

STRENGTHS

The Evaluation and Assessment Framework

- There are clear national goals for education in Australia which gather wide support
- The overall evaluation and assessment framework is sophisticated and well-conceptualised
- The principle of evidence-based policy is well established
- There are good bases for sound knowledge management within the overall evaluation and assessment framework

Student Assessment

- A coherent framework for the assessment of student learning is in place
- There is evidence that NAPLAN is technically sound and results are credible among school agents
- Summative student assessment is adequately supported by moderation processes and dedicated tools
- Assessment for secondary school qualifications is well established
- There are good practices of formative assessment and there is good reliance on teacher-based summative assessment

Teacher Appraisal

- Teaching standards are instituted and their establishment at the national level is a major development
- Teacher registration processes are in place
- Performance management processes provide a good basis for developmental teacher appraisal
- Advanced Skills Teaching positions grant opportunities for recognition of skills and competencies
- Teachers are trusted professionals with a high degree of autonomy and are open to professional feedback

School Evaluation

- Accountability and transparency are well embedded as national principles guiding school evaluation
- The use of performance data and survey results is well integrated into school evaluation processes
- The principle of publishing performance data at the school level is established
- The key role of school self-evaluation is recognised and there are clear rules for school reporting
- External school reviews are well established

System Evaluation

- Common reporting frameworks are well established and the set of national monitoring tools has been strengthened
- There are strong procedures for system monitoring at the state and territory level
- There is transparency in reporting results of national monitoring, which are used extensively

CHALLENGES

The Evaluation and Assessment Framework

- The links to classroom practice are less clearly articulated
- Some articulations within the overall evaluation and assessment framework are not sufficiently developed
- Striking the right balance between nationally-dictated policies and ability to meet local needs is a challenge
- There is room to improve the integration of the non-governmental sector in the overall framework
- Building capacity for evaluation and assessment remains a priority

Student Assessment

- NAPLAN has certain limitations in its alignment with student learning objectives
- There are some challenges in ensuring NAPLAN is a fair test for some subgroups and results are delivered timely
- There are some inadequacies in teachers' skills for assessment and to use assessment data
- The consistency of secondary certificates across jurisdictions is not ensured
- There are risks the emphasis on NAPLAN may "narrow" teacher-based assessment

Teacher Appraisal

- Regular teacher appraisal is not systematic across the system and is not perceived as meaningful
- Teachers have few opportunities for feedback and the extent of externality in teacher appraisal is limited
- There are missing links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development
- There is little alignment between teaching standards, registration processes and career structures
- There are some challenges to the implementation of teacher registration processes
- Advanced Skills Teaching positions are an incipient approach to career diversification and the reward of teachers

School Evaluation

- There is little national direction on the role and nature of school reviews
- The too great reliance on measuring and publicising student outcomes can have undesired effects
- There is a need to improve the scope of the information provided by the *My School* website
- Clarity is needed about the nature of externality and the focus of school review needs to be better defined
- The degree of follow-up to school reviews is variable

System Evaluation

- There are some gaps in the national monitoring system
- Further steps are needed in monitoring the new Australian Curriculum
- There is room to improve the use of results from the national monitoring system
- There are varied practices among states and territories in monitoring schools across different sectors and in systems of data collection

POINTERS FOR FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Evaluation and Assessment Framework

- Establish national strategies for strengthening the linkages to classroom practice within the overall framework
- Promote greater national consistency while giving room for local diversity
- Improve the integration of the non-governmental sector in the overall evaluation and assessment framework
- Further develop some articulations within the overall evaluation and assessment framework
- Sustain efforts to improve capacity for evaluation and assessment

Student Assessment

- Develop national consistency while respecting state and territory assessment strengths and cultures
- Reinforce the assessment validity of NAPLAN and ensure that it is a fair test to all subgroups
- Establish safeguards against overemphasis on NAPLAN
- Strengthen teachers' capacity to assess student performance against the Australian Curriculum
- Build teachers' competence to use student assessment data
- Maintain the centrality of teacher-based assessment while ensuring the diversity of assessment formats
- Increase the visibility of the Australian Government's goals for formative assessment

Teacher Appraisal

- Align teaching standards with a competency-based career structure for teachers
- Conceive teacher registration as career-progression evaluation
- Perform developmental evaluation through teacher appraisal as part of performance management processes
- Ensure links between developmental evaluation and career-progression evaluation
- Reinforce the linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development
- Strengthen competencies for teacher appraisal

School Evaluation

- Develop a set of national principles and protocols for school evaluation
- Clearly establish the fundamental purpose of school evaluation and define the nature of externality
- Strengthen the alignment between self-evaluation and external evaluation
- Ensure a broad scope for external school evaluation and place greater emphasis on follow-up
- Ensure a focus on the quality of teaching and learning in both internal and external school evaluation
- Build expertise among evaluators and improve data handling skills of school agents
- Publish externally validated school evaluation reports to complement the publication of national test data

System Evaluation

- Continue and prioritise efforts to meet information needs for national monitoring
- Clarify the role of the National Assessment Program in relation to the Australian Curriculum
- Further exploit results from jurisdiction and national monitoring systems for systemic school improvement
- Support and promote greater monitoring in the non-government sector

FURTHER READING

This summary of strengths, challenges and recommendations is drawn from *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Australia*, published in August 2011.

The full Country Review report and further information about the *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes* are available on the project's website: www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.