify the content for the learning. Within these binding goals for student achievement, the schools are given a good degree of autonomy to develop local curricula (School Education Programmes) and approaches for evaluation and assessment. Nonetheless, a range of stakeholders expressed that FEPs do not provide statements of learning goals and expectations that are clear enough to guide teaching and assessment practices and bring consistency to education in the Czech Republic. The agreed national competency aims for student performance, as expressed in the FEPs, are quite broad and there are no descriptions of expected learning progress through the curriculum. This is part of a more general challenge about the lack of descriptions of expected performance in the education system. Standards have not been developed not only for student achievement but also for defining the expected performance of teachers, school principals and schools.

There is an "open door" climate among teachers but there is a narrow understanding of the purposes of evaluation and assessment

A major strength in the system is the "open door" climate which exists among teachers. Classroom observation is a key instrument in external school evaluation ensuring the proper evaluation of the quality of the teaching and learning in schools. Also, the observation of classes by school management is common practice in schools, including in the context of school-based teacher appraisal and schools' self-evaluation processes. This is a crucial element to ensure the effectiveness of the evaluation and assessment framework which depends to a great extent on the ability to cultivate a culture of sharing classroom practice, professional feedback and peer learning. However, the Review Team formed the view that there is a narrow understanding of the purposes and the potential of evaluation and assessment. Evaluation and assessment are still perceived mostly as instruments to hold stakeholders accountable, to "control" and assess compliance with regulations. This is visible at all levels with the focus often being whether formal requirements are met and with less attention given to the quality of practices or ways for these to improve.

There is a need to strengthen competencies for evaluation and assessment across the system

While there have been considerable national efforts to stimulate an evaluation culture by strengthening assessment and evaluation activities, as well as providing competency-building learning opportunities in some cases, the Review Team assesses that there are still limited evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the education system. There is a need to improve the evaluation competencies of school governing bodies, in particular at the municipal level. There is great variation in the capacity for municipalities to develop and effectively use quality assurance systems. There is also a need to improve the competencies of school leaders in evaluation and assessment, in particular with regard to ensuring a meaningful school self-evaluation process, and providing pedagogical guidance and coaching to individual teachers. Another area where there is limited expertise is standardised test development. This is a rather technical area requiring very specific expertise in domains such as educational measurement, test development, validation of test items or scaling methods, which happens to be scarce in the Czech Republic. Other areas in which building capacity is a considerable challenge include: the competencies of teachers for student assessment (both formative and summative); the data handling skills of school agents; and analytical capacity for educational planning and policy development at the system level.

Assessment is seen as part of the professional role of teachers but approaches to learning and assessment remain markedly traditional

Teachers in the Czech Republic play an important role in the assessment of students. At all levels of education, teachers play the major role in assessing and reporting on student achievement. The introduction of School Education Programmes has given an even greater role and increased responsibility to teachers for establishing student learning objectives and assessing against these. Schools are required to establish and publish the criteria against which students are assessed, and have these validated by the school board.

All students are assessed in an ongoing manner throughout the school year in each curriculum area using a variety of approaches. There is widespread use of oral assessments, as well as written tests/examinations. There is an emerging use of student self-assessment in areas of key competencies. In general, it can be said that this autonomy in assessment for teachers and for schools is uncontested and widely supported. However, generally there is a traditional approach to the organisation of classrooms in the Czech Republic. Teaching and assessment practices have not changed for many decades and largely still reflect the beliefs and approaches used before the liberalisation of the education system in 1989. Assessment for learning is not systematically used in Czech schools. There is little emphasis in assessment practices on providing student feedback and developing teacher-student interactions about student learning. Feedback is often understood as "summative assessment done more often".

An external dimension to assessment was introduced but the multiple purposes of school-leaving examinations raise some concerns

A component of centralised, national assessment of student achievement has been introduced into the procedures of the school-leaving examination. The school-leaving examination includes both a national common component as well as a school/teacher-based component. This model allows for an assessment of students that is consistent in format and content across all schools nationally, while recognising the value of assessments that are best made by teachers. Also, common assignments for the apprenticeship certificate have been developed by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education for use by the schools. The national examinations at the end of secondary education appear to serve two competing purposes. One purpose for the examination is to provide a certificate of achievement for students at the end of their secondary school education. However, it also appears that national examination results may also be used for comparing the performance of schools. These two purposes are not compatible and would require different approaches to be optimally valid for each purpose. If the national examinations are for certifying students' achievement, then it would be important to ensure that the examinations cover adequately the breadth and depth of the curriculum, knowledge and competencies/skills. There are important other sources of information that would be necessary to collect in order to understand the performance of a school.

There is an increased focus on student outcomes but the national standardised tests entail a range of limitations and risks

With the liberalisation of the education system and the introduction of curricular reforms, there is an increased focus on key learning outcomes for students. Alongside this focus, is a move to identify expected minimum standards of achievement for students at key points in their education. In this context, the Czech Republic is introducing national standardised tests at grades 5 and 9 (in Czech language, foreign language and mathematics). The purposes while announced by the Ministry remain not well understood by the education sector. The tests are being designed to be IT-based, and will therefore potentially cover the limited range of student learning objectives that can be assessed with objective item formats that can be computer marked. In preparation for the introduction of the national tests, a team of educators has been developing standards against which the national tests will be marked. It is the view of the Review Team that the development of

the standards is being rushed by the requirement for national tests to be piloted in 2011. Development of the standards began in November 2010 to be completed by mid 2011. Given the more immediate reason for their development, the standards may be more appropriately regarded as specifications for the national tests, rather than indicators of the quality of student achievement expected at different levels of the education system. Also, the Review Team considers that it is essential to better articulate the purposes of national tests and recognise that they cover a limited range of competencies. The tests, as originally announced by the Ministry, will likely be very "high stakes tests". This will certainly arise if the test scores are used to evaluate schools and/or teachers. Overseas experience has demonstrated that there are serious negative side effects when national test scores of student achievement are used for these purposes (*e.g.* "teaching to the test", "narrowing of the curriculum").

There is limited consistency of student assessment across schools and classes

Each school is responsible for establishing the student assessment criteria. There is evidence that assessment rules and practices often differ between schools and descriptions of assessment procedures and criteria are often very general. In addition, it is not common practice for Czech teachers to specify assessment criteria in full detail and to inform students of them in advance. Even though schools may use the same five-point marking scale, schools have different marking criteria. Therefore, it cannot be assured that the marks awarded in one school align with similar marks awarded in another school. This inequity of grading becomes particularly problematic when a student moves to another school. The general lack of national specifications or guidelines for student assessment hinders a consistent application of assessment criteria. Also, there is little moderation (professional discussions between teachers about the quality of students' work) of marks within schools and no moderation across schools in the Czech Republic, and generally, moderation which involves teachers discussing authentic student work is underdeveloped.

The principle that teachers should be evaluated is widely accepted but teacher appraisal is not systematically implemented for all teachers

While the processes and criteria for teacher appraisal are not regulated nationally, there is a clear legal requirement for school principals to appraise their teachers. In the schools visited by the Review Team, school principals and teachers described teacher appraisal as a well-established aspect of regular practice in schools. Teacher appraisal appears to be widely accepted as an important and normal part of school activities. A key strength of teacher appraisal in the Czech Republic is that the process is clearly focused on evaluating actual teaching practices in the classroom. The typical approach to teacher appraisal is for school principals and/or their deputies to observe classroom practice, followed by a common discussion and analysis of the observed practice with the teacher. At the same time, given that the design and implementation of teacher appraisal is the responsibility of each individual school, teacher appraisal practices vary across the system. The quality and extent of teacher appraisal approaches in individual schools depend on the capacity and leadership style of the school principals. While school inspectors check whether teacher appraisal is implemented as part of school self-evaluation, there is no mechanism to ensure that each individual teacher receives proper professional feedback. As a consequence, there is also no guarantee that underperformance is identified and addressed accordingly.

There is currently no shared understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching but there are plans to develop teaching standards

At the moment, there is no clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. At the national level, there are no uniform performance criteria or reference frameworks against which teachers could be appraised. Professional standards are essential to guide any fair and effective system of teacher appraisal, given the need to have a common reference of what counts as accomplished teaching. The lack of such a framework weakens the capacity of school principals to effectively appraise teachers as required by labour-law provisions. Nonetheless there are some plans to develop teaching standards and a new career system for teachers.

The importance of teacher professional development is formally recognised but its links to teacher appraisal could be enhanced

For teacher appraisal to lead to improvement of practices, it is important that feedback is followed up with appropriate professional development. The importance of continuous professional development for teachers is recognised in legal documents in the Czech Republic, with Act No. 563 on Pedagogical Staff establishing an obligation for teachers to undergo in-service training and an annual entitlement of 12 days leave for professional development purposes. However, the provision appears fragmented and not systematically linked to teacher appraisal. Without a clear link to professional development opportunities, the impact of performance review processes on teacher performance will be relatively limited. Professional development is predominantly a choice by individual teachers and is not systematically associated with school development needs. School principals interviewed by the Review Team rarely tracked their teachers' professional development activities and the extent of strategic planning for professional development appeared limited. There was little evidence of school-centred professional development that would emphasise the community of learners within the school.

The link between teacher appraisal and rewards is not transparent

There are potential benefits of linking teacher appraisal to pay increments, as is currently done by school principals in Czech schools. It can allow school principals to do proper staff planning, stimulate professional development, and reward, retain and motivate teachers. However, there are indications that the current system of performance-related pay increments does not fulfil these functions, mainly due to a lack of transparency in the way that increments are awarded. Many of the teachers the Review Team spoke to indicated that the relationship between performance and pay was not transparent. Teachers often did not know how their salary was determined and whether it was based on classroom observations or other aspects of their work. A major reason for the lack of transparency is the absence of a clear framework for evaluating the performance of teachers.

External school evaluation is established but it has limited emphasis on school improvement

The Czech Republic shows a clear commitment to external accountability based around school evaluation with a regular cycle of external school evaluations carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI). The CSI is highly respected and schools, municipal and regional authorities value the availability of individual inspection reports for schools on a regular basis. In general, the external evaluations are welcomed and found helpful to identify certain kinds of problems by schools and other stakeholders and to provide a national overview of the system in terms of the specified criteria used. However, a challenge for the Czech Republic is that currently external school evaluation by the CSI is predominantly an assessment of how legal requirements are met, or how the School Education Programme is being fulfilled and how it adheres to Framework Education Programmes. The accountability function tends to emphasise compliance with legislation rather than the promotion of school improvement. Advice is only given to "weaker" schools which are identified as those that do not meet the minimum standards as set by law. There is not enough focus on strategies for promoting improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and better outcomes for students including better progress and attainment for those schools that need it the most.

The external evaluation model embodies a number of features of best practice but a number of limitations exist

The process of external evaluation undertaken by the CSI is well structured and systematic. Each stage in the process is clear and the approach builds logically. The importance of communicating clearly the basis upon which evaluation judgements will be made has been recognised and built into the model. A set of publicly-available criteria for external inspection is drawn up every year. Also, the principle of transparency in publishing the results of inspection and the responsiveness to stakeholders (there are provisions that enable parents to trigger an inspection if they have concerns) are well established. Furthermore, the approach to external evaluation in the Czech Republic is designed to be evidence driven. The provision of a data profile for an inspection team, provided by the Institute of Information on Education, offers outcome information, aids efficiency by allowing the team to focus its attention on key issues and can help to benchmark and contextualise judgements. Similarly, documentation is sought and analysed as a key part of evidence gathering and a sample of stakeholders is interviewed in the course of the inspection. However, there are a number of challenges in the current approach to external school evaluation. It is difficult to take account of the socio-economic context of the school because this is not required by the Education Act and no national data are available to promote this. It also appears that there is not enough emphasis on pedagogical aspects particularly on identifying the main features of effective or high quality teaching using evidence from international studies and research. Moreover, the criteria used in the CSI external evaluations are not stable enough from year to year and as a result comparison across years might not be assured in all areas.

There is a new emphasis on schools' self-evaluation which needs to be strengthened

The new emphasis on promoting schools' self-evaluation has the potential to encourage schools and principals to place a greater emphasis on school improvement and development planning. Combined with external evaluation through the work of the CSI and regular publication of school reports the emphasis on institutional self-evaluation makes it a more balanced approach to school evaluation than one relying only on external evaluation. The introduction of self-evaluation is explicitly linked to the Czech Republic's intention to encourage flexibility and greater autonomy at the school level. Increasing schools' self-reflective abilities will support internal quality assurance and will help maintain quality across the board. However, the penetration of school self-evaluation across the school system remains at an early stage of development. Schools have only a limited understanding of the contribution that self-evaluation can and should make to improving practice and no clear models have emerged generally. There seems to be limited capacity amongst school staff and principals to engage in self-evaluation and ultimately school self-evaluation seems to lead to little change of school practices. As a result, although some form of self-evaluation can be identified generally, its rigour and impact on practice remains incipient. The potential of self-evaluation to engage parents in the work of the school has also not been sufficiently exploited.

School leadership is promoted in school evaluation but there is no full recognition of the role of school leaders and their appraisal is limited

There is an explicit recognition that the process of self-evaluation is hugely dependent on a principal's capacity to stimulate engagement, to mobilise resources and to ensure appropriate training and support. The approach to inspection has, in turn, reinforced the importance of such leadership. School principals are seen as important actors in the course of an inspection, have direct accountability during the self-evaluation and external evaluation processes and have the main responsibility for ensuring that the results of the inspection are communicated and its recommendations taken forward. In spite of this, there is little evidence of a culture of instructional/educational leadership (as opposed to administrative and managerial leadership) and while the school principal has a key role in the system and considerable responsibilities, this has not as yet been translated into a dedicated career structure. There is also limited preparation for the role of school principal and little recognition and financial reward. The CSI seeks to evaluate certain features of school leadership and management but these focus mostly on compliance with regulations and limited attention is given to the principal's pedagogical leadership abilities or professional development needs. The evaluation of school principals, conducted by organising bodies, is largely absent except in terms of the financial aspects of budget management. There is no link made between the evaluation of school leaders and evidence of student outcomes or the quality of teaching and learning.

There is little emphasis on the evaluation of the education system

The Review Team formed the impression that the evaluation of the education system as part of the evaluation and assessment framework has received limited policy attention thus far and there is no comprehensive strategic approach to it. While the 2005 Education Act determines who takes responsibility for system evaluation, it does not define the objectives of system evaluation and what it should achieve. As it stands, system evaluation draws mostly on the evaluation of schools complemented with a set of indicators on education. Even if there is the concern to establish Long-term policy objectives and develop indicators to assess progress towards achieving the objectives, it can be said that the policy objectives are narrow and do not adequately capture student learning objectives.

An Education Indicators Framework is established but there are key information gaps at the system level

An Education Indicators Framework is in place to assist decision makers analyse the state of the education system, monitor trends over time, compare regions and provide information to the general public. The framework includes four core components: students, teachers, schools and funding. However, some key information gaps remain. A significant gap is the unavailability of measures on students' socio-economic background. Other gaps include the unavailability of information on student assessment for individual students, incomplete data on teachers such as their qualifications and professional development activities and limited information on the teaching and learning environment.

The participation in international surveys is instrumental for system evaluation but national student performance data are absent

International surveys have provided – in spite of their lack of alignment with student learning objectives in the Czech Republic – unique information about student learning in the Czech Republic. Participation in international surveys 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 PISA from 2000. At the same time, the national monitoring system for school education is considerably weakened by the absence of national data on student performance, *i.e.* there is no information on student learning outcomes which is comparable across schools, regions or over time.

System-level information is not fully exploited

The Review Team formed the view that system-level data are not used to their full potential in analysis which could be useful to inform policy development. Comprehensive statistical analysis of student outcomes such as an assessment of the factors influencing student performance or a study about the impact of socio-economic background on student performance does not seem to be available. In addition, there is limited use of system-level data to inform school management, there is no comprehensive information system for use by education agencies and the systematic sharing of data between schools is limited.

Policy recommendations

Better articulate learning goals

For evaluation and assessment to be effective in improving quality across the whole education system, it is essential that all school agents have a clear understanding of the national goals for education. This requires the development of goals aligned with broader social and economic objectives, including aims at promoting equity and excellence and the articulation of the ultimate purposes of learning for citizens. In this respect, goals for the education system in the Czech Republic could be made more concrete. For instance, the Long-term policy objectives could include targets for improving educational outcomes, contemplating both achievement levels and equity. Furthermore, there is a need for clearer reference points in terms of expected levels of student performance. While it is important to keep the curriculum open so as to allow for teachers' professional judgements in the classroom, there is still scope to make student learning goals more concrete. The national competency goals established in the FEPs can be refined and expanded to include clearer guidance concerning expected student learning progressions and criteria for assessment in different subjects. This could take the form of national standards defining what constitutes adequate, good and excellent performance in different subject areas at different stages of the education system.

Integrate the evaluation and assessment framework

The full potential of evaluation and assessment will not be realised until the framework is fully integrated and is perceived as a coherent whole. An important initial step is to develop a strategic plan or framework document that conceptualises a complete evaluation and assessment framework and articulates ways to achieve the coherence between its different components. The different levels of education governance should be engaged in regions and municipalities so their responsibilities and roles in the framework are clearly established. The plan should essentially constitute a common framework of reference for educational evaluation across the country with the ultimate objective of embedding evaluation as an ongoing and essential part of the professionalism of the actors in the education system. The plan should establish a clear rationale for evaluation and assessment and a compelling narrative about how evaluation and assessment align with the different elements in the education reform programme. It should describe how each component of the evaluation and assessment framework can produce results that are useful for classroom practice and school improvement activities. The plan should include strategies to both strengthen some of the components of the evaluation and assessment framework and to develop articulations across the components.

Develop evaluation and assessment capacity across the school system

As the evaluation and assessment framework develops and gains coherence, an area for policy priority is consolidating efforts to improve the capacity for evaluation and assessment. As the Czech Republic education system is highly devolved and relies on the evaluation and assessment capacities of diverse school agents, it is important that capacity building responds to the diverse needs of school governing bodies (regions and municipalities), school principals and teachers. A priority is to develop the evaluation competencies of school governing bodies, at the region and municipality levels.

Competency profiles for regional and municipal education officers should be developed. There is also a need to reinforce the educational leadership skills of school principals as their role in the Czech Republic still retains a more traditional focus on administrative tasks. Teachers could also benefit from a range of professional development opportunities, including improving skills for formative assessment; enhancing the capacity to assess against the objectives defined in the FEPs; and improving the capacity to collect and analyse information for self-improvement. Another area to explore is building capacity at the system level, including regional and municipal levels, to ensure an effective use of the results generated by evaluation and assessment activities, including analytical capacity for educational planning and policy development. Finally, a considerable investment is needed to develop expertise in standardised test development, including areas such as educational measurement and test design.

Develop educational standards covering the breadth of student learning objectives prior to developing national standardised tests

There is a need for clear external reference points in terms of expected levels of student performance at different levels of education. While it is important to leave sufficient room for teachers' professional judgements in the classroom, it is necessary to provide clear and visible guidance concerning valued learning outcomes. Teachers would benefit from education standards with more specific descriptions of what students should know and be able to do at different stages of the learning process. The national tests should not be the vehicle for developing standards as this would set an inappropriate precedent. Rather, sound standards (and associated supporting resources such as learning progressions and assessment tasks) for the full breadth and depth of the curriculum should be developed as the basis primarily for guiding teachers' work in classrooms, assessing against the curriculum and reporting to students and parents. In other words, if tests are developed they should then be aligned to such standards rather than the tests setting the standards.

Limit the undesired effects of national standardised tests

Before implementation, the Ministry should reflect further on the purposes of the national tests, articulate those purposes in ways that are convincing for educators, and carefully design appropriate measures that will optimise the positive impacts on student learning and minimise the negative impacts. If they are to be introduced they should first be trialled to enable an evaluation of impacts before full-scale implementation. National standardised tests (as well as school-leaving examinations) should be valid and reliable instruments, assess the breadth of learning objectives in the curriculum, and results should be used properly for their intended purposes by teachers, schools and education agencies. An independent working group with representatives from a range of sectors and organisations in education could be established to further debate the national test, monitor its implementation and conduct impact evaluations. The high stakes nature of the test will undoubtedly influence classroom (and perhaps governmental) practices.

Strengthen the role of formative student assessment

At the heart of improving student achievement in the Czech Republic should be a greater awareness and practice of using assessment *for* learning, that is, using assessment formatively in an ongoing way to monitor students' learning and to plan for their next learning steps. The Czech Republic needs a stronger commitment to improving students' achievement through the use of formative assessment to enhance student learning, rather than simply through the use of assessment summatively for recording and reporting learning. Effective formative assessment requires that teachers develop sophisticated skills for uncovering students' level of understanding, for providing feedback and adjusting teaching strategies to meet identified needs, and for helping students to develop their own skills for learning to learn. Strategies to improve the impact of formative assessment might include a stronger focus on short-cycle classroom interactions, building teachers' repertoire of research-based formative assessment techniques, and strengthening the approaches to respond to identified learning needs.

Put in place moderation processes to ensure the consistency of student summative assessment

A priority should be the introduction of moderation processes within and across schools to increase the reliability of teacher-based judgments. The objective is to reduce the variations in the ways teachers assess students and set marks so equity of student assessment is improved. This should go along with the development of guidelines at the national level for assessing against student learning objectives. Teachers require exemplars of student work to illustrate achievement at different levels or marks, benchmarks or indicators of desired student achievement, optional assessment tasks, and tests. These issues are particularly important to consider for the school-based assessment component of the school-leaving examination if it is to have national comparability, be fair and have the confidence of the public. Engaging in appropriate moderation procedures also provides substantial professional learning benefits for teachers.

Develop a professional profile or standards for the teaching profession

The Czech Republic education system should pursue the efforts that are being made in preparing a professional profile or standards for the teaching profession. Teaching standards, *i.e.* a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do are a key element in any teacher appraisal system as they provide a shared understanding of accomplished teaching and a credible reference to make judgements about teacher competence. Teaching standards should contain quality criteria or indicators for professional teaching practice and should be applied in individual performance appraisals. They should build on the work already accomplished and discussed in 2009 and be framed in the context of the overall objectives for schooling. The teaching standards should be developed in a way as to provide a common basis to guide key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher professional development, career advancement and, of course, teacher appraisal. It is also important that teacher appraisal takes account of the school context. Schools have to respond to different needs depending on the local context and face different circumstances.

Strengthen teacher appraisal for improvement purposes

The Review Team recommends strengthening regular formative appraisal with a professional development focus which is separate from the more summative appraisal processes. Teacher appraisal for improvement purposes is likely to benefit from a non-threatening evaluation context, a culture of mutually providing and receiving feedback, clear individual and collective objectives, simple evaluation instruments, supportive school leadership, opportunities for professional development and close linkages to school self-evaluation. The main purpose of this process should be continuous improvement of teaching practice. It should be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers and the school principal with a focus on teachers' practices in the classroom. The main outcome would be feedback on teaching performance and contribution to school development, which should lead to a plan for professional development. To ensure that developmental appraisal conducted by school principals is systematic and coherent across Czech schools, it is important that the Czech School Inspectorate validates externally the school-level processes for teacher appraisal, holding the school principal accountable as necessary.

Consider establishing a system of teacher certification to determine career progression

Teachers and school principals could benefit from the establishment of a clearer career structure that applies across the country. The concept of career stages, or a career ladder, would help meet this need. Access to each of the key stages of the career could be associated with formal processes of summative appraisal that complement the regular formative appraisal. The different career steps should match the different levels of expertise reflected in teaching standards and be associated with certain pay levels. This would ensure a link between teacher appraisal results and career progression, therefore establishing an indirect link with pay levels. Advancement in the teaching career could be organised through a system of teacher registration or certification at key stages in the career. While the process could be mostly school-based, led by the school leadership team, there would need to be a stronger component external to the school to validate the process and ensure that practices are consistent across the Czech Republic. Teacher appraisal for registration/certification would have as its main purposes providing public assurance with regard to teachers' standards of practice, determining advancement in the career, and informing the professional development plan of the teacher.

Strengthen external evaluation for school improvement

The CSI external school evaluation process should strengthen its focus on school improvement and move away from the current "compliance" driven model. This would imply providing advice for improvement to all schools evaluated, rather than just focusing on lower performing schools. The school evaluation framework, the criteria and questions governing judgements and the methods employed should all focus much more directly on the quality of learning and teaching and their relationship to student outcomes. The CSI external school evaluations would also benefit from a greater focus on monitoring student outcomes if appropriate national assessment data become available. Such analyses should take the schools' socio-economic and other features of context into consideration. This should be accompanied by judgments made on how well schools address equity, to be published in individual school reports and in overview reports at a

national and regional level. The CSI should report explicitly on school performance in relation to outcomes achieved for disadvantaged and minority students (particularly Roma students) and provide advice to support improvement. Also, it is suitable to ensure stability in inspection criteria across a wider range of areas for a longer period of time. This will allow for better comparisons to be made of change in the system across several inspection cycles and it will help to evaluate the impact of policy changes and system-level improvement more meaningfully. Follow-ups to external inspection should be strengthened (and generalised), requiring all schools to establish an improvement plan regardless of the results of the school evaluation. A programme of follow-up visits, suitably differentiated on the basis of the original report, would give added impetus and credibility to the overall evaluation process.

Improve the alignment between self-evaluation and external evaluation and thereby raise the profile of self-evaluation

The Review Team recommends establishing better synergies between external and schools' self-evaluation, especially concerning the alignments of the aspects assessed. There is a need to ensure that the criteria used in both processes are sufficiently similar as to create a common language about priorities and about the key factors which influence high quality learning and teaching. Lack of clarity about what matters is likely to reinforce confusion and continue to relegate self-evaluation to something which serves inspection rather than creating a platform for a discussion based on reliable and comparable evidence.

Improve the instructional leadership skills of school principals and strengthen the evaluation of these skills

School leaders need to refocus their work more on instructional leadership. This would imply school leaders engaging in professional development to enhance their leadership capacities especially in promoting school improvement, and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. School principals should be expected to engage in monitoring and evaluating the quality of student outcomes in their school compared with results in similar schools. In addition, school principals should be supported to place a greater emphasis on evaluating and promoting the quality of teaching, and focussing on the professional development needs of staff to support the school's improvement needs and priorities. Finally, there is a need to re-conceptualise the overall approach to evaluate school principals by school organising bodies so that the role of the school principal as a pedagogical leader is reinforced.

Raise the profile of system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework

The profile of system evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework needs to be raised. An initial priority is to broaden the concept of system evaluation as the wide range of system-level information which permits a good understanding of how well student learning objectives are being achieved. It should include a varied set of components such as broad measures of student outcomes; demographic, administrative and contextual data; information systems; and research and analysis to inform planning, intervention and policy development.

Develop national student performance data for system monitoring

A clear priority in the Czech Republic for system evaluation is the development of measures of student learning outcomes. This effort has now started with the development of national standardised tests for students in grades 5 and 9 in the curricular areas of Czech language, foreign language and mathematics. This is a valuable effort with the potential to provide national data on student performance which are comparable across schools, regions and over time. The Review Team supports these efforts but expresses cautions in three specific areas. First, standardised tests need to be closely aligned with student learning objectives. Second, it needs to be recognised that inevitably national tests measure a limited range of student learning outcomes. Third, the Review Team believes that the national tests at this stage should be conceived for dual purposes: to provide a powerful pedagogical tool to teachers against testable areas of the Framework Education Programmes; and to monitor national student performance and allow regions and municipalities to monitor their school results against it. To have reliable national measures of performance across broader curricular areas the Czech Republic could also consider introducing sample-based national monitoring surveys.

Prioritise efforts to meet information needs for national monitoring

An immediate priority for meeting information needs to adequately monitor student outcomes in the Czech school system is to strengthen the information on student socio-economic background, including parental level of education, occupation and income level; immigrant or minority status; and special needs. Also, moving to data at the individual student level would be a considerable improvement to the collection of data from schools. Moreover, the monitoring of student performance across specific groups (*e.g.* by gender, socio-economic or immigrant background, minority status) as well as the analysis of student performance across regions needs to be strengthened. Finally, there is a need to include stakeholders' perceptions of the teaching and learning environment in the national monitoring system.

Optimise the reporting and use of system-level data

The amount of existing information on schools and system performance offers many opportunities to engage stakeholders in supporting improvements across the school system. While large amounts of data are collected from schools and comparable student results will soon become available, there is room to strengthen the analysis and mobilisation of such information for system monitoring and improvement. This includes strengthening the analysis for educational planning and policy development; improving feedback for local monitoring; integrating available data and facilitating access by key agencies; and easing the sharing of student information across schools.

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 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

Tuesday, 29 March, Prague

09:00 – 10:15	Educational System Unit of the Ministry of Education
10:15 – 11:15	Preschool, Elementary and Elementary Arts Education Department of the Ministry of Education
11:30 – 12:45	Institute for Information on Education
14:00 – 15:30	Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (CERMAT)
16:00 – 18:00	Czech School Inspectorate

Wednesday, 30 March, Prague

09:00 – 11:00	School visit: Secondary Technical School Jesenická, Prague 10 School leadership team Meeting with a group of teachers Meeting with a group of students
11:15 – 12:15	National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education
13:30 – 14:15	Meeting with members of teams preparing the education standards in basic education
14:15 – 15:00	Research Institute of Education
15:00 – 15:45	National Institute for Continuing Education
16:15 – 17:00	Association of Private Schools
17:00 – 17:45	Association of Towns and Municipalities

Thursday, 31 March, Prague

09:00 – 10:30	School visit: Basic School Středokluky School leadership team Meeting with a group of teachers Meeting with a group of students
10:30 – 11:00	Municipal Educational Authority Mayor of Středokluky
11:30 – 12:30	Business and industry representatives
12:45 – 14:45	School visit: Secondary General School Arabská 682/14, Prague 6 School leadership team Meeting with a group of teachers Meeting with a group of students
15:15 – 16:15	Representatives of Teacher Unions

Friday, 1 April, Ostrava

08:45 – 09:45	Regional Educational Authority Vice-president of the Moravskoslezský Region
10:00 – 12:30	School visit: Special Basic School Mariánské hory, Karasova 6 School leadership team Meeting with a group of teachers Meeting with a group of students
13:00 – 13:30	Association of Basic School Principals
13:30 – 15:45	School visit: Basic School Šeříková 33 School leadership team Meeting with a group of teachers Meeting with a group of students
16:00 – 16:45	Municipal Educational Authority Deputy mayor of Ostrava City

Sunday, 3 April, Prague

09:30 – 18:30	Review Team meetings

Monday, 4 April, Prague and Liberec

09:20 – 10:20	Visit of Regional Centre for Teacher Professional Development
10:30 – 12:45	School visit: Secondary Business School, Šamánkova 500 School leadership team Meeting with a group of teachers Meeting with a group of students
13:00 – 14:00	Board of Education of Association of Regions
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting with teacher educators Jan Korda, the chair of Association of Teaching Professionals; Jana Olchavová, chief methodologist HYL; Ondřej Hausenblas, Faculty of Education, Charles University; Dana Mandíková, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University
17:00 – 18:00	Professional associations for certain disciplines: Association of Czech Mathematicians and Physicists Association of History Teachers

Tuesday, 5 April, Prague

10:30 – 11:30	Seminar with Researchers - David Greger, Charles University; - Petr Matějů, Institute for Social and Economical Analyses; - Daniel Munich, CERGE; - Jana Straková, Institute for Information on Education; - Arnošt Veselý, Charles University
12:00 – 13:00	Meeting with Deputy-Minister of Education Ladislav Němec
14:00 – 14:45	Private testing companies Kalibro Scio
14:45 – 15:30	Associations of NGOs in Education: Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association for Brain Compatible Education Friends of Engaged Learning
15:15 – 16:15	Oral report by Review Team with preliminary conclusions

Annex C: Composition of the Review Team

Associate Professor ***Alison Gilmore*** is Co-director at the Educational Assessment Research Unit at the University of Otago. Alison has had a long career in the field of educational assessment and evaluation, both as a researcher and university teacher. She presently leads the National Education Monitoring Project in New Zealand that monitors the achievement and progress of students across the curriculum. She is Chair of the New Zealand Assessment Academy and Managing Editor of the Assessment Matters journal. She is a member of the Consortium of International Researchers in Classroom Assessment with a particular research focus on developing teacher education students' assessment capabilities.

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. At the OECD, she previously worked on the Thematic Review of Migrant Education and the Improving School Leadership study. She has led country review visits on migrant education and participated in case study visits on school leadership in several countries. She also co-authored the OECD reports *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students* (2010) and *Improving School Leadership* (2008). She has previous experience with UNESCO and the World Bank and holds an M.A. in International Affairs from Sciences Po Paris.

Pamela Sammons is a Professor of Education at the Department of Education, University of Oxford, and a Senior Research Fellow at Jesus College, Oxford. Previously she was a Professor at the University of Nottingham (2004-2009). She spent 11 years at the Institute of Education, University of London (1993-2004) where she was a Professor of Education and Co-ordinating Director of its International School Effectiveness & Improvement Centre. She has been involved in educational research for the last 30 years with a special focus on school effectiveness and improvement, the early years and equity in education. She has provided advice and policy briefings on inspection, teacher and school effectiveness, leadership and school improvement for a number of national agencies including England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the National Education Agency in Sweden.

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 20 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. He co-ordinated the review and acted as *Rapporteur* for the Review Team.

Annex D: Comparative indicators on evaluation and assessment

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic'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	91	71	1/30
Ages 25-34	94	80	=2/30
Ages 35-44	94	75	1/30
Ages 45-54	90	68	1/30
Ages 55-64	85	58	2/30
% of population that has attained tertiary education, by age group (2008)			
Ages 25-64	14	28	=28/31
Ages 25-34	18	35	=29/31
Ages 35-44	14	29	=29/31
Ages 45-54	15	25	=25/31
Ages 55-64	11	20	=26/31
Upper secondary graduation rates (2008)			
% of upper secondary graduates (first-time graduation) to the population at the typical age of graduation	87	80	11/26
STUDENT PERFORMANCE			
Mean performance in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) (15-year-olds) (2009) Source: PISA 2009 Results (OECD, 2010c)[3]			
Reading literacy	478	493	27/34
Mathematics literacy	493	496	21/34
Science literacy	500	501	=18/34
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	3.5	~	=16/26
2000	2.8	~	26/29
2007	2.8	3.6	=27/29
Public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education as a % of total public expenditure (2008)[5]	6.1	9.0	29/29
Total expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education from public sources (2007) (%)	90.7	90.3	13/25
Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions, (2007) (US$)[6]			
Primary	3359	6741	26/28
Lower secondary	5635	7598	21/26
Upper secondary	5428	8746	22/26
All secondary	5527	8267	24/28
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	109	88	1/22
2007	152	125	6/27
Current expenditure – composition, primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (2007)[7]			
Compensation of teachers	47.4	63.8	20/20
Compensation of other staff	14.5	14.9	11/20
Compensation of all staff	62.0	79.2	28/28
Other current expenditure	38.0	20.8	1/28

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
SCHOOL STAFF NUMBERS			
Ratio of students to teaching staff (2008) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a)[3, 8]			
Primary	18.1	16.4	9/27
Lower Secondary	11.8	13.7	13/24
Upper Secondary	12.2	13.5	=12/24
All Secondary	12.0	13.7	=17/29
TEACHER SALARIES in public institutions, Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2010a)[3]			
Annual teacher salaries (2008)[6]			
Primary – starting salary (US$)	16013	28949	26/29
Primary – 15 years experience (US$)	21652	39426	26/29
Primary – top of scale (US$)	23693	48022	27/29
Primary – ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	0.89	1.16	24/29
Lower secondary – starting salary (US$)	15976	30750	27/29
Lower secondary – 15 years experience (US$)	22084	41927	27/29
Lower secondary – top of scale (US$)	24049	50649	27/29
Lower secondary – ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	0.91	1.22	26/29
Upper secondary – starting salary (US$)	16587	32563	26/28
Upper secondary – 15 years experience (US$)	23540	45850	26/28
Upper secondary – top of scale (US$)	25846	54717	26/28
Upper secondary – ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	0.97	1.29	25/28
Number of years from starting to top salary (lower secondary education) (2008)	32	24	9/27
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	●■ Δ	●29 ■9 Δ8	
Management responsibilities in addition to teaching duties	●■ Δ	●12 ■18 Δ7	
Teaching more classes or hours than required by full-time contract	■ Δ	●2 ■10 Δ17	
Special tasks (career guidance or counselling)	■ Δ	●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.)	■ Δ	●1 ■8 Δ12	
Teaching students with special educational needs (in regular schools)	●■ Δ	●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	●■ Δ	●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)	● Δ	●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]	No	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	No	18/29	

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
Potential subjects of assessment at national examinations[11] (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008)[3, 10]			
National examinations exist (Yes/No)	No	8/25	
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 assessments[12] (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008)[3, 10]			
National periodical assessments (Yes/No)	No	14/25	
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 H igh: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	
Existence of national tests (2008-09) Source: Eurydice (2009)[14]	No	30/35	
Number of national tests (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice, (2009)[14]			
Compulsory tests	a	2.7	-
Sample tests	a	2.3	-
Optional tests[15]	a	2.3	-
Years of testing	a		
Number of subjects covered in national tests[16]	a	2 subjects:14 3 subjects:11 3+ subjects:13 Does not apply:5	
Main aims of nationally standardised tests (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
Taking decisions about the school career of pupils	a	17/30	
Monitoring schools and/or the education system	a	21/30	
Identifying individual learning needs	a	12/30	

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
Bodies responsible for setting national tests (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[9, 14]			
●Tests for taking decisions about the school career of pupils/■Tests for other purposes/ΔNo national tests			
A unit/agency within the ministry of education without external players	Δ	●2 ■0 Δ5	
A unit/agency within the ministry of education with external players	Δ	●3 ■10 Δ5	
A public body distinct from the ministry, which specialises in education or educational evaluation	Δ	●11 ■16 Δ5	
A private body or university department	Δ	●4 ■4 Δ5	
People in charge of administering national tests (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[9, 14]			
●Tests for taking decisions about the school career of pupils/■Tests for other purposes/ΔNo national tests			
Class teachers	Δ	●10 ■15 Δ5	
Class teachers + external people	Δ	●1 ■3 Δ5	
Other teachers from the same school	Δ	●3 ■3 Δ5	
Other teachers from the same school + external people	Δ	●1 ■4 Δ5	
External people alone	Δ	●3 ■5 Δ5	
Persons in charge of marking national tests (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[9, 14]			
●Tests for taking decisions about the school career of pupils/■Tests for other purposes/ΔNo national tests			
Class teachers	Δ	●7 ■10 Δ5	
Class teachers + external people	Δ	●4 ■2 Δ5	
Other teachers from the same school	Δ	●1 ■3 Δ5	
Other teachers from the same school + external persons	Δ	●0 ■1 Δ5	
External persons alone	Δ	●8 ■16 Δ5	
Standardisation of test questions (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
Questions are the same for all pupils taking one national test	a	19/30	
Questions are not the same for all pupils taking one national test	a	8/30	
Whether test questions are standardised or not varies depending on type of test	a	2/30	
Data not available	a	1/30	
Use of ICT in national testing (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
ICT is currently used in national tests	a	11/30	
Use of ICT for on-screen testing	a	3/30	
Use of ICT for marking tests	a	8/30	
Participation of students with special educational needs (SEN) in national testing (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
Pupils with SEN may take part in national testing	a	27/30	
Participation in national testing for pupils with SEN is compulsory	a	16/30	
Participation in national testing for pupils with SEN is optional	a	13/30	
Participation varies depending on type of test, level of education or type of school	a	6/30	
Data not available	a	1/30	
Communication of the results of national tests to local authorities (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
Local authorities have access to aggregated results for their own area	a	17/30	
Use of achievement data for accountability (2006) Source: PISA Compendium for school questionnaire (OECD, 2006) (15-year-olds)			
% of students in schools where the principal reported that achievement data is used in the following procedures			
Posted publicly	30.6	36.4	=20/33
Used in evaluation of the principal's performance	54.2	35.5	7/33
Used in evaluation of teachers' performance	79.1	44.2	5/33
Used in decisions about instructional resource allocation to the school	4.0	32.2	30/33
Tracked over time by an administrative authority	56.0	65.2	22/33

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
SCHOOL EVALUATION			
Requirements for school evaluations by an inspectorate (lower secondary education) (2006) Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2008)[3]		None:4 1 per 3+ years:5	
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:6 1 per 2 years:0 1 per year:1 1+ per year:1	
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	High	None:1 Low:5 Moderate:2 High:3	
Financial and other implications			
The school budget	Moderate	None:5 Low:2 Moderate:2 High:1	
The provision of another financial reward or sanction	Low	None:4 Low:4 Moderate:0 High:1	
The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills	Moderate	None:1 Low:2 Moderate:6 High:2	
Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers	Moderate	None:6 Low:1 Moderate:2 High:0	
Likelihood of school closure	High	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)	Yes	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 year	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	High	None:1 Low:2 Moderate:1 High:8	
Performance appraisal of the school management	High	None:2 Low:2 Moderate:4 High:4	
Performance appraisal of individual teachers	High	None:4 Low:4 Moderate:2 High:2	
Financial and other implications			
The school budget	Moderate	None:5 Low:2 Moderate:2 High:1	
The provision of another financial reward or sanction	Moderate	None:4 Low:4 Moderate:1 High:0	
The assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills	High	None:3 Low:2 Moderate:1 High:5	
Remuneration and bonuses received by teachers	High	None:5 Low:3 Moderate:0 High:1	
Likelihood of school closure	None	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	
Use of student test results in school evaluation (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
Test results may be used for evaluation	a	15/30	
Test results used for external evaluation	a	5/30	
Recommendations or support tools for the use of results during internal evaluation	a	7/30	
Use varies depending on type of test, level of education or type of school	a	3/30	
Publication of individual school results in national tests (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[10, 14] (Yes/No)			
Individual school results may be published	a	10/30	
Publication organised, or required of schools, by central/local governments	a	9/30	
Publication at the discretion of schools	a	1/30	
Accountability to parents (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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	61.4	46.1	=8/32
This child's academic performance relative to national or regional benchmarks	60.8	46.8	11/33
This child's academic performance of students as a group relative to students in the same grade in other schools	32.1	23.1	8/33

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
TEACHER APPRAISAL			
Official methods for the individual or collective evaluation of teachers (2006-07) Source: Eurydice (2008) [10, 14]			
Teacher evaluation exists		30/33	
Teacher inspection on an individual or collective basis		22/30	
School self-evaluation		14/30	
Individual evaluation by school heads		16/30	
Individual evaluation by peers		5/30	
Methods used to monitor the practice of teachers (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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	71.4	58.3	13/34
Teacher peer review (of lesson plans, assessment instruments, lessons)	57.1	56.3	17/34
Principal or senior staff observations of lessons	96.0	68.3	6/34
Observation of classes by inspectors or other persons external to the school	29.4	28.0	16/34
STUDENT ASSESSMENT			
The influence of test results on the school career of pupils (2008-09) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2009)[9, 14]			
ISCED 1/ ISCED 2[4]			
Award of certificates	-	ISCED 1:2 ISCED 2:12	
Streaming	-	ISCED 1:4 ISCED 2:2	
Progression to the next stage of education	-	ISCED 1:1 ISCED 2:2	
No national tests, or no impact on progression	ISCED 1 & 2	ISCED 1:29 ISCED 2:22	
Completion requirements for upper secondary programmes Source: Education at a Glance (OECD, 2009)[3, 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]	● ■ Δ	●21 ■19 Δ19 ♦3	
ISCED 3B	■ Δ	●6 ■8 Δ7 ♦0	
ISCED 3C	● ■ Δ	●17 ■18 Δ17 ♦1	
Student grouping by ability (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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	5.0	9.4	16/33
For some subjects	26.1	37.4	=17/33
Not for any subject	67.7	50.4	11/33
Student are grouped by ability within their classes			
For all subjects	2.2	4.5	=20/33
For some subjects	57.3	46.4	8/33
Not for any subject	39.3	47.0	21/33
Groups of influence on assessment practices (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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)	58.2	56.6	18/33
The school's governing board	50.1	29.6	6/33
Parent groups	32.8	17.3	6/33
Teacher groups (*e.g.* staff association, curriculum committees, trade union)	77.5	58.1	9/33
Student groups (*e.g.* student association, youth organisation	31.1	23.4	8/33
External examination boards	52.3	45.2	12/31
Responsibility for student assessment policies (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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	95.4	63.5	1/33
Teachers	73.2	69.0	17/33
School governing board	51.8	26.5	4/33
Regional or local education authority	0.5	15.5	=28/32
National education authority	4.7	24.3	28/33

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
Frequency of student assessment by method (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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	11.0	23.7	24/33
1-2 times a year	78.4	51.0	5/33
3-5 times a year	7.5	16.5	26/33
Monthly	1.4	4.3	=20/33
More than once a month	0.6	3.4	22/33
Teacher-developed tests			
Never	1.3	2.7	6/33
1-2 times a year	11.8	6.7	6/33
3-5 times a year	37.9	30.0	11/33
Monthly	23.1	27.6	21/33
More than once a month	24.9	33.3	21/33
Teachers' judgmental ratings			
Never	5.6	6.6	9/33
1-2 times a year	8.3	12.0	18/33
3-5 times a year	25.5	22.9	13/33
Monthly	22.5	15.7	5/33
More than once a month	37.0	42.2	19/33
Student portfolios			
Never	43.5	24.1	4/33
1-2 times a year	32.8	34.4	22/33
3-5 times a year	12.1	20.6	26/33
Monthly	7.7	10.4	16/33
More than once a month	2.9	9.3	=23/33
Student assignments/projects/homework			
Never	0.6	1.5	=13/33
1-2 times a year	10.6	12.2	12/33
3-5 times a year	18.8	16.1	13/33
Monthly	17.2	13.6	6/33
More than once a month	51.8	56.5	20/33
% 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	24.8	14.9	6/27
Sometimes	55.0	44.2	6/27
Most of the time	13.6	24.5	23/27
Always	5.7	13.9	=20/27
Teachers make useful comments on homework			
Never	34.2	23.5	4/27
Sometimes	52.0	50.1	9/27
Most of the time	9.6	19.2	25/27
Always	3.1	4.9	22/27
Homework is counted as part of marking			
Never	25.6	13.7	5/27
Sometimes	46.3	33.3	4/27
Most of the time	16.9	25.7	23/27
Always	10.5	24.7	22/27
Use of student assessments (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Compendium for 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	96.7	97.5	26/33
To make decisions about students' retention or promotion	88.6	77.1	16/33
To group students for instructional purposes	39.8	49.8	21/33
To compare the school to district or national performance	64.9	53.0	12/33
To monitor the school's progress from year to year	88.6	76.0	9/33
To make judgements about teachers' effectiveness	60.1	46.9	10/33
To identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved	83.7	76.7	16/33
To compare the school with other schools	62.0	45.4	8/33

	Czech Republic	Country Average[1]	Czech Republic's Rank[2]
% 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 school questionnaire (OECD, 2010b)[3]			
ISCED2[4]	0.7	3.2	20/29
ISCED3	2.1	4.5	18/29
% of students repeating one or more grades according to their own report (2009) (15-year-olds) Source: PISA Volume IV (OECD, 2010d)[3]	4.0	13.0	26/34
Level of school autonomy regarding the criteria for the internal assessment of pupils (2006-07) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2008)[10, 14]			
Full/Limited/No autonomy	Full	Full:24 Limited:10 No:0	
School decision-makers involved in determining the criteria for the internal assessment of pupils (2006-07) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2008)[10, 14]			
School responsibility involved	Yes	34/34	
School head	No	0/34	
Teachers individually or collectively	No	13/34	
School management body	No	0/34	
Responsibilities vary depending on level of education	Yes	21/34	
School autonomy in preparing the content of examinations for certified qualifications (2006-07) (primary and lower secondary education) Source: Eurydice (2008)[10, 14]			
School responsibility involved/ examinations for certified qualification exist	No	24/34	
Full/Limited/No autonomy	a	Full:24 Limited:10 No:0	
School decision-makers who may be involved in preparing the content of examinations for certified qualifications (ISCED 2)[4] (2006-07) Source: Eurydice (2008)[10, 14]			
School responsibility involved/ examinations for certified qualification exist	No	5/34	
School head	a	0/5	
Teachers individually or collectively	a	1/5	
School management body	a	0/5	
Responsibilities vary depending on level of education	a	4/5	

Sources:

Eurydice (2008), *Levels of Autonomy and Responsibilities of Teachers in Europe*, Eurydice, Brussels.
Eurydice (2009), *National Testing of Pupils in Europe: Objectives, Organisation and Use of Results*, Eurydice, Brussels.
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.
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OECD (2010c), *PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do, Volume I*, OECD, Paris.
OECD (2010d), *PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful?: Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV*, OECD, Paris.

Data explanation:

m	Data are not available
a	Data are 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

The report Eurydice (2009) includes all 32 member countries/education areas of the European Union as well as the members of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

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*.

General notes:

1. The country average is calculated as the simple average of all countries for which data are available.
2. "Czech Republic's rank" indicates the position of Czech Republic 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 1/30 indicates that Czech Republic recorded the 1st highest value of the 30 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

ISECD 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 are 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. For this indicator, the column "country average" refers to Eurydice member countries/areas.
15. "Compulsory tests" have to be taken by all pupils, regardless of the type of school attended, or by all students in public sector schools. "Optional tests" are taken under the authority of schools.
16. Austria, Belgium-Flemish Community, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland apply several tests at the national level each with a distinct number of subjects. Thus, for these countries no exact number of subjects tested can be provided.

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) PISA Results 2009 (OECD, 2010c)	Eurydice (2008)	Eurydice (2009)
Australia	●	●	●	●	●		
Austria	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Belgium (Flemish Community)		●	●	●		●	●
Belgium (French Community)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Belgium (German Community)						●	●
Brazil							
Bulgaria						●	●
Canada	●	●	●	●	●		
Chile				●	●		
Czech Republic	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denmark	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Estonia					●	●	●
Finland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
France	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Germany	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Greece	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Hungary	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Iceland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ireland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Israel					●		
Italy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Japan	●	●	●	●	●		
Korea	●	●	●	●	●		
Latvia						●	●
Lichtenstein						●	●
Lithuania						●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Malaysia							
Malta						●	●
Mexico	●	●	●	●	●		
Netherlands		●	●	●	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●		
Norway	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Poland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Portugal	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Romania						●	●
Slovak Republic		●	●	●	●	●	●
Slovenia					●	●	●
Spain	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	●	●	●	●	●		
Turkey		●	●	●	●		
UK - England						●	●
UK - Wales	●	●	●	●	●		●
UK - Norther Ireland						●	●
UK - Scotland						●	●
United States	●	●	●	●	●		

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