

Knowing Our School

May 2004

Department of Operations
Education Division - Malta

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ISBN: 99909-74-16-0

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Cover design: Marie Celine Grech
Section separators, layout and figures: Carmelo Ellul
Printed by: Publishers Enterprises Group (PEG) Ltd
Published by: Department of Operations
Education Division
Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, Malta

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Acknowledgements

This publication is mainly the result of the unstinted efforts of the members of the School Development Guidelines committees¹. Since 1999 these committees have been compiling this set of Quality Indicators on the strength of the experiences gleaned during their school-based school development planning exercises. The material is also based on the advice given to the compilers by all Heads of School and their respective staffs.

The final version was edited in 2003/2004 by a committee formed of Director Operations Dr Cecilia Borg and the following Heads of School: Ms Mary Doris Aquilina, Mr Godfrey Bonello, Ms Carmen Camilleri, Ms Salvina Muscat and Mr Godwin Zammit. Ms Mary Vella, ex-Director Curriculum Management, joined them in the pre-publication phase.

Particular thanks are due to The Scottish Office, Education and Industry Department, for having inspired our work through their school audit manual: *How good is our school?: self-evaluation using performance indicators*.

Thanks are also due to *Kanonku Pawl Pullicino* Girls' Secondary School and *Patri Felic Sammut* Primary School for providing visual material.

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Minister of Education, Youth and Employment

Education is not simply the key to one's future. In today's knowledge society, education is the heart and soul of all development and prosperity. There is a growing conviction that education is not only one of the key factors in the eradication of poverty, but also the cornerstone of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.

Today, we no longer speak of providing education for all, but of providing quality education for all. In this process of quality education provision, the issue of school development planning is one of the main pillars for a sound foundation.

School development planning is the process whereby schools prioritise the various development needs that arise from self-evaluation of their own practice and procedures. It is an essential tool for schools in managing resources and workload issues. The purpose of the school development plan is to make it easier for schools to devise and implement their own strategies for school development. It is envisaged that this will enhance school effectiveness in meeting pupil needs.

Together, we need to stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools, with a view to promoting school improvement and effectiveness. School development planning needs to ensure the best possible use of resources.

Self-evaluation is an invaluable tool for any human being. Being able to reflect on one's experience, being able to analyse, to discern and to evaluate is a gift we should strive to give to every individual. This is also part of our professional responsibility. The school's self-evaluation process is a collaborative initiative involving the senior management team, the staff, the students and the parents. The whole process needs to lead to self-improvement. Self-evaluation is a crucial stage of school audits. The level of self-evaluation is indicative of the level of a school's maturity and the maturity of its staff that should grow individually and collegially. In professional communities, those who are not able to implement a critical self-evaluation and professional development process, forfeit their claim to be true professionals. Self-evaluation is not a threat but a form of support.

It is also vital that we set educational targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related. However, it is crucial to remember that the school development planning process should focus clearly upon pupil performance. Experience of development planning shows that a cycle of analysis, target setting, action and evaluation can lead to real gains.

At the end of the day, our target is clear. Our mission is to enhance student learning. While a plan is developed within the national context, it should reflect the uniqueness of the local school environment. It is vital that the school development plan involves all the stakeholders, namely the senior management team, teachers, school support staff, parents and students.

All this necessitates a culture shift in our mentality as educators. We need to start developing a sense of ownership that will then lead us to be eclectic in our approach.

When we speak of quality change, what does this entail? We are stating that we want to offer a quality education for all. This will mean, amongst other things, changing methods of school management, changing curriculum provision, and obviously changing the methodology we use in our classes.

We have been working towards developing school autonomy, accountability and continuity. All in all we wish to ensure that our children are given a smooth educational experience, preferably from the moment they are born to the moment they leave this world. We no longer speak of the compulsory schooling years as our main focus. We now speak of the lifelong learning focus.

I augur that this handbook will be one of the many tools that will aid us in our professional delivery of the service we give to students. One may ask why we need to re-evaluate current practices. The answer is simple. We want to improve quality. Quality assurance is a sure way of delivering to all students their entitlement. Improving educational quality will also ensure that we will be improving the quality of life in our society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louis Galea', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Louis Galea

Permanent Secretary

Our endeavours over the past nine years have been geared to generating a quality leap in the provision of educational services in Malta.

In the last analysis, the quality leap can only materialise if the effectiveness of individual schools is enhanced and developed. I have had occasion to refer to the slogan adopted in Singapore to illustrate a policy similar to ours. I make reference to it, because it is so apt. Singapore is out to develop “Thinking Schools; Learning Society”. As, in fact, is the objective of the greater part of national education authorities from all corners of the world.

In moving along the policy strategies that we have been formulating and developing together, we have ensured that our country’s educational provision is anchored within the mainstream of contemporary educational practice.

The process was initiated through the research work of an American “Effective Schools Task Force” which carried out an extensive review of school effectiveness in primary and secondary schools in a variety of school systems in North America and Britain. Based on these findings, a list of characteristics falling under three broad groupings was identified.

The three broad areas were:

- A Common Mission
- An Emphasis on Learning
- A Climate Conducive to Learning.

This led to the introduction and development of “School Growth Plans” being generated by individual schools. At a later stage, a process of structured internal evaluation of such plans was set up to be followed, at a subsequent phase, by external audits of schools.

The idea has fanned out across the whole world and has been modified in particular aspects by the various national educational establishments to fit their particular needs. The project was locally taken on board (as Mr. Godfrey Bonello indicates in his Preface) through the adoption of the Scottish model, terminology and practice, way back in 1997.

School Development Planning has taken root and has been owned and embraced by all Maltese schools. We are now in a position where our school leaders are responding to a spontaneous realisation that the School Development Planning model and format should be more autochthonous and moulded to suit our local needs. I am very proud of the professional outlook that progressively is becoming the hallmark of our schools and our school leaders.

Going back to the Singaporean dictum, I wish to propose a modified form that describes the new policies governing work practices and vision formulation in Maltese schools. It is our dream that each and every Maltese school should become

a learning organisation and adopt as part of its mission statement an ardent desire to become a “thinking school; a learning community.”

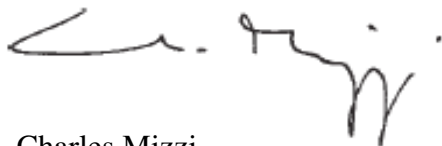
My appreciation and indebtedness to the team of heads of school which developed the manual, together with the unstinted support given to the team by Dr. Cecilia Borg, Director General for Education, are being warmly recorded.

The publication itself is of a high standard and is again another artefact of Ms Mary Vella’s fine tuning of the various documents that have been published to chart the strategy for the quality leap that we are striving to attain.

It is now the right time to move on towards the next milestones.

A first milestone is the development of the Performance Management Programme for each teacher, whereby every member of a school staff will indicate her/his personal contribution towards the implementation of the School Development Plan. The project is currently in the pilot stage. In the coming years, it ought to mature in the same way that the SDP project has matured over the past ones.

The time is also ripe to complement the internal evaluation of schools by external evaluation through school audits. May the implementation of these two projects be as effective as the introduction of School Development Planning has been.



Charles Mizzi

Schools are in a state of continual regeneration. Change for change's sake is not part of their remit. Change however takes place as a result of positive thinking and of the need felt for onward looking. This process can be both short or long term but it requires revision coupled with research. In the long term planning there is also the need for regular audit to assess progress reached and effect adjustments to the initial plan.

The introduction of School Development Planning in Schools was the result of a much needed structured change in Maltese Education. It formed part of a wider project, which at school level included PMP for Administration and staff, devolution of funds to schools and school autonomy. Planning was not new to Heads of School but the concept of having all stakeholders directly involved in the planning and the carrying out of what had been agreed upon was a novel idea. After the initial hitches and expected debates, the idea of collaborative planning was accepted. Models of School Development Planning carried out abroad were studied and the local authorities decided on following the Scottish model but allowing enough space for schools for different interpretations. Whilst relying heavily on *How good is our school?: Self-evaluation using performance indicators* of the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, Maltese schools went on to create a local model.

Due praise needs to be given to all the Heads of School who formed part of the different committees set up in order to arrive at the present publication: *Knowing Our School*. They have worked hard, giving generously of their expertise and of their free time, leaving no stone unturned in the quest to produce a manual that will help all schools carry out their internal audit efficiently and professionally.

The production of this manual however marks another important step in Quality Education in Malta. Schools now have available an important tool that is specific for the local scenario. This tool has been designed, tested and approved by the stakeholders themselves. It is the benchmark against which the external auditor will review the school, thus creating the common language that will ensure quality assurance on the local scene.

Having reached this milestone, schools in Malta can look optimistically to the future, as they have a tool that will help them continue to ensure excellence in education.



Cecilia Borg

Preface

The school development planning process in Malta started evolving in 1997 when Assistant Directors who had shadowed HM Inspectors at the Scottish Office in Edinburgh held a meeting about the subject for Heads of School. Later on in the year the Education Division invited the Scottish Office to Malta and they delivered a short course. It had as its main speakers HMIs from the Scottish Office. The seminar informed and inspired the participants who subsequently launched school development planning in their respective schools.

In January 1999, after Maltese state schools had formed their first School Development Plan (SDP), Ms Carmelina Debono Director Operations, gave a brief to a committee made up of 18 Heads hailing from different sectors of the educational system, to prepare proposals for a set of SDP Guidelines and of Performance Indicators (PIs). The members in the group began the process by recounting and discussing experiences gleaned during their own school-based SDP exercise. A broad spectrum of SDP strategies was thus recorded.

The group then started writing their SDP guidelines adopting as a model the Scottish Education Office publication: *How good is our school?: self-evaluation using performance indicators*. As a result a version suitable to the needs of our educational scenario was compiled.

The draft of these guidelines included:

- The advice that there was to be an emphasis on quality education in our schools
- An introduction to school development planning
- A mission statement/aims section
- The Key Areas of a school's activity
- An Audit Section which concentrated mostly on Performance Indicators, their structure and their usefulness in the school development planning process
- Action Plans

The group dealt with PIs in detail aiming at the compilation of a set of qualitative indicators of a school's work to complement the traditional quantitative indicators such as attendance rates and examination results. The first group adapted PIs relative to two Key Areas: *Learning and Teaching* and *Support for Pupils*.

In July 1999 the results of the committee's work were distributed to all Heads of School and their comments were sought.

At the beginning of scholastic year 2001/2 the SDP group was reconvened with some new members being added including Director Operations Dr. Cecilia Borg. The brief was to continue the work on the adaptation to the Maltese scene of three other Key Areas: *Curriculum*, *Ethos* and *Management*. A novel addition was the compilation of checklists to complement the Maltese Performance Indicators.

In January 2002 the results of the second phase of the work of the SDP committee were presented to Heads of School and intensely discussed and amended during a seminar organized for the purpose. The seminar also decided to modify the title of Performance Indicators to read Quality Indicators (QIs) in consonance with the modern trend of aiming at *Total Quality Management* in all institutions.

Following the seminar, the committee was reconvened and the findings of the meeting for Heads were discussed. It was also decided to proceed with the adaptation of the remaining Key Areas relative to *Attainment* and *Resources*. At this point the need was felt for a change in the method of working. The group was divided into a number of sub-groups who concluded work on all the Key Areas. A separate committee was finally set up to review and edit the work of the other sub-groups.

During the final stages of the publication the editing committee was joined by Ms Mary Vella, ex-Director Curriculum Management, who provided her expertise to fine-tune the product to be the ideal tool with which heads and staff could carry out an audit of their school.

It is hoped that this publication will help Maltese schools gradually evaluate their own work in the Key Areas of their activity.



Godfrey J. Bonello
Chairman
SDP Committee



Introduction



This handbook

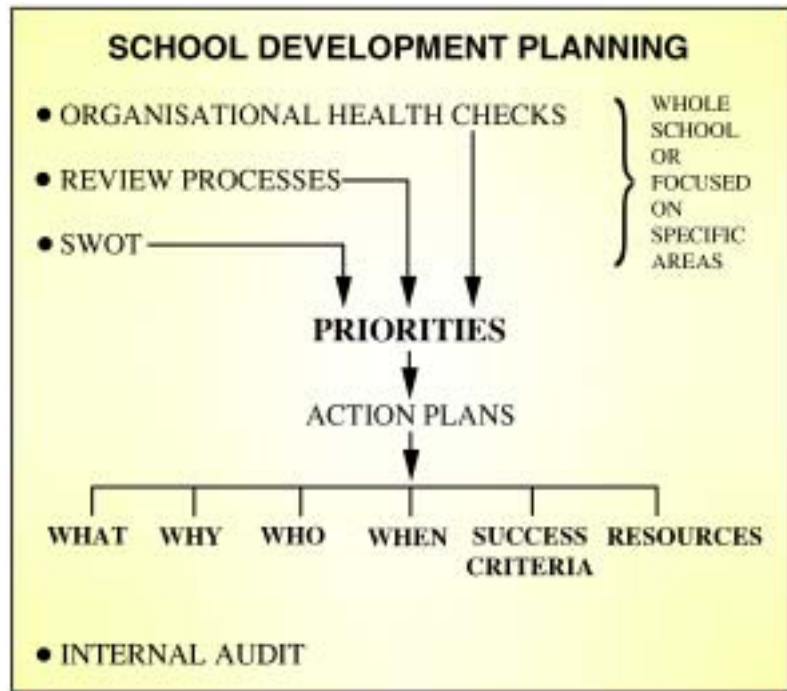
- Gives a brief outline of the School Internal Audit Process.
- Provides a relevant and manageable checklist for each of the seven Key Areas that constitute the organisation of a school in order to facilitate a school's **broad view** of its performance.
- Delineates the Quality Indicators (QIs) for each of the seven Key Areas to enable a school to take a **close view** in evaluating its activities.
- Illustrates Performance Levels 2 and 4 for each Quality Indicator.
- Provides: i) a list of available reference books at **Appendix 2**.
ii) a compilation of relevant material from educational literature, at **Appendix 3**.

The aim of this publication is to provide tangible benchmarks against which the Head of School, School Management Team (SMT) and Staff can measure themselves and be able to take informed decisions at the audit stage of their school development planning.

This handbook has been created specifically for the Maltese context and reflects the Maltese educational scenario with its particular culture and provision.

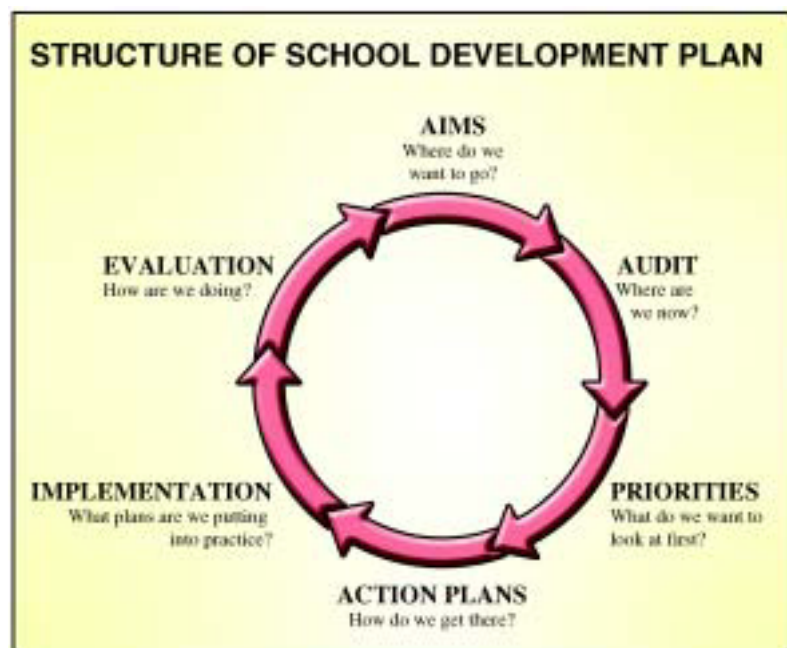
School Development Planning and Internal School Audit

Maltese schools are conversant with school development planning and they are familiar with the process as depicted in the following two figures



(South Eastern Education and Library Board UK, 1997)

Figure 1



(School Development Planning Guidelines Committee Malta, 1999)

Figure 2

This handbook focuses on the important phases of the school development planning process when schools reflect on their practices and ask themselves the questions:

- Where are we now?**
- How well are we doing?**

Figure 3 below indicate these phases in School Development Planning.

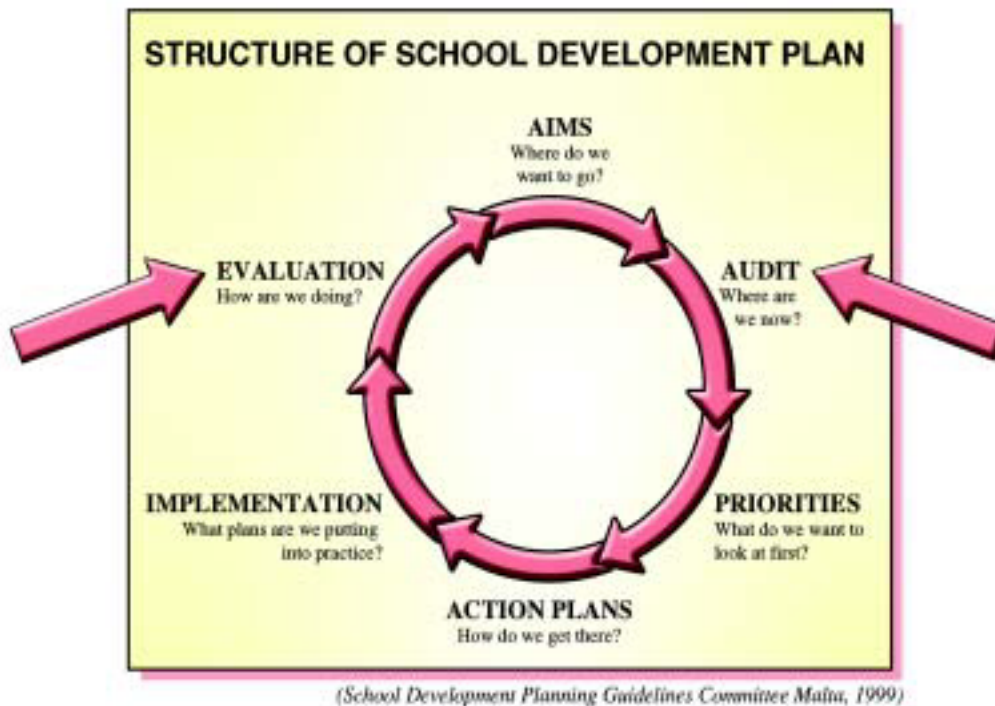
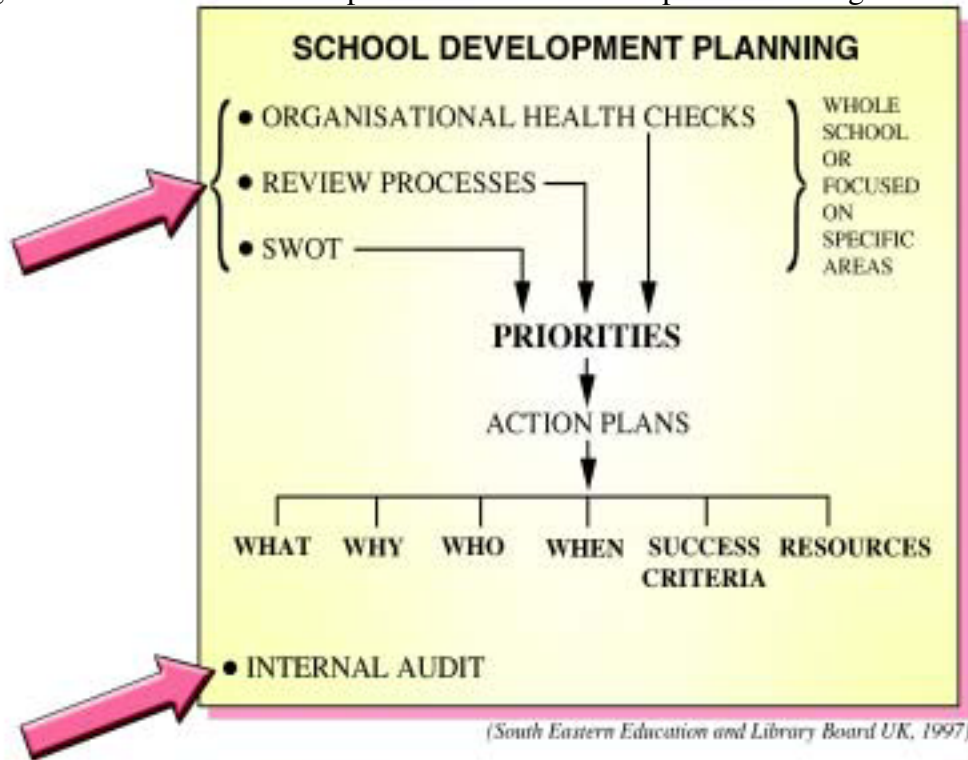


Figure 3

The Key Areas

Schools are complex organisations and consequently a detailed examination of all facets of their activities must be carried out in order to ensure that the development planning process will succeed. It is therefore important to have a clear idea of what is being audited, in what areas development should take place and what is being evaluated. These are the seven **KEY AREAS** that constitute the whole organisation of a school:

1. **Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance**
2. **Curriculum**
3. **Learning and Teaching**
4. **Attainment**
5. **Support for Students**
6. **Ethos**
7. **Resources**

This list departs slightly from the conventional list of Key Areas usually found in literature on school development planning where Key Area: **Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance** normally appears at the bottom of the list. In this handbook **Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance** has been consciously put at the head of the list to convey the critical importance of this area that impinges strongly on school performance in all the other Key Areas.

The Audit Process

It is imperative for all schools to examine the seven Key Areas listed above. It would however be too taxing on the schools' resources and time to examine all Key Areas in detail every scholastic year. This handbook therefore recommends an audit programme, described below, which is both effective and manageable.

This programme includes:

1. A **broad view** of the seven Key Areas once a year and
2. A **close view** of the seven Key Areas over a period of three years.

A **broad view** is necessary especially to monitor and update priorities and for long term planning.

A **close view** is a finer audit and forms a good basis for future Action Plans. One possible schedule for a close view is listed below. Schools should decide on their own schedule according to their needs. Example:

First Year: Curriculum, Ethos, Resources

Second Year: Learning and Teaching, Attainment

Third Year: Support for Students, Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

There is also an **alternative method** for a **close view** and this is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The Broad View

In order to help schools with the task of taking a broad view across the seven Key areas, this handbook provides a set of checklists. There is a checklist for each Key Area.

At one of its annual school development planning sessions, a school can go through the seven checklists, as a whole school or in groups focusing on specific areas. These exercises are like **Organisational Health Checks** when the school's **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** are identified and recorded.

As a result of the **broad view** a school can update its priorities for maintenance programmes¹ and for new projects.

The Close View

For a closer look at Key Areas identified for a particular year, this handbook provides schools with a number of Quality Indicators (QIs) for each Key Area.

Quality Indicators

Quality Indicators are yardsticks or benchmarks against which schools will find it easier to measure themselves.

This handbook provides two illustrations for each Quality Indicator. One illustration describes **Level 2** and indicates that any performance below the one in the description is **Level 1**.

The other illustration describes **Level 4** as a level to aspire to. A performance that is better than Level 2 but still working towards Level 4 is a **Level 3**. Figure 4 on page 10 is a graphical representation of the structure supporting school development planning.

¹ Maintenance programmes are Action Plans for Key Areas on which a school has worked intensively in the past and in which it has already registered a marked improvement. Such programmes entail: on-going effort to secure and enhance standards of performance already reached, progress through subsequent steps in the original action plan and consolidation of the first positive results already achieved.

While maintenance programmes usually make fewer demands on a school's resources, in terms of time and energy, than new projects that have to be tackled intensively, they are equally important because effective attempts at school improvement are processes rather than events.

Process Leading to the Use of Quality Indicators and Level Illustrations

Auditing involves

- Developing a range of strategies which help to reveal the school as it is
- Establishing a culture of teamwork
- Linking the school aims to action by using these aims as a framework for evaluation, thereby identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Regular meetings of the monitoring group
- Establishing priorities
- Establishing procedures for monitoring and reviewing the SDP

Who should be involved?

- The School Management Team
- The Staff: teaching and ancillary
- Students
- Parents/guardians
- The School Council
- The local community

Collection of data

Various tools may be adopted to collect reliable information and evidence in order to be able to define the quality level of particular items related to any one of the seven Key Areas:

- Discussions/meetings for parents, students, staff and other stakeholders
- Brainstorming
- Class visits
- Observation
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Diary or log
- Analysis of documentation
- Analysis of examination results
- Seminars
- Feedback from external sources: visitors, Education Officers and others

Quality Levels

The collated data will make it possible to define the quality level of a particular item investigated, thus making it possible to prioritise:

Quality level 4	very good	- major strengths
Quality level 3	good	- strengths outweigh weaknesses
Quality level 2	fair	- some important weaknesses
Quality level 1	unsatisfactory	- major weaknesses

All evidence collected will identify the strengths and weaknesses and determine the quality level to be assigned. This will be a springboard to a successful School Development Plan.

SECTION 1 of this handbook is dedicated to the **Broad View** in the Audit Process.

SECTION 2 provides material for a **Close View**.

FIGURE 4 below is a graphical representation of the structure on which **School Development Planning** is built.

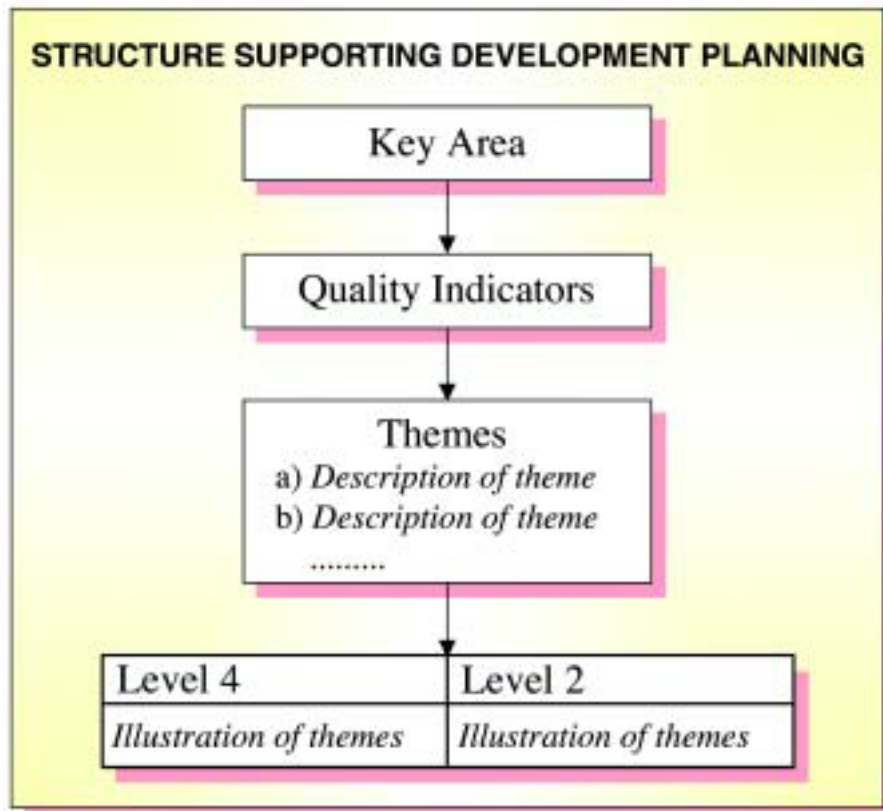
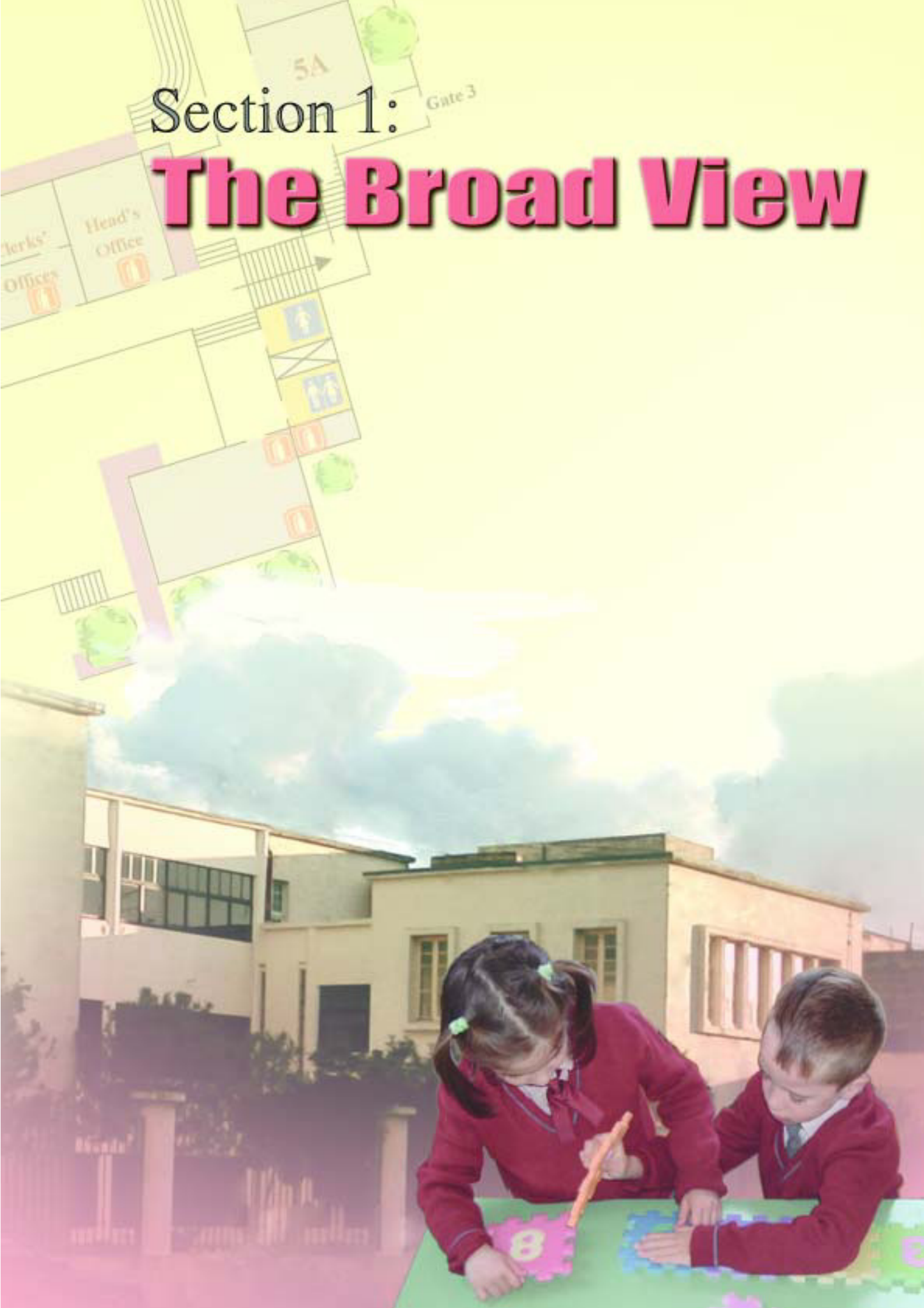


Figure 4



Section 1:

The Broad View

The Broad View: Organisational Health Checks

1. Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

Aspects For Review		Strengths	Weaknesses
1	The SDP follows sound structures: aims, audit and action plan sections.		
2	The Mission Statement reflects the vision of all the players: SMT, staff, students and parents.		
3	The SDP is concise and easily understood.		
4	All the staff contribute to the implementation of the SDP.		
5	The staff involve themselves willingly in the evaluation of school effectiveness.		
6	The implementation of the SDP is monitored according to set success criteria.		
7	The SMT monitors regularly the quality of the teaching/ learning process.		
8	Information on student assessment is analysed as useful feedback.		
9	The review of the effectiveness of the SMT is an established exercise.		
10	The Head of School is a competent professional.		
11	The Head of School is an inspiring leader.		
12	The Head of School has a good relationship with students, staff and parents.		
13	Individual members of the SMT know their responsibilities and are aware of the role of others.		
14	The individual members of the SMT deliver work of high quality.		
15	The members of the SMT work collaboratively as a good team.		

Organisational Health Checks

2. Curriculum

Aspects For Review		Strengths	Weaknesses
1	The Curriculum is broad enough to cover National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) aspects.		
2	The Curriculum is well balanced.		
3	Curriculum content has relevance for the students.		
4	The Curriculum makes adequate provision for differentiated learning.		
5	Syllabus topics are adequately covered.		
6	Interaction between subjects is evident and enhances learning.		
7	Logical sequence in schemes of work is ensured.		
8	Attention is given to continuity in schemes of work and related projects.		
9	Teachers' lesson plans are regular and of good quality.		
10	Teachers receive adequate in-school support and guidance.		
11	Planning within the school is done collaboratively.		
12	The school collaborates smoothly with Head Office in planning processes.		

Organisational Health Checks

3. Learning and Teaching

Aspects For Review		Strengths	Weaknesses
1	School work is innovative and stimulating.		
2	Students involve themselves actively in the learning process.		
3	Coursework is closely related to the lessons delivered.		
4	The different needs and abilities of students are adequately catered for.		
5	Teachers' interaction with students is strong and includes all students.		
6	Student attainment is rising.		
7	Students work and learn collaboratively.		
8	The school adopts both formative and summative assessment.		
9	Quality is ensured in all assessment processes.		
10	Recording of assessment is adequate and accurate.		
11	Assessment data is analysed and used as feedback for students and teachers.		
12	Communication and dialogue with parents are effective and cordial.		

Organisational Health Checks

4. Attainment

	Aspects For Review	Strengths	Weaknesses
1	Teaching methods cater adequately for the needs of students with different learning abilities.		
2	Students are exposed to a wide range of learning experiences.		
3	Sustained progress is evident.		
4	Assessment methods are accurate and effective.		
5	Student performance compares well with that of peers at a National Level.		
6	Students' acquisition of skills is given due importance.		

Organisational Health Checks

5. Support For Students

Aspects For Review		Strengths	Weaknesses
1	The strong relationship (in class and out of class) between staff and students ensures that all students are known, loved, valued and cared for.		
2	Staff's continuous monitoring ensures that the pastoral needs of students are identified and subsequent action is taken.		
3	Support staff provide adequate advice in response to students' needs.		
4	Students are empowered to assume responsibility, take risks and respond to change.		
5	Students participate in curricular and extra-curricular activities enabling them to develop life skills.		
6	Students are provided with clear, accurate, relevant and up to date information.		
7	Guidance teachers advise students on both curricular and vocational matters.		
8	Teachers and students interact to build a profile of students' progress, aptitudes and attainment.		
9	Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) for children with special needs are periodically reviewed and evaluated.		
10	Effective personalised teaching makes use of modern available technological resources helping the students to overcome difficulties.		
11	All concerned are informed about the professional assessment of students with particular needs and consequent plan of action.		
12	The school caters for differentiated learning and teaching.		

Organisational Health Checks

6. Ethos

Aspects For Review		Strengths	Weaknesses
1	There is a strong sense of belonging to school among all stakeholders.		
2	The climate is welcoming and reassuring.		
3	School safety and security are well safeguarded.		
4	A sense of democracy in the school embraces staff and students.		
5	Students and staff morale is high.		
6	There is mutual respect among all stakeholders.		
7	Discipline is firm but caring.		
8	Involvement of parents in their children's learning process is encouraged and supported.		
9	Communication between school and parents is regular and effective.		
10	Parents respond regularly and positively to communications regarding children.		
11	Parents participate regularly and actively in school activities.		
12	The School Council's contribution to the school is effective.		
13	Links with feeder schools/further education institutions are regular and structured.		
14	Contacts with governmental and non-governmental institutions are regular and productive.		
15	Links have been established with prospective employers.		
16	Co-operation between school and community is well maintained.		

Organisational Health Checks

7. Resources

Aspects For Review		Strengths	Weaknesses
1	Accommodation and facilities provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment.		
2	The space is appropriate for the size of school/classes.		
3	There are sufficient and suitable resources.		
4	Resources and facilities are easily accessible.		
5	Resources are used effectively to support learning and teaching.		
6	Students' work is attractively displayed.		
7	There is a full complement of staff.		
8	Ancillary staff carry out clearly defined duties.		
9	Teachers work together to facilitate learning and teaching.		
10	Staff development processes concentrate on the needs of the whole school.		
11	Efficient school review procedures exist.		
12	School finances are wisely managed to support school planning, learning and teaching.		

Section 2: Gate 3

The Close View



The Close View:

Overview of Key Areas and Quality Indicators

Key Area 1: Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

- QI 1.1 Self-Evaluation
- QI 1.2 The School Development Plan
- QI 1.3 Implementation of the School Development Plan
- QI 1.4 Effectiveness of Leadership
- QI 1.5 Effectiveness of Assistant Heads, Subject Co-ordinators, others

Key Area 2: Curriculum

- QI 2.1 Structure of the Curriculum
- QI 2.2 Quality of Schemes of Work and Projects
- QI 2.3 Quality of Teachers' Planning

Key Area 3: Learning and Teaching

- QI 3.1 Quality of the Teaching Process
- QI 3.2 Quality of Students' Learning
- QI 3.3 Meeting Students' Learning Needs
- QI 3.4 Assessment as part of Teaching
- QI 3.5 Communication with Parents about Students' Progress

Key Area 4: Attainment

- QI 4.1 Quality of Students' Attainment

Key Area 5: Support for Students

- QI 5.1 Pastoral Care
- QI 5.2 Personal and Social Development
- QI 5.3 Quality of Curricular and Vocational Guidance
- QI 5.4 Monitoring Progress and Achievement
- QI 5.5 Effectiveness of Learning Support Programmes
- QI 5.6 Implementation of Special Educational Needs Programmes
- QI 5.7 Placement of Students with Special Educational Needs

Key Area 6: Ethos

- QI 6.1 The Character of the School/The School Ethos
- QI 6.2 Partnership with Parents and the School Council
- QI 6.3 Links with Other Schools, Organizations, Employers and the Community

Key Area 7: Resources

- QI 7.1 Accommodation and Facilities
- QI 7.2 Provision and Organisation of Resources
- QI 7.3 Effectiveness and Deployment of Staff
- QI 7.4 Staff Review and Development
- QI 7.5 School Management of Finances

Quality Indicator 1.1

Self-evaluation

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Staff involvement in internal audit
- b) Staff involvement in monitoring the implementation of the SDP
- c) Monitoring and evaluation of staff performance
- d) Evaluation of overall student attainment through assessment information
- e) Evaluation of management

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Staff is involved in the systematic evaluation of school effectiveness in the main Key Areas during the audit stage of the SDP, taking into account the viewpoint of students and parents where this is pertinent. The staff is also involved in the systematic evaluation and discussion of their work at department level.</p>	<p>a) Staff involvement in auditing the school effectiveness in the main Key Areas is haphazard and not structured, relying more on individual initiatives than planned collaborative action.</p>
<p>b) Staff is actively involved in the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the SDP.</p>	<p>b) There are practically no structures that see to the implementation of the action plans agreed upon during the formulation of the SDP.</p>
<p>c) SMT is systematically engaged in monitoring the quality of work of each member of the teaching staff through the PMP. This includes the quality of teaching, the involvement and collaboration of staff in school activities and the implementation of the SDP.</p>	<p>c) SMT has preconceived ideas of teachers' abilities and takes these impressions for granted with very little evidence of the teachers' actual performance and output.</p>
<p>d) Staff is familiar with and makes full use of assessment information and examinations data analysis to evaluate the overall standards of attainment and make their priorities for teaching.</p>	<p>d) Assessment information is available but hardly ever made use of for better informed planning and practices.</p>
<p>e) SMT is regularly involved in reviewing the effectiveness of its management and leadership styles.</p>	<p>e) Although the management team seems to be open to suggestions and criticism in their regard, self-evaluation is lacking.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

Quality Indicator 1.2

The School Development Plan

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Structure of the plan
- b) Content of the plan
- c) Format of the plan

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) The aims, the audit and the action sections form the backbone of the SDP. Each action plan includes the following details: school aim, key area, development target, person/s responsible, action to be taken, resources needed and criteria for success.</p>	<p>a) On the whole the SDP seems to have a basic structure. However there is no clear indication of a proper audit exercise in most key areas and the action section is often at variance with the school aims. There seems to be no clear indication of who is responsible for what. No criteria are established to gauge successes achieved.</p>
<p>b) The Mission Statement is the motivating force in the SDP. The school aims are clear and few in number. They reflect the content of the Mission Statement and clearly link with the NMC. The audit is a thorough exercise that exposes the strengths and weaknesses, while the action section defines the strategies to improve standards of attainment and the quality of the teaching/learning experience. Attention to continuous monitoring is evident in the plan.</p>	<p>b) Most of the time, the Mission Statement and subsequently the school aims indicated, do not seem to link. The audit exercise does not clearly expose the school's strengths and/or weaknesses. Very few action plans are directed towards the improvement of the teaching/learning process and more emphasis is laid on less important themes. Monitoring of the whole process is lacking.</p>
<p>c) The plan is concise, easily understood and accessible. It is attractively presented and all necessary information can be easily obtained.</p>	<p>c) The presentation of the plan is commendable, but the over-abundance of its verbosity does not make it user friendly.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 1.3

Implementation of The School Development Plan

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Progression in achieving the targets as outlined by the SDP
- b) Monitoring of the Plan's implementation process

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Marked progress regarding the set targets is achieved within predetermined time-scales and the persons involved are fully committed. Moreover what has been achieved previously is being maintained. All the staff is involved in the implementation of the SDP. Parents also contribute towards its implementation.</p>	<p>a) Progress can be observed in the achievement of some of the targets. On the other hand in some targets, time-scales are not respected while in others no progress at all is registered. What has been achieved previously is not regularly being maintained.</p>
<p>b) There is a sense of ownership of the SDP among the SMT, staff, students, parents and the School Council. A monitoring group collects evidence about the implementation of all targets. The SMT regularly meets the persons responsible for the implementation of all action plans and makes adjustments where necessary.</p>	<p>b) Evidence clearly shows that only some of the staff are involved in the implementation of the SDP with the consequence that there is no reliable and complete ownership. The SMT informally meets the persons responsible for its implementation yet there is no mechanism that monitors this process continuously. Consequently there is no clear evidence of the success or failure of the action plans.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

Quality Indicator 1.4

Effectiveness of Leadership²

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Professional competence and commitment
- b) Leadership qualities
- c) Relationship with people and development of teamwork

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) The Head of School shows a high level of professional competence in:</p> <p>planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifying a problem and finding solutions <p>implementing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – communicating, consulting, delegating and coordinating <p>exercising control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – monitoring, evaluating and effecting change <p>personal professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – being conversant with current educational needs 	<p>a) The Head of School shows only a degree of professional competence and commitment. It is evident as s/he has difficulty in communicating and delegating effectively. The skill to control through evaluation needs improvement.</p>
<p>b) The Head of School demonstrates a wide range of leadership qualities including the ability to communicate well with staff, students and parents. S/he consults staff on significant issues and is personally involved in the appropriate initiatives suggested by others.</p>	<p>b) The Head of School demonstrates relevant personal abilities but does not adopt a policy where all partners feel that they can fully participate in the life of the school. A number of teachers do not respond to her/his management style because s/he does not consult staff when developing and presenting school aims and policies.</p>
<p>c) The Head of School has very good relationship with staff, students and parents. S/he establishes a team-based approach to management. Together with the staff s/he develops learning goals and strategies ensuring that all students learn.</p>	<p>c) The Head of School often has difficulties in her/his relationship with staff, students and parents. S/he does not develop strong collegial working relationships. S/he rarely attends departmental/year group meetings. Consequently her/his educational vision is not put into practice satisfactorily.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

²Referring to the Head of School

Quality Indicator 1.5

Effectiveness of Assistant Heads, Subject Co-ordinators, others

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Roles (Remits) and delegated work
- b) Individual effectiveness
- c) Corporate effectiveness

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) Assistant Heads, Subject Co-ordinators and staff in posts of responsibility have clearly defined duties delegated to them. Such duties reflect the school's aims as outlined in the Mission Statement.	a) Not all Assistant Heads, Subject Co-ordinators and staff in posts of responsibility have clearly defined duties assigned to them. The few delegated duties do not fully reflect the aims as expressed in the School Mission Statement.
b) Promoted staff produce work of high quality, work collegially and pass on their examples of good practice to others.	b) Promoted staff do not all give example of good practice.
c) Collegiality among these members of staff is evident and effective.	c) Collegial work is minimal and not of high quality.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Curriculum

Quality Indicator 2.1

Structure of the Curriculum

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Breadth and balance within the curriculum
- b) Holistic development of the student
- c) Provisions for modification of the curriculum

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) There is breadth and balance within the different components of the curriculum. It is fully in keeping with the school's aims and with the NMC.	a) There is not enough breadth and balance within the different components of the curriculum. It does not fully reflect the school's aims. It is not closely aligned with the NMC.
b) There is good provision for personal and collective knowledge as well as for the development of basic attitudes and skills.	b) There is insufficient provision for personal and collective knowledge. Development of basic attitudes and skills is limited.
c) The curriculum is designed efficiently, allowing for modifications to make it appropriate for students of different abilities.	c) Curriculum design hardly allows for modifications to cater for students of different abilities.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 2.2

Quality of Schemes of Work and Projects

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Stimulation for the development of students' potential
- b) Continuity and subject interaction
- c) Ongoing staff development

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Schemes of work and projects are well designed to stimulate the development of every student's potential without undermining the principles of solidarity and co-operation. They take account of the NMC and are fully in keeping with the school's aims.</p>	<p>a) Schemes of work and projects do not consistently stimulate the development of student potential. They do not sufficiently take account of the NMC and school aims.</p>
<p>b) Schemes of work follow a logical sequence allowing for continuity and progression in student learning. There is interaction among the various components of the school's curriculum.</p>	<p>b) Schemes of work do not always allow for continuity and progression in student learning. Interaction among the various components of the school's curriculum is not very evident.</p>
<p>c) The school provides professional opportunities for the exchange of ideas on curricular matters. It plans training programmes for staff development to support learning and teaching.</p>	<p>c) Opportunities for the exchange of ideas on curricular matters are seldom provided. Training for staff development is irregular.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Curriculum

Quality Indicator 2.3

Quality of Teachers' Planning

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Forward planning
- b) Reflective practices and self-evaluation

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Schemes of work indicate clear targets. Forecast of work is specific, shows how it is to be carried out, and indicates the tasks to be undertaken. The NMC and relevant school policies are followed. Effective use is made of time available. Planning, carried out in collaboration with colleagues, support staff, senior staff and education officials, is given due importance.</p>	<p>a) Schemes of work are not clear enough. Forecast of work is somewhat vague and does not always indicate specific tasks to be undertaken. The NMC and relevant school policies are often ignored. Time available is not always used effectively. Collaboration with colleagues and other competent staff is lacking.</p>
<p>b) The SMT and the teaching staff understand the value of reflective practices and of self-evaluation as tools for improvement. The school has developed ways of implementing such practices and is committed to making time for them.</p>	<p>b) There is some awareness of the need for the SMT and the teaching staff to adopt reflective practices and self-evaluation as tools for improvement. The way they plan to do this is still rather vague and these practices happen by chance rather than through commitment.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 3.1

Quality of Teaching Process

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Participatory, creative, innovative and motivating methodology
- b) Relevant and stimulating class work and homework
- c) Clear and suitable expositions and explanations by the teacher
- d) Teachers'/students' interaction

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) Teaching methods adopted include the participation of as many students as possible, reflect attention to individual learning needs, are attentive to relevance, and are continuously evolving and innovative. Teachers use their creativity and imagination to motivate students.	a) There is a tentative effort to involve students but teaching is constantly based on chalk and talk.
b) Work given to the students in class and at home is related closely to the lessons delivered.	b) Class work and homework are in some way related to the lesson but tend to be composed of a series of tedious and repetitive exercises.
c) Teachers' explanations and expositions are clear and suited to the needs of the students involved.	c) Teachers' explanations are quite verbose and lack the necessary clarity thus presenting confused expositions to students.
d) The teachers are in continuous dialogue with the students in order to stimulate them, inspire them and empower them to learn.	d) The teachers' style is more of the pulpit type than that of inspiring leaders who manage their lessons collaboratively.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Learning and Teaching

Quality Indicator 3.2

Quality of Students' Learning

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Students' motivation towards a positive learning experience
- b) Progress in learning
- c) Participative learning
- d) Collaboration with others

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) There is a learning environment which encourages and motivates almost all students to meet the high expectations set. A positive attitude is used in order to encourage students and to help build their self-esteem. Students are motivated to work well and are enthusiastic about learning without the need for close supervision.</p>	<p>a) Students respond quite conscientiously to the tasks set by the teacher, but the work of the class is characterised by lack of enthusiasm and students have few opportunities to exercise initiative. Occasional opportunities are taken to encourage good work and to improve motivation but these are not maintained.</p>
<p>b) Students are making good progress in their learning and are achieving to the maximum of their potential.</p>	<p>b) Students are making some progress in their learning but only a few are attaining their full potential.</p>
<p>c) Students participate actively and take responsibility for their learning. They are encouraged to take initiatives, and to be creative and independent thinkers. Students reflect on their own work in order to evaluate it.</p>	<p>c) Students do not often take initiatives to be creative and independent thinkers. They have few opportunities for reflection and evaluation of their own work. They do not always participate actively in their own learning.</p>
<p>d) There is full collaboration among students when working as a class or in groups.</p>	<p>d) Collaboration among students when working as a class or in groups is hardly evident.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 3.3

Meeting Students' Learning Needs

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Identification of students' needs
- b) Relevance of tasks set
- c) Respect for diversity in students

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) The individual needs of students are clearly identified and are addressed when learning programmes are planned.	a) Not enough importance is given to the identification of the individual needs of students when setting up learning programmes.
b) Tasks set meet the individual needs and aspirations of students and are matched to their abilities. Tasks help students develop their learning skills and are relevant to their social background.	b) The individual needs, aspirations and abilities of students are not always taken into consideration when setting tasks. Therefore students cannot fully develop their learning skills.
c) Learning programmes respect and acknowledge the different learning needs of all students. Each individual is given the opportunity to learn at her/his own pace and so feels challenged to develop her/his full potential.	c) Learning programmes do not always reflect the different abilities of students. Not all students are given the opportunity to learn at their own pace and to develop their full potential.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Learning and Teaching

Quality Indicator 3.4

Assessment as Part of Teaching

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Methods of assessment
- b) Recording of assessment
- c) Use of assessment to draw up teaching strategies
- d) Use of assessment for feedback

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) Methods of assessment reflect clearly identified goals. Assessments directly examine student performance. Set tasks primarily support the needs of learners. Standards and expectations are clear and challenging.	a) Assessment procedures only occasionally reflect identified goals. Tasks set are not always relevant to the needs of the learners. Standards and expectations are vague and unchallenging.
b) Recording of assessment is regular and clear. Records are comprehensive and serve their purpose. Records of school/national tests are made available.	b) Assessment is not always recorded clearly and regularly. Information is somewhat limited and consequently inadequate.
c) Assessment data is used during departmental sessions/year group meetings. Formative assessment of students' performance and work forms the basis for relevant teaching strategies. National tests are used to corroborate teachers' judgements.	c) Assessment records are not given due importance when drawing up teaching strategies. Assessment is used almost exclusively for summative purposes.
d) Students and parents are regularly informed by teachers about the progress and level achieved. Teachers are engaged in a continuous dialogue with students in order to improve performance. Existing records are made available to teachers of the following year in order to ensure continuity.	d) Assessment information is not always available to students and parents. Dialogue between student and teacher about progress in learning is often lacking. Existing records are rarely used.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 3.5

Communication with Parents about Students' Progress

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Procedures for communicating with parents
- b) Information given to parents about each student's progress
- c) The school's response to parents' concerns

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) The home/school line of communication is positive. Information about school activities reaches parents who can communicate easily and regularly with management and teachers. Parents receive progress reports, and opportunities for discussion are available.</p>	<p>a) Procedures for communicating with parents are limited and not always effective. There are few opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss students' progress.</p>
<p>b) Report sheets show results obtained by students in school based and national exams, and give parents information regarding students' progress. Periodic reports, Parents' Day and other organised activities provide opportunities to parents to consult with teachers and get involved in their children's learning.</p>	<p>b) Report sheets are not sufficiently indicative of the attainment achieved by each student. Parents lack the information necessary to help them contribute to their children's learning. The school policy about parents' meetings has to be reviewed because there is a need for more consultation between parents and teachers.</p>
<p>c) The school regularly informs parents about the academic, social and personal development of their children. Parents are made to feel welcome in school and due consideration is given to their concerns.</p>	<p>c) Parents are not regularly informed about the academic, social and personal development of their children. Parents' concerns are treated lightly or often ignored.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Attainment

Quality Indicator 4.1

Quality of Students' Attainment

This Quality Indicator is used to evaluate the overall quality of students' attainment, taking due consideration of the following themes:

- a) Quality of attainment
- b) Progress in learning
- c) Students' attainment in relation to school-based, National and/or External Examinations
- d) Evaluations across other related Quality Indicators³

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) The school uses an appropriate range of teaching experiences supported by good teacher/student interaction, providing for students with different learning abilities and aptitudes. Sound progress in raising and maintaining attainment is very evident.	a) The range of teaching experiences is limited and teacher/student interaction is not very effective. Students with different learning abilities and aptitudes are not adequately provided for. There is little progress in attainment.
b) Sustained progress is evident through identification of learning needs, use of praise, efficient monitoring and effective assessment methods.	b) Students' progress is somewhat unsatisfactory. Learning needs are not thoroughly identified. Students are rarely praised. Monitoring and assessment methods are not very effective.
c) Student performance is excellent as is reflected in Formative/Summative Assessment. Students compare well with their peers with respect to benchmarking, the National Mean and/or grades obtained in external examinations.	c) Student performance as reflected in Formative/Summative Assessment is limited. Students do not compare well enough with their peers with respect to benchmarking, the National Mean and/or grades obtained in external examinations.
d) Related QIs contribute to the achievement and/or maintenance of standards of attainment.	d) The contribution of related QIs to the achievement and/or maintenance of standards of attainment is limited.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

³ This QI should be used to evaluate the students' attainment both at school level and at National level. Evaluation is to be carefully carried out and is to be sensitive to the type of school and to its population. Due consideration should be given to the following Quality Indicators:

- Self Evaluation (QI 1.1)
- Quality of Schemes of Work and Projects (QI 2.2)
- Quality of Teaching Process (QI 3.1)
- Quality of Students' Learning (QI 3.2)
- Meeting Students' Learning Needs (QI 3.3)
- Assessment as Part of Teaching (QI 3.4)
- Monitoring Progress and Achievement (QI 5.4)
- Effectiveness of Learning Support Programmes (QI 5.5)
- The Character of the School/The School Ethos (QI 6.1)

Quality Indicator 5.1

Pastoral Care

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Provision for the well-being of the individual student: emotional, physical and social needs
- b) Arrangements for ensuring support

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) The school is a loving, caring experience. Relationships between staff and students are strong and open. Students feel accepted and valued as individuals. Staff take a personal interest in the students and show great concern for their welfare. The physical, emotional and social needs of students are identified through constant monitoring with the help of support staff and outside agencies. Due importance is given to information about students' background which is communicated to staff concerned as need arises.</p>	<p>a) A strong, encouraging, personal student/ staff relationship has still to be established. Staff do not always take an active interest in the welfare of the students with the consequence that some students feel lost and insecure. Behavioural problems can be resolved if communication links between staff and parents are strengthened. Background information about students is, in some cases, somewhat scanty.</p>
<p>b) Staff interact well with students both within and outside the classroom. They are readily accessible and responsive to students' needs. Management ensures that Guidance and Counselling services are available. Guidance teachers and Counsellors keep clear and updated records, which are accessible to specialised support personnel (psychological, social, medical) with whom regular contacts are kept and who give advice regarding students' welfare. There is on-going contact with parents.</p>	<p>b) Staff is not alert enough to students' needs. Guidance and Counselling Services are available but not functioning satisfactorily. Although contacts with outside support agencies are quite regular, follow-up of individual needs of students is not adequate. Parent-Teacher consultation needs to be more frequent.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Support for Students

Quality Indicator 5.2

Personal and Social Development

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) The development in students of positive attitudes, personal and social skills
- b) The contribution of extracurricular activities

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Almost all students are developing a sense of self-esteem and they are aware of their personal safety and of their capabilities. They can put into practice what they have learnt in class to their advantage and to the benefit of their peers. While being able to take decisions independently of others, they co-operate with others in all circumstances. The school does not compromise on unacceptable behaviour. It celebrates achievement at all levels.</p>	<p>a) Some students are developing a sense of self-esteem and an awareness of personal safety. Only a few are aware of their capabilities and they do not always put into practice what they have learnt in class. Cases of unacceptable behaviour are occasionally evident and no corrective structure is in place. The school does not always celebrate success.</p>
<p>b) Students are given all possible opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities such as activity clubs, awareness programmes and voluntary work. There are strong links with the community and good opportunities for experiences out of school.</p>	<p>b) Opportunities for extracurricular activities are not frequent, and participation is sporadic. Students are not always encouraged to participate in school and out of school events.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 5.3

Quality of Curricular and Vocational Guidance⁴

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Guidance in preparation for choice in education, training or employment
- b) Accuracy and relevance of information and advice
- c) Guidance based on appropriate consultation

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Preparation of students for the options exercise and for post sixteen education involves a spectrum of focused approaches. Students are well informed about courses and careers in relation to their particular skills and interests. In the upper classes specific programmes are organised. These include work-experience visits and programmes, career seminars, industry and business information. Career talks are also organised for parents.</p>	<p>a) The range of approaches in the preparation of students for subject options is limited. Information given to students is not adequate and students' personal skills are hardly considered. In the upper classes work-experience programmes and visits are inadequate. Guidance is not responsive enough to the needs of all students.</p>
<p>b) The Guidance Department at school level ensures that all students receive accurate and relevant information regarding further education opportunities. Provision is made for participation in the national guidance programme.</p>	<p>b) The information given by Guidance Department at school level is not always accurate, relevant and complete. Participation in the national guidance programme is not taken seriously enough.</p>
<p>c) Guidance teachers are well informed about the individual student's overall curricular needs. They discuss with subject departments appropriate choices in education, training or employment. Consultation of guidance teachers with staff and parents is very effective.</p>	<p>c) Guidance teachers do not have sufficient information about the curricular needs of individual students. Consultation with subject departments regarding students' education or employment is limited. Guidance teachers are not always available to advise students and/or parents on curricular and vocational matters.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

⁴This QI applies mainly for Secondary Education

Key Area: Support for Students

Quality Indicator 5.4

Monitoring Progress and Achievement

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Monitoring process
- b) Student profiles
- c) Using the information obtained

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Subject/class teachers, guidance teachers and learning support staff⁵ monitor and record students' progress. Attainment is discussed with students, who are encouraged to assess their own progress. Where necessary, parents are invited to give their views before suggestions for improvement are made and targets set.</p>	<p>a) Students' progress is not always well monitored by subject/class teachers, guidance teachers and learning support staff. Discussion with students about their own progress is limited and parents' views are rarely requested, even when relevant to particular cases.</p>
<p>b) A detailed profile is kept of every student. This includes information about attainment, aptitudes, progress and achievements, both within and outside school. Students are asked to contribute ideas/views to this profile.</p>	<p>b) Records are kept of all students but information contained therein is mostly limited to students' attainment. Other information about students' aptitudes, interests and achievements, both within and outside school, is limited. Students are rarely encouraged to contribute ideas/views towards the building of this profile.</p>
<p>c) Subject/class teachers, guidance teachers and learning support staff make use of the information obtained about a student when drawing up learning programmes, setting targets, and assessing progress. Information is also utilised by guidance teachers to help students select career paths. These teachers help and encourage students compile their <i>curriculum vitae</i> (CV) and acquire skills to prepare them for interviews.</p>	<p>c) Subject/class teachers, guidance teachers and learning support staff do not often make use of the information available about a student when drawing up learning programmes, setting targets, and assessing progress. Although the information is available, it is seldom utilised when guiding students to select career paths. Students are given little opportunity to acquire skills in compiling CVs and preparing for interviews.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

⁵ Support staff includes complementary teachers, teachers of students with disabilities/learning difficulties, facilitators and other specialists.

Quality Indicator 5.5

Effectiveness of Learning Support Programmes

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Availability of learning support programmes
- b) Quality of learning support programmes
- c) Students' attainment
- d) Availability and quality of external guidance and support

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Programmes are designed to enable individual students to participate fully in the educational process. They cater for individual students' strengths and weaknesses and they utilise all internal and external means of support, both human and material.</p>	<p>a) Availability of programmes is restricted or haphazard. Programme design does not cater for individual students' abilities and needs. Programmes do not tap adequately human and material resources that can support students in their learning.</p>
<p>b) Support programmes are the result of collegial involvement, including the involvement of students and parents. All programmes are periodically reviewed and evaluated and, where appropriate, they are externally audited by experts in the relevant field.</p>	<p>b) Support programmes are very often subject-centred rather than student-centred. There is little or no contact with internal and external expertise. Review or evaluation of programmes is random and superficial.</p>
<p>c) Benchmarking programmes are available in order to enable the school to identify relevant starting points and desired outcomes in the particular educational area, within the appropriate time span. Students' programmes are formulated on the feedback received. Teaching and learning agreements are formulated and reviewed periodically. A range of tools is used to evaluate students' progress including profiling and portfolios. Curricular material and human support are available both within and outside the class.</p>	<p>c) Student progress is assessed mostly on the basis of examinations. Attainment is somewhat limited. Assessment is not used to provide feedback for future planning. Not enough attention is given to setting of learning goals, negotiation of learning paths and review of progress. Curricular material and human support are inadequate.</p>
<p>d) The design and implementation of learning programmes are supported by relevant material and by expertise in psychological, social and other fields. Such programmes are considered as open-ended and are reviewed periodically.</p>	<p>d) External support is limited to overt cases only. Communication with external sources of expertise is restricted. Programmes are very narrow in scope. Programme review is left to chance.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Support for Students

Quality Indicator 5.6

Implementation of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Programmes

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Differentiated programmes for children with special needs
- b) Procedures for implementing programmes for children with special needs
- c) Knowledge and understanding of needs and related interventions

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Programmes of work for children with special needs are clear and target the individual needs of students, ensuring a balanced curriculum. Programmes are negotiated with parents, teachers and other personnel⁶. Suitable activities take into account the range of student needs, especially personal, social, educational and developmental needs. Short-term programmes for specific needs are functioning effectively.</p>	<p>a) Programmes of work for children with special needs are not clear and they do not cater for the individual needs of these students. Short-term programmes for specific developmental needs are not effective.</p>
<p>b) Special timetabled and out-of-class personalised teaching is effective. Modern techniques, like videos and special computer programmes, are used specifically for teaching/learning processes to help overcome significant difficulties. Care is taken to ensure that classes contain a manageable balance of students with special needs.</p>	<p>b) Specific programmes for treating special educational needs are not effective as these lack the desired support or contribution of the teaching staff. There is not enough out-of-class learning/teaching process. Not enough use is made of technology to help reinforce the teaching process.</p>
<p>c) Parents and teachers fully understand the needs of children and are well informed about them. The teaching staff receives support and advice from the experts.</p>	<p>c) Parents and teachers are not adequately informed about the needs of students and do not fully understand them. Professional advice in the setting of targets, tasks and activities is lacking.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

⁶ Other personnel could include psychologists, facilitators, carers, etc.

Quality Indicator 5.7

Placement of Students with Special Educational Needs

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Procedure for inclusion of students with special needs
- b) Placements in mainstream setting

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Staff involved identify and refer students' learning difficulties. Parents are informed about intervention programmes and the next procedures are agreed upon. Advice from medical experts is sought and the appropriate referrals made. Apposite agencies issue accurate assessment reports based on prior consideration of the students' special needs.</p>	<p>a) Staff is not fully aware of the students' learning difficulties. Parents are not always informed about intervention programmes. Although advice from medical experts is available, necessary follow-up action is not always taken. Assessment reports issued by apposite agencies are not effectively dealt with.</p>
<p>b) Students are placed with a group where their curricular and social needs are addressed. Support is provided and IEPs are drawn up with parents'/experts' participation. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out regularly. Where a placement is not proving successful, corrective measures are taken. Teachers, facilitators, physiotherapists and educational psychologists contribute to a multi-disciplinary programme. There is an effective home-school liaison policy. Qualified facilitators co-ordinate the handling of students' needs within school and are in liaison with other sections of the education system. Facilitators work in close co-operation with teachers. New teachers in mainstream education are regularly briefed regarding students' needs.</p>	<p>b) Those responsible for placing students in a group do not always take into consideration the students' curricular and social needs. Although support is provided, the IEP drawn up does not adequately cater for the student's needs. Evaluation is not regular and home-school liaison is inadequate. Collaboration between teacher and facilitator is insufficient.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Ethos

Quality Indicator 6.1

The Character of the School/The School Ethos

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Sense of belonging to the school
- b) Welcoming and secure climate
- c) Equal opportunities and fair treatment for everyone
- d) Student and staff demands
- e) Student and staff rapport, standard of behaviour and discipline
- f) Student and staff morale

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Students and staff show a strong sense of belonging. School activities are fully supported by all. Students wear their proper uniform and are neat. They behave correctly even when out of school. Staff is appropriately dressed and tries to promote the school with outsiders.</p>	<p>a) Students and staff do not show a strong sense of belonging. School activities are poorly supported. Uniforms are shabby and not worn regularly. Out of school behaviour often harms the school's reputation. Some members of staff do not dress decorously or pass disparaging remarks about school with outsiders.</p>
<p>b) Parents and visitors are accorded a good welcome in a fitting ambience. Security measures are effective. A healthy atmosphere is felt throughout the school.</p>	<p>b) Parents and visitors are not accorded a good welcome in a fitting ambience. Security is lax. SMT does not strive enough to maintain a good atmosphere throughout the school.</p>
<p>c) Democratic practices exist at school allowing students to voice their opinion. All students have equal opportunities to learn and to participate in school life.</p>	<p>c) There is a lack of democratic practices at school. Staff/students are not always given a fair treatment and at times favouritism deprives them of equal opportunities.</p>
<p>d) Students are aware of their capabilities and have full opportunities to fulfill their expectations. Staff expectations of their students are equally high. Students' achievements are praised through positive reinforcement.</p>	<p>d) Students do not have high expectations of themselves. Staff do not have high expectations of their students and often complain of their limitations. Although praise is sometimes used, its positive aspect is not fully recognised.</p>
<p>e) Relationships between students and staff are very good. Respect is shown in dealings among students, staff and administration. Disciplinary problems are handled in a firm but caring manner. Learning and teaching are rarely disturbed by disciplinary problems.</p>	<p>e) Relationships between students and staff, and among members of the staff themselves, are sometimes strained and consideration for others is not always evident. Disciplinary problems are dealt with inconsistently, at times leading to an aggravation of the problem.</p>
<p>f) Student and staff morale is high, and both feel well integrated within the school's set-up. Attendance is regular and everyone's effort is appreciated.</p>	<p>f) Student and staff morale is not very high and sometimes members' dissatisfaction is expressed as negative criticism. Absenteeism is considerable.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 6.2

Partnership with Parents and the School Council

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Involvement of parents in their children’s learning
- b) Encouragement of parents to participate in the life of the school
- c) Relationship between the school and the School Council

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) Parents involve themselves in their children’s learning. They follow up any suggestions from the school, for example they supervise homework and support reading habits. They respond promptly to communication from school regarding their children.</p>	<p>a) Parents do not often involve themselves in their children’s learning, through lack of interest, lack of awareness, or lack of encouragement. Suggestions from school are not often followed up at home.</p>
<p>b) Parents are encouraged to participate actively in the life of the school by contributing to school curricular and extracurricular activities. Parents’ views and suggestions on aspects of school life are considered and appropriate action is taken accordingly. Activities are organised purposely for parents and attendance is good. Parents support the school’s disciplinary procedures.</p>	<p>b) Parents are not effectively encouraged to participate actively in the life of the school. They are not asked to give their views and suggestions, but when these are given, they are generally followed up. Communication with parents is weak. Very few activities are organised for parents and when such activities are held few parents attend. Most parents do not support the school’s disciplinary procedures and they tend to uphold their child’s views.</p>
<p>c) The School Council is an important part of the school set-up. It meets regularly and is updated about school developments. It has a participatory role in a number of school activities organised by the school or by the Council or collaboratively. Its contribution is of benefit to the school and it is appreciated by staff, parents and students.</p>	<p>c) The School Council is not considered to be very important for parents and the school. Relations between the school and the Council are strained. The School Council’s contribution is limited and not very evident.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Ethos

Quality Indicator 6.3

Links with Other Schools, Organisations, Employers and the Community

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Contacts with other educational institutions
- b) Contacts with governmental and non-governmental, national or local organisations
- c) Contacts with prospective employers
- d) Contacts with the community

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) The school maintains links with its feeder schools and with the institutions to which its students progress for further studies. Exchange visits are organised. Pastoral and educational information about students is professionally exchanged. Links with the various units within the Education Division, the Faculty of Education and other educational establishments are effective.</p>	<p>a) Links with other scholastic institutions are very limited in scope and not fully effective. Exchange visits are rarely organised. Exchange of information about students is neither comprehensive nor timely. Links with the various units within the Education Division and other educational establishments are limited and their assistance is not often sought.</p>
<p>b) The school strives to maintain links with governmental, non-governmental, national or local organisations and personnel who can be of support to the school in its pastoral and educational mission. The expertise of professional people is sought.</p>	<p>b) Links with governmental, non-governmental, national or local organisations and their professional personnel who could be of support to the school, are not very effective. They do not cater enough for the pastoral, medical and educational needs of the students.</p>
<p>c) The school maintains links with employers in its bid to provide career orientation for its students. Where relevant, students are exposed to direct work experiences.</p>	<p>c) Links with prospective employers are too sporadic and unscheduled to be effective.</p>
<p>d) The school maintains links with the community by participating in events, organising activities and making its facilities accessible. It serves as a community-learning centre and is thus committed to the lifelong education of the community. School activities are given adequate exposure.</p>	<p>d) Links with the community are not well developed and the school's contribution to the community is limited. The school premises are not readily used for lifelong learning programmes. Very little use is made of the media to promote school activities.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 7.1

Accommodation and Facilities

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Sufficiency, range, appropriateness and accessibility
- b) Security, health and safety

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) All areas of the school are easily accessible. Classrooms, work, play and leisure areas are comfortable, spacious and conducive to learning. Storage space is adequate. The school provides various areas where students' work may be attractively displayed. The place is clean and well maintained. Fixtures and furniture are in very good condition and meet the various educational needs.</p>	<p>a) Not all areas in the school are easily accessible. Classrooms, work, play and leisure areas do not always match desirable standards of comfort and space and are not generally conducive to learning. Storage space is limited and not well organised. Display areas are few and could be better utilised. Cleanliness and maintenance leave much to be desired. Most fixtures and furniture are in need of maintenance or require replacement.</p>
<p>b) Through efficient and effective liaison between school management and health and safety teachers, school buildings are secure. Accommodation and facilities provide a safe and healthy environment for all users.</p>	<p>b) Co-ordination between school management and health and safety teachers is lacking. Not all areas and facilities of the school are secure and provide a safe and healthy environment for all users.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Resources

Quality Indicator 7.2

Provision and Organisation of Resources

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Adequacy, range and suitability
- b) Awareness and accessibility
- c) Use
- d) Displays and presentations

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) The school is equipped with valid and modern resources in sufficient quantities to meet the demands of the NMC.	a) The school needs to replace, update and/or increase its resources to satisfy the demands of the NMC.
b) The staff is aware of and has full accessibility to the resources, space and facilities within the school. The staff is also aware of the availability of resources outside school.	b) Not all the staff is aware of resources, space and facilities within and outside the school. Restrictions hinder access to resources. Available space is used sparingly.
c) The staff is well versed in the use of the resources available in the school. Staff and students use resources, including ICT, effectively and thus learning and teaching are enhanced. ICT is also used effectively by the administration.	c) Not all staff is competent enough to make use of available resources. Staff and students do not make full use of resources and of ICT, to the detriment of learning and teaching. The administration does not always make effective use of ICT.
d) Students' work and other material are displayed in a very stimulating manner thus encouraging learning and teaching.	d) Students' work and other material are not always displayed attractively and displays are seldom changed.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 7.3

Effectiveness and Deployment of Staff

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Effectiveness of teachers and teamwork
- b) Classification exercise
- c) Student support
- d) Effectiveness and deployment of ancillary staff

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) Teachers make very effective contributions to the work of the school or section. Year groups/subject departments function very effectively as teams.	a) Teachers' contribution to the work of the school or department is inconsistent. Collegiality is lacking.
b) Classes are allocated to teachers according to their aptitude and training <i>vis-à-vis</i> the curriculum. Learning support staff is requested from the Education Division as needed.	b) Class allocation does not always take into consideration teachers' aptitudes and training. The school almost ignores the role and need of learning support staff.
c) Staff involved with any particular student or group of students consult each other to discuss developments, and work effectively to support the child/group.	c) Staff involved with particular students or groups of students rarely consult or discuss developments, and often work in isolation.
d) Ancillary staff has clearly defined duties, which are understood by all. They work effectively and contribute positively to the smooth running of the school. Teachers and administrators focus on purely educational and administrative tasks thus enhancing students' education.	d) There is no clear definition of respective duties. Teachers and administrators spend much time on routine tasks which could be easily undertaken by ancillary staff. This negatively affects students' education and the smooth running of the school.

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Key Area: Resources

Quality Indicator 7.4

Staff Review and Development

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Links within staff review, school self-evaluation, planning and development
- b) Staff review procedures
- c) Staff professional development

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) All members of staff are fully aware of their areas of accountability. Responsibilities of administration and any delegated staff regarding review and development are clearly defined. Staff development concentrates on the whole school, sections and individual needs. The school scrutinises the strengths and weaknesses in all strata and suggests initiatives for development.</p>	<p>a) Not all members of staff are fully aware of their areas of accountability. Responsibilities of administration and delegated staff are not clearly defined. Sometimes staff development does not concentrate on the whole school, sections or individual needs. Strengths and weaknesses are not scrutinized in all strata and suggestions for development are rare.</p>
<p>b) Efficient review procedures, which meet all provisions listed in the NMC, exist for all the staff. These procedures include the Performance Management Programme (PMP).</p>	<p>b) Although all the staff is catered for by staff review procedures, these are not regularly and efficiently conducted to meet provisions enlisted in the NMC.</p>
<p>c) An identification of the needs of individuals, staff and school, forms the basis of sound staff development. This ongoing process effectively taps various areas of expertise which can be of benefit to the school. Findings from the follow-up and evaluation of activities favour new planning ideas. New members of staff are fully supported by the school.</p>	<p>c) Although there is some identification of the needs of individuals, staff and school, this information does not form the basis of staff development. This process does not effectively use areas of relevant expertise. Findings from the follow-up and evaluation of activities do not sufficiently foster new planning ideas. The school's induction process does not fully support new staff.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.

Quality Indicator 7.5

School Management of Finances

This Quality Indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- a) Awareness of school funding arrangements
- b) Management of various school budgets
- c) Use of school finance to support learning and teaching

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
<p>a) The Head of School and persons entrusted with school finances have a good understanding of school funding mechanisms. The procedure used to operate funds follows national financial regulations and Education Division instructions. All members of staff are aware of funding arrangements.</p>	<p>a) The Head of School and persons entrusted with school finances have a limited understanding of school funding mechanisms. The procedure to operate funds does not always follow national financial regulations and Education Division instructions. Not all members of staff are aware of funding arrangements.</p>
<p>b) The school observes financial funding periods and deadlines. Management of school budgets is open, fair and well planned. All members of staff are given opportunities to propose and to discuss acquisitions in their department/section. Financial records are kept up to date. Apportionment of school funds ensures a wise economy and equity of distribution. Financial management does not impede Head from dedicating her/his time to other duties.</p>	<p>b) The school does not always observe funding periods and deadlines. Management of school finances lacks openness and fairness. Financial planning is not always successful. Staff input is seldom used to ensure a wise economy and an equitable distribution of funds. Financial matters take up a considerable amount of the time of the Head and delegated staff at the expense of educational priorities.</p>
<p>c) Spending priorities reflect school's planning and educational objectives. Business plans are compiled after accurate costings are carried out, keeping in mind school priorities for current and future years. Funds are concentrated on the maintenance and the improvement of the quality of students' learning. These are used to finance specific school projects.</p>	<p>c) Spending does not always reflect school planning priorities and educational objectives. Business plans are short-term and cater only for current needs. Costings for these plans are not always accurately carried out. Funds are not sufficiently concentrated on the improvement of the quality of students' learning or to finance specific projects.</p>

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 or Level 2 award.



Appendices and References

Appendix 1: Alternative Method for a Close View

A school could also take a close look at specific aspects of its work. For example, a school could take a close look at Homework and the process could be on the following lines:

1. Quality Indicators appropriate to monitoring and evaluating homework are chosen.

Key Area **Learning and Teaching**, theme b) in QI 3.1: *Quality of the Teaching Process* states the following:

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
b) Work given to the pupils in class and at home is related closely to the lessons delivered.	b) Class work and homework are in some way related to the lesson but tend to be composed of a series of tedious and repetitive exercises.

Area **Ethos**, theme a) in QI 6.2: *Involvement of Parents in their Children's Learning* is equally relevant and states that:

Level 4 Illustration	Level 2 Illustration
a) Parents involve themselves in their children's learning. They follow up any suggestions from the school, for example they supervise homework and support reading habits. They respond promptly to communication from school regarding their children.	a) Parents do not often involve themselves in their children's learning, through lack of interest, lack of awareness, or lack of encouragement. Suggestions from school are not often followed up at home.

2. Once the school selects the relevant Quality Indicators, it proceeds to discuss them and identify strengths and weaknesses.

3. Subsequently a school may follow these steps:

- A survey among parents is conducted by means of a questionnaire.
- Results are collated and analysed.
- Action plans are identified and approved by staff.
- A homework policy is drawn up (or reviewed if it already exists).

4. This area could become a priority in the School Development Plan.

Appendix 2: Publications

The publications listed below, available in schools, provide very useful material to support school development planning.

Abela, P. & Spiteri, A. (2000) *Bullying: a war to be won*, Resource Pack published by the Ministerial Committee for Good Behaviour in School and the Curriculum Department

Chetcuti, D. & Grima, G. (2001) *Portfolio Assessment*

Consultative Committee on Education (1995) *Tomorrow's Schools: Developing Effective Cultures*

Curriculum Department (2003) *Level Descriptors*

Educational Assessment Unit, Curriculum Department *Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination Report* (annual publication)

Educational Assessment Unit, Curriculum Department (2003) *Sample Compositions for Formative and Summative Assessment Purposes*

Guidance and Counselling Service, The Department of Students Services & International Relations (2002) *Description of Services Manual*

Guidance and Counselling Service, The Department of Students Services & International Relations (2003) *Student Services Booklet*

Guidance and Counselling Service, The Department of Students Services & International Relations *Tracer Study Report* (annual publication)

Inclusive Education Focus Group, National Curriculum Council (2002) *Noħolqu Skejjel Inkluzivi*

Ministry of Education Malta (1999) *Child Protection: Procedures for Schools*

Ministry of Education Malta (1999) *L-Imġiba Tajba fl-Iskejjel*

Ministry of Education Malta (1999) *National Minimum Curriculum: Creating the Future Together*

Ministry of Education Malta (2000) *National Curriculum on its Way*, Proceedings of Conference on the Implementation of the National Curriculum June 2000

Ministry of Education Malta (2001) *National Curriculum on its Way: Strategic Plan*, Report of the Steering Committee on the Implementation of the National Curriculum March 2001

Ministry of Education Malta (2001) *Tackling Substance Abuse*

Ministry of Education Malta (2002) *Good behaviour and discipline policy for schools*

Ministry of Education Malta (2002) *Guidelines for Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements*

Ministry of Education Malta (2002) *The Democratic School*, Proceedings of Keynote Conference September 2002, Department of Student Services and International Relations, Curriculum Department, British Council

Newsletters published periodically by various subject departments

Website: <http://www.education.gov.mt>

Appendix 3:

Background Material from Educational Literature

ACTION RESEARCH

“the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it”

(Elliott, 1991)

ASSESSMENT

Definition

“a wide range of methods for evaluating pupil performance and attainment including formal testing and examinations, practical and oral assessment, classroom based assessment carried out by teachers and portfolios.”

(Gipps, 1994)

“this is an attempt to analyse the learning that a child has achieved over a period of time as a result of classroom/teaching/learning situation. Assessment does not need to be based on a particular task, nor is it usually expressed as a mark or percentage. It may include a subjective opinion, by the teacher, of the achievement of a child in terms of attitude, participation, socialisation, general cognitive and physical development etc. Assessment may be expressed relatively in that the progress of a single child can be measured against her/his individual starting points and abilities rather than compared against the skills and abilities of other children in the class, as in traditional testing situation”

(*Teaching Children English*, Vale & Feutcun CUP)

“A general term embracing all methods customarily used to appraise performance of an individual pupil or group. It may refer to a broad appraisal including many sources of evidence and many aspects of a pupil’s knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes; or to a particular occasion or instrument. An assessment instrument may be any method or procedure, formal or informal, for producing information about pupils: for example, a written test paper, an interview schedule, a measurement task using equipment, a class quiz.”

(Black, 1998 quoted in Klenowski, 2002)

Main uses of assessment:

1. screening	which is the process of testing groups of children to identify individuals who are in need of special help
2. diagnosis	which involves using tests to identify individual children’s strengths and weaknesses
3. record keeping	to provide information for others
4. feedback	on performance about both the child’s progress and teacher’s success
5. certification	to provide a student with a qualification which signifies that he or she has reached a certain level of competence of knowledge
6. selection	into different institutions for further and higher education

(Gipps and Stobart, 1993)

Guidelines for Assessment

Assessment should be:

- based on positive achievement
- practical (can you manage it?)
- fit for the purpose (does the choice of assessment match the information you want?)
- valid (does it assess what you want it to? does it help you diagnose difficulties and identify next steps?)
- reliable (does it give a reliable result? would it be the same if you repeated it? is it consistent and fair?)
- part of a system which pulls together different sorts of information to support professional judgements

(Birmingham Advisory & Support Services, (1997) *Planning for Achievement With Assessment In Mind*, Training for the Advisory Service in Malta)

Gipps (1997) quoted in Klenowski (2002) has indicated that good assessment practice should:

- support learning and reflection, including formative assessment
- be open and connected to clear criteria rather than linked to comparative performance of others and
- include a range of assessment strategies so that all learners have a chance to perform well

Formative assessment

“... assessment ... undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provides information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes formative assessment when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet the needs.”

(Black, P. & William, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box*)

“Judgements about assessment should focus on how the day-to-day interventions with pupils, including the marking of work, are used to help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and make progress.”

(Ofsted Inspection Framework quoted in BASS (1997) *Planning for Achievement with Assessment in Mind*, Training for the Advisory Service in Malta)

“Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve and should avoid comparisons with other pupils.

For formative assessment to be productive, pupils should be trained in self-assessment so that they can understand the main purposes of their learning and thereby grasp what they need to achieve. Opportunities for pupils to express their understanding should be designed into any piece of teaching, for this will initiate the interaction whereby formative assessment aids learning.

The dialogue between pupils and a teacher should be thoughtful, reflective, focused to evoke and explore understanding, and conducted so that all pupils have an opportunity to think and to express their ideas.

Tests and homework exercises can be an invaluable guide to learning but the exercises must be clear and relevant to learning aims. The feedback on them should give each pupil guidance on how to improve, and each must be given opportunity and help to work at the improvement.”

(Black, P. & William, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box*)

Summative assessment

“the recording of the overall achievement of a pupil in a systematic way”

(Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office (1987) *National Curriculum*,
Report of Task Group on Assessment and Testing)

“Summative assessment implies an overview of past performance.”

“The purpose of summative assessment is to determine the extent to which the student’s work has met given criteria (William and Black, 1996). Transfer between different stages of schooling, between different institutions and between different teachers requires assessment information to be structured.”

(Klenowski, V. (2002) *Developing Portfolios For Learning And Assessment, Processes and Principles*)

Changing emphases in assessment

Shift from

Assessing knowledge
Assessing products
External end of course assessment
Written assessments only
Norm-referencing
Pass/fail summative assessment

Towards

Assessing skills and understandings
Assessing processes
Internal during course assessment
Use of a variety of methods and evidence
Criterion referencing
Formative identification of strengths and weaknesses and recording of positive achievement

(Source: Torrance (1997) quoted in Klenowski (2002))

A school assessment policy

A school policy on assessment may include guidelines on ways to:

- plan for everyday assessment
- plan for the statutory assessment at the end of year or course
- mark work and provide feedback to pupils
- record assessment
- use the outcomes from everyday assessment, from school-based tests and from national tests to identify strengths and weaknesses and to inform the planning of future teaching
- report to parents on pupils’ progress and on statutory assessment at the end of year/course;
- monitor and evaluate policies and procedures on assessment, recording and reporting.

(adapted from: SCAA, (1995) *Consistency in Teacher Assessment; Guidance for Schools*)

ATTAINMENT

“Although assessment has many facets, the essence is determining what a pupil is actually achieving in relation to expectations of attainment and drawing conclusions from the comparison.”

(SOED, (1991) *5-14 Guidelines: Assessment 5-14*)

“Self-evaluation using quality indicators encourages schools to ask questions about the attainment of pupils in order to find out if they are doing as well as they might and what could be done to improve their performance.”

(Source: The Scottish Office (1998) *Raising Standards – Setting Targets*)

Schools ask the questions:

- How are we doing?
- How are we doing in relation to national attainment levels

The main factors affecting pupil attainment include:

- quality of teaching
- level of expectations
- pace of progress through programmes of study
- monitoring of progress by promoted staff
- extent and nature of learning support
- early intervention

Key factors in raising attainment

High expectations

- Promote an ethos of achievement
- Set targets for the school, for groups and classes and for individuals
- Monitor progress towards these targets
- Encourage pupils to be independent in their learning

Quality of learning and teaching

- Identify clear aims for a block of teaching and share these with pupils
- Ensure adequate pace through the course
- Match tasks, activities and resources to attainment levels
- Focus on the development of skills and pace of work
- Provide opportunities for active learning and questioning and productive homework tasks

Assessment

- Ensure good assessment and recording practice, good quality feedback to pupils and clear identification of Next Steps in learning.
- Track pupils' progress using a range of assessment evidence to identify needs for support and challenge
- Transfer information about individual pupils and groups

School management

- Use whole school approaches led and supported by promoted staff (SMT)
- Identify staff development needs and provide for these
- Employ co-operative teaching by promoted staff where possible
- Monitor classroom practice and implementation of policies
- Monitor pupils' progress across the school and in every class
- Provide opportunities for liaison among teachers

Involvement of parents

- Provide information about the curriculum
- Support parents in assisting their children's learning

(Source: The Scottish Office (1998) ***Raising Standards – Setting Targets: Taking a closer look at 5-14 attainment in primary schools***)

AUDIT

“An evaluative summary of the school’s performance in the key areas of its work, related to its stated aims and the available resources. It should give a concise statement of the quality of education in the school, indicating particular strengths and weaknesses.

Audit is a term associated with a recurring process of evaluation of the effectiveness of a system or organisation. In the educational context it refers to the use of finances and resources and embraces both the more obviously quantifiable indicators of a school’s performance such as examination results, attendance and staying-on rates, and the more qualitative aspects of a school’s work.”

(Lightly adapted from The Scottish Office (1994) *Managing of Educational Resources: 5*)

CURRICULUM

Definition

“an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice.”

(Stenhouse, 1975)

“the learning experiences of students insofar as they are expressed or anticipated in educational goals and objectives, plans and designs for learning and the implementation of these plans and designs to school environments.”

(Skilbeck, 1984)

“all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out in groups or individually, inside or outside the school.” (a textbook definition)

“all the experiences of children for which the school should accept responsibility.”

(a textbook definition quoted in Walsh, P. (1997) *The Curriculum: context, design and development*)

Principles governing the curriculum

Breadth provides appropriate experiences to ensure the coverage of a sufficiently comprehensive range of areas of learning.

Balance ensures that appropriate time is allocated to each area of curricular activity and that provision is made for a variety of learning experiences.

Coherence requires the establishment of links across the various areas of learning so that pupils begin to make connections between one area of knowledge and skills and another.

Continuity ensures that learning builds on pupils’ previous experience and attainment.

Progression provides pupils with a series of challenging but attainable goals.

(Scottish Qualifications Authority)

DIFFERENTIATION

“Making provision for differentiation focuses on the needs of individual pupils so that they may be encouraged to reach the full extent of their capability and are given opportunities to demonstrate fully what they know, understand and can do.”

(Curriculum Council for Wales, 1993)

“Differentiation is necessary to identify and meet the needs of every individual pupil within the classroom setting. There is a necessity for differentiated tasks appropriate to individual pupil’s ability, aptitude and developmental stage. Meeting these needs is the major responsibility of all teachers.”

(Barthorpe and Visser, 1991)

“Differentiation is the process of adjusting teaching to meeting the learning needs of individual children. It’s purpose is to promote pupils’ success in learning. Differentiation is not an end in itself.”

(Lewis, 1992)

“I take differentiation to imply a set of judgements and procedures whose purpose is to accommodate differences in children’s abilities, aptitudes and needs.”

(Hart, 1992)

“Differentiation is the process of identifying, with learner, the most effective strategies for agreed targets.”

(Weston, 1992)

“Differentiation is synonymous with good teaching. It is as Colin McCall (1988) has described, how curriculum objectives, content, learning activities, teaching methods and resources are varied to cope with the range of experience of the pupils.”

(Moore, 1992)

“Differentiation is about matching what teachers want pupils to learn – the curriculum – and what pupils bring to their learning – their experiences, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills.”

(Falconer Hall, 1992)

(quoted in ‘*Differentiation in Practice*’, National Primary Centre, Westminster College, Oxford)

EVALUATION

“the process by which we attempt to gauge the value and effectiveness of any particular piece of educational activity”

(Kelly A.V. (1989) *The Curriculum Theory and Practice*)

“the process which describes, analyses and judges educational practices, institutions and policies with a view to their maintenance, development or alteration, and educational proposals with a view to their adoption, development or alteration”

(Kelly A.V. (1989) *The Curriculum Theory and Practice*)

“Evaluation is a global view of the achievement of the teaching and learning process over a period of time. For example: Analysis of the success or failure of a teaching approach, course book, pupil response, motivation etc.”

(Vale & Feutcun CUP, *Teaching Children English*)

The importance of evaluation in educational practice:

“Just as to will the end is to will also the means, so really to will to achieve something ongoing and recurrent is to will this check on how well we are going at it.”

(Walsh, P. 1993)

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Paradigm Shift in Leadership and Management

MANAGEMENT	⇒	LEADERSHIP
VERTICAL	⇒	SIDEWAYS
FIXED ROLES	⇒	FLEXIBLE ROLES
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY	⇒	SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
AUTOCRATIC	⇒	COLLABORATIVE
DELIVERING EXPERTISE	⇒	DEVELOPING EXPERTISE
STATUS	⇒	STATURE
EFFICIENCY	⇒	EFFECTIVENESS
CONTROL	⇒	RELEASE
POWER	⇒	EMPOWERMENT

(Whitaker, P. 1990)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A syllabus is converted into learning objectives by asking the questions:

- What do I want the children to learn?
- What key knowledge, skills and understandings do I want the children to acquire in the course of being taught this week?

(Birmingham Advisory & Support Services, (1997) *Planning for Achievement With Assessment In Mind*, Training for the Advisory Service in Malta)

LEARNING STYLES: The Seven Intelligences

“Effective or particular learning styles are based around what are known as ‘The Seven Intelligences’ or talents developed from work undertaken by Doctor Howard Gardner from Harvard University in America. His view is that we don’t just have an intelligence... but seven all of equal importance.

The Seven Intelligences

1. Linguistic Intelligence: the ability to talk or write well
2. Mathematical/Logical Intelligence: a talent for maths, logic and systems. An ability to deal well with numbers and to think things out logically
3. Visual/Spatial Intelligence: the ability to visualise how things will look in you mind
4. Musical Intelligence: the ability to create and interpret music
- 5 Bodily/Physical Intelligence: the intelligence is used when you dance, build or construct something
- 6 Inter-personal Intelligence: an ability to communicate well with others and naturally make people feel at ease
7. Intra-personal Intelligence: an ability to understand your own feelings and the relevance of what they are doing. Often such persons like to work independently”

(Source: Andrews, T. (1966) *Learning Styles*)

PORTFOLIO

“a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student’s efforts, progress or achievement in a given area(s). This collection must include student participation in the selection of portfolio content; the guidelines for selection; the criteria for judging merit; and evidence of student self-reflection.”

(Arter, J. & Spandel, V. (1992) *Using Portfolios of Student Work in Instruction and Assessment, Educational Measurement: issues and Practice*)

“a careful and conscious collection of a student’s work which provides a multidimensional picture of a student’s learning over time, accounts for both process and products, and includes the active participation of students in their own learning.”

(Jervis, K. (1996) *Eyes on the Child: Three Portfolio Stories*)

Types of portfolios

- individual pupil portfolios
- class portfolios
- whole school/year group portfolios

The purposes of the various portfolios often overlap.

(Birmingham Advisory & Support Services, (1997) *Planning for Achievement With Assessment In Mind*, Training for the Advisory Service in Malta)

QUALITY INDICATORS

Quality indicators generally are measures of those factors which influence effectiveness of pupils’ learning and over which schools have some control.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

“Quality assurance in a particular school depends on systematic professional evaluation of the achievement of clearly defined aims by the school’s own staff led by the headteacher. A school development plan should help headteachers organise such school self-evaluation and plan a programme of activities aimed at sustaining and improving aspects of the school’s work. It provides a means of organising relevant information about where the school is and where it is going to, so that the information can be easily understood by specialist and non-specialist alike. Formulation of a school development plan should encourage and assist headteachers to take accurate and systematic stock of the school’s current performance, to consider the most effective use of available finance and resources, to think and plan strategically for the phased introduction of new initiatives, to consolidate recent developments and to report on existing practice and performance.”

(The Scottish Office (1991) *The Role of School Development Plans in Managing School Effectiveness*)

TESTING

“Testing is a means of checking learning that has taken place with respect to a specified teaching content or input, often by means of a particular task. The results are usually concrete, expressed as a mark or percentage.”

(Vale & Feutcun CUP, *Teaching Children English*)

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