

# Looking at our School

An aid to self-evaluation  
in second-level schools



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION  
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | AND SCIENCE

INSPECTORATE  
Evaluation Support & Research Unit

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## Foreword

I am very pleased to welcome readers to this publication *“Looking at our School – an aid to self-evaluation in second-level schools”* which was prepared by the Evaluation Support and Research Unit (ESRU) of the Department of Education and Science Inspectorate.

*“Looking at our School”* is designed to assist the school community in reviewing and evaluating the work of their school. Its publication reflects the Inspectorate’s advisory remit under the *Education Act 1998* to promote excellence in all aspects of the functioning of schools and to provide advice and support to schools, teachers, boards of management, and parents on matters relating to educational provision.

Quality in schools is a matter for all concerned with, and involved in, the education of our children. Schools have a crucial role to play in ensuring that every aspect of their activity is carried out at a level commensurate with best practice, taking their particular context factors into account. Under the *Education Act 1998* a school is required to establish and maintain systems whereby the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations can be assessed. The School Development Planning Initiative provides support to second-level schools in the process of internal review and in formulating their school plans. This set of themes for self-evaluation has been prepared by the Inspectorate to further assist school communities in fulfilling their quality assurance obligations. I hope that they will make use of this publication as they engage with the process of looking critically at their own school. It will also provide a clear framework within which external evaluation of schools and centres for education by the Inspectorate will be carried out.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the education partners to the development of this publication. In the interest of improving its usefulness in school self-evaluation and development planning activities, I would welcome views from schools on any aspect of the document as they make use of it. The Inspectorate plans further publications in support of all those engaged in the work of schools, with a view to improving quality and standards in the education of our children and young people.

**Eamon Stack**  
Chief Inspector

May 2003



# Introduction

## Towards school improvement through internal review and self-evaluation

### Context

The *Education Act 1998* clearly delineates the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Science with regard to quality assurance within the education system generally. Under Section 7(2)(b) of the Act the Minister is required

*“... to monitor and assess the quality ... and effectiveness of the education system provided in the State by recognised schools and centres for education, ...”*

Ireland, along with other European countries, is adopting a model of quality assurance that emphasises school development planning through internal school review and self-evaluation, with the support of external evaluation carried out by the Inspectorate.

### The school's role in quality assurance

The maintenance of the quality of education in individual second-level schools is a major aim of education policy in Ireland. Schools themselves have a key role in the task of identifying existing good practice as well as areas for further development.

The centrality of the school's role with regard to evaluation and development is clear from the following statement:

*“... schools are complex institutions in which change can only come about through internal acceptance by staff and management both of the school's strengths and of the need for action in those areas of activity where further development is desirable.”*

Report on the 1998/1999 Pilot Project on Whole School Evaluation, p.49

In order that second-level schools may engage effectively in quality assurance activity, it is necessary that school management and staff have access to instruments and methodologies that will assist them, through internal review, self-evaluation and planning, in achieving those standards of quality to which they aspire. The evaluation themes that follow are designed to provide schools with a basis for evaluating their own performance and for identifying areas for further development.



## School context factors and the self-evaluation process

As well as operating in a national context, each second-level school works within a very specific local context. Local factors that affect schools include:

- the size, location and catchment area of the school
- socio-economic circumstances of the students and community, including local employment availability and patterns
- students' special needs
- physical, material and human resources available to the school.

These context factors serve as a backdrop for the work of the school, and any self-evaluation by the school should take them very much into account. As well as being important for internal review purposes, school context considerations are also central to all other stages of the school planning process.

## Structure of the evaluation themes

This document presents a set of themes through which a second-level school may undertake a review and self-evaluation of its own performance. These themes encompass five broad dimensions, or **areas**, of the operation of a school, as follows:

1. school management
2. school planning
3. curriculum provision
4. learning and teaching in subjects
5. support for students.

Each of these areas is divided into a number of **aspects**, which represent the different activities collectively constituting the **area** of the school's operation that is to be evaluated. The **aspects** are further broken down into **components** for each of which a number of **themes** have been identified as a basis for evaluation. The extent to which the themes are relevant to a school will be influenced by the context factors which apply to the school, as outlined in the previous section.

## Using the themes in a self-evaluation context

These evaluation themes are designed to assist second-level school management and staff in the process of making professional judgements regarding the operation of the school. It is acknowledged that, while these evaluation themes are extensive, there are other aspects of its functioning that the school may wish to evaluate. In such cases, the school may wish to draw up its own set of themes.

When engaging in a self-evaluation exercise, a second-level school may decide to focus on an **area**, an **aspect** or a **component** of its activity. In making this decision, the school is guided to an appropriate range of **evaluation themes** that can be used as a guide in judging or measuring its own performance. In order to be in a position to make judgements, the school will gather information in relation to the theme or themes under evaluation. Having engaged in a process of collecting and analysing this information and evidence, the school will then be in a position to make a statement or statements indicating its own performance in the relevant component, aspect or area of its activity. Cumulatively, such statements will be an invaluable source of information and perspective in subsequent school development planning tasks and in the context of external evaluation carried out by the Inspectorate.

When considering how the school is performing under any theme, it may be useful to think of a quality continuum consisting of a number of reference points representing stages of development in the improvement process. A commonly used continuum (with variations) consists of four levels – **significant strengths (uniformly strong)**, **strengths outweigh weaknesses (more strengths than weaknesses)**, **weaknesses outweigh strengths (more weaknesses than strengths)**, **significant/major weaknesses (uniformly weak)**. An acknowledgement by the school of its position on such a continuum in relation to a number of themes will assist in the process of identifying its strengths and those areas of its operation where it considers further development and improvement is necessary.

## Principles of equality

In accordance with the *Education Act 1998*, it is the policy of the Department of Education and Science to promote and support principles of equality, including gender equality, in second-level education. Under Section 9(e) of the Act a school is required to

*“promote equality of opportunity for both male and female students and staff of the school.”*

The school evaluation themes in this document reflect principles of equality in education and will be of assistance to second-level schools in ensuring that school policies and practices meet equality requirements, including those under Section 7(2) of the *Equal Status Act 2000*. They will, therefore, be especially helpful in the planning, implementation and monitoring of progress on equality issues throughout the school.

## **Conclusion**

It is intended that these evaluation themes will be continually updated to reflect changes in second-level schools and in the education system generally. In this way they will continue to be of assistance and relevance to schools in their internal review and self-evaluation activities as part of the school development planning and school improvement process.

**xii** Areas, Aspects and Components of second-level school activity

Summary

| AREA 1   | Aspects  | Components  |
|--|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quality of school management</b></p> | <p><b>Aspect A</b><br/> <b>Characteristic spirit of the school</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Statement of the characteristic spirit of the school</i></li> <li><i>ii. Relationships and communication within the school community</i></li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>Aspect B</b><br/> <b>School ownership and management</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Role of patrons, trustees and owners</i></li> <li><i>ii. Composition, role and functioning of the board of management</i></li> <li><i>iii. Operation of the board of management</i></li> <li><i>iv. Board of management's policies and procedures</i></li> </ul> |
|  | <p><b>Aspect C</b><br/> <b>In-school management</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Management of staff</i></li> <li><i>ii. Management of students</i></li> <li><i>iii. Management of relationships with parents and the wider community</i></li> <li><i>iv. Management of resources</i></li> <li><i>v. Self-evaluation</i></li> </ul>               |

| AREA 2                     | Aspects  | Components   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Quality of school planning | <b>Aspect A</b><br>The school plan                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Planning process</li> <li>ii. Content of the school plan</li> </ul>  |
|                            | <b>Aspect B</b><br>Implementation of the school plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Implementation and impact of the school plan</li> <li>ii. Monitoring and evaluation of the school plan, leading to review</li> </ul> |

| AREA 3                          | Aspects   | Components  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Quality of curriculum provision | <b>Aspect A</b><br>Curriculum planning and organisation                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Curriculum provision</li> <li>ii. Breadth and balance across programmes and subjects</li> <li>iii. Deployment of staff and timetabling</li> </ul>                                       |
|                                 | <b>Aspect B</b><br>Co-curricular and extra-curricular provision                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Activities that support and enhance learning (co-curricular activities)</li> <li>ii. Extra-curricular opportunities</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | <b>Aspect C</b><br>Arrangements for students' choice of subjects and programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Subject and curriculum options</li> <li>ii. Student choice of subject and level</li> <li>iii. Provision of information, support and advice</li> <li>iv. Parental involvement</li> </ul> |

| AREA 4   | Aspects  | Components   |
|--|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quality of learning and teaching in subjects</b></p> | <p><b>Aspect A</b><br/><b>Planning and preparation</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Planning of work</i></li> <li><i>ii. Planning for resources</i></li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>Aspect B</b><br/><b>Teaching and learning</b></p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Methodology</i></li> <li><i>ii. Classroom management</i></li> <li><i>iii. Classroom atmosphere</i></li> <li><i>iv. Learning</i></li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>Aspect C</b><br/><b>Assessment and achievement</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Assessment modes and outcomes</i></li> <li><i>ii. Record-keeping and reporting</i></li> <li><i>iii. Student engagement in subject</i></li> <li><i>iv. Overall student achievement in subject</i></li> </ul> |

| AREA 5  | Aspects   | Components   |
|---|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quality of support for students</b></p> | <p><b>Aspect A</b><br/>Provision for students with special educational needs</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Principles underlying provision for students with special educational needs</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Provision for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>ii. students with general and specific learning disabilities</i></li> <li><i>iii. exceptionally able and talented students</i></li> <li><i>iv. students with physical and sensory disabilities</i></li> <li><i>v. students with behaviour problems or emotional disturbance</i></li> <li><i>vi. students with specific speech and language disorder</i></li> <li><i>vii. students with autistic spectrum disorder</i></li> </ul> |
|   | <p><b>Aspect B1</b><br/>Provision for students from disadvantaged backgrounds</p> <p><b>Aspect B2</b><br/>Provision for students from minority groups</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Principles underlying provision and support for students</i></li> <li><i>ii. School's provision and support for students</i></li> </ul>   |
|   | <p><b>Aspect C</b><br/>Guidance</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Guidance policy and organisation of programme</i></li> <li><i>ii. Implementation of guidance policy</i></li> </ul>  |
|   | <p><b>Aspect D</b><br/>Social, personal and health education</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Policy and provision</i></li> <li><i>ii. Implementation</i></li> </ul>  |
|   | <p><b>Aspect E</b><br/>Pastoral care</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Pastoral care provision: policy, organisation and implementation</i></li> <li><i>ii. Provision for co-operation between school, home and community</i></li> <li><i>iii. Involvement of students in the operation of the school</i></li> </ul>   |

## Looking at our School



# **Themes for School Self-Evaluation at Second Level**

## Looking at our School

# **AREA 1**

**QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

## Aspect A Characteristic spirit of the school

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="292 299 375 364">i</p> <p data-bbox="223 505 447 591"><b>Statement of the characteristic spirit of the school</b></p>             | <p data-bbox="509 291 1860 349">Provision by the patrons or trustees or owners of a statement of the religious and/or educational philosophy (founding purpose) of the school, and the availability of this statement to all members of the school community</p> <p data-bbox="509 402 1759 459">Provision by the patrons or trustees or owners of a statement of the characteristic spirit of the school, and the availability of this statement to all members of the school community</p> <p data-bbox="509 512 1850 570">The level of awareness among members of the school community of the founding purpose and characteristic spirit of the school</p> <p data-bbox="509 592 1783 619">The extent to which the school's founding purpose and characteristic spirit are reflected in its mission statement</p> <p data-bbox="509 671 1798 728">Opportunities for students, staff and the school community to acquire insights into the values and beliefs that are inherent in the characteristic spirit and founding purpose of the school</p> <p data-bbox="509 781 1852 839">The link made by school management between the activities and policies of the school and its characteristic spirit and founding purpose</p> |
| <p data-bbox="292 1008 375 1073">ii</p> <p data-bbox="205 1100 466 1186"><b>Relationships and communication within the school community</b></p> | <p data-bbox="509 1000 1858 1058">The extent to which relationships within the school and throughout the school community are characterised by mutual respect, openness, and concern</p> <p data-bbox="509 1111 1868 1168">The effectiveness of communication within the school and throughout the school community and how such communication reflects the school's characteristic spirit and the values and principles outlined in the mission statement</p>  |

## Aspect B School ownership and management

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>i</b></p> <p><b>Role of patrons, trustees and owners</b></p>                          | <p>The role of patrons or trustees or owners of the school in the governance of the school and their commitment to the effective provision of education in the school</p> <p>The level of co-operation between patrons or trustees or owners of the school and the board of management in the governance of the school</p>  |
| <p><b>ii</b></p> <p><b>Composition, role and functioning of the board of management</b></p> | <p>The extent to which the board of management functions in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Education Act 1998</i>, and Department of Education and Science policies, rules, and directives</p> <p>Communication of the role and responsibilities of the board of management to all members of the school community, and the understanding of that role and those responsibilities among the school community</p> <p>Participation of members of the board of management in training for their role</p> <p>The extent to which the board's decision-making in the areas of policy, planning, resources and staffing is characterised by openness, accountability, clarity of communications, and sharing of responsibility</p> <p>The extent to which continuous self-review is integral to the practice of the board of management and incorporates the views of all groups within the school community</p> |

## Aspect B School ownership and management

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">iii</p> <p><i>Operation of the board of management</i></p> | <p>The effectiveness of the board of management in upholding and supporting the characteristic spirit of the school</p> <p>The quality of partnership and support in the relationship between the board of management and in-school management</p> <p>The effectiveness of board of management procedures in ensuring meaningful communication with parents in all aspects of the school's operation</p> <p>The level of awareness of the board of management of the school's accommodation and resource needs</p> <p>Use by the board of management of agreed rules and procedures in appointing and promoting staff</p> <p>The extent to which the board of management maintains accounts in accordance with statutory requirements and the regulations of the Department of Education and Science, the quality of procedures for the management of the school's financial resources and the efficiency of its expenditure planning</p> |

## Aspect B School ownership and management

### Component

### Themes for self-evaluation

iv

#### **Board of management's policies and procedures**

Fulfilment by the board of management of its statutory obligation in arranging for the preparation of a school plan

The development and documentation by the board of management of policies in relation to the provision of appropriate resources for the education of all students, especially those with a disability or other special educational needs

The extent to which the board of management of the school has developed, documented and implemented an environmental policy statement on the management of material and energy resources in the school

The role of the board of management, in co-operation with in-school management, in ensuring that school policies on the admission and participation of students are prepared and published, with particular reference to the admission policy of the school in respect of students with special educational needs, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from minority groups

The development and documentation of policies on gender and other equality issues

The role of the board of management in ensuring that all school policies accord with the requirements of the *Equal Status Act 2000*

The development and documentation by the board of management of a poverty-proofing statement and strategies to cater for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and from minority groups, as appropriate

The role of the board of management in preparing strategies and measures to ensure school attendance as required by the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*

The role of the board of management of the school in preparing a code of behaviour as required by the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*

Provision for systematic review and updating of policies and procedures

## Aspect C In-school management

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="292 303 375 364"><b>i</b></p> <p data-bbox="215 692 457 722"><b>Management of staff</b></p> | The extent to which in-school management involves staff in decision-making, through delegation of responsibility where appropriate                                       |
|   | The extent to which in-school management actively fosters a partnership approach with staff in agreeing on and achieving the aims of the school                          |
|   | The effectiveness, clarity and openness of systems of communication between in-school management and other school staff  |
|   | The extent to which measures are in place to resolve conflict within the staff in a fair and equitable manner  |
|   | The extent to which staff are encouraged and facilitated to participate in appropriate professional development  |
|   | Awareness among staff of the management structure of the school and the schedule of duties assigned to in-school management  |
|   | The effectiveness of in-school management in ensuring that responsibilities delegated to post-holders and other school staff are carried out effectively and efficiently |
|   | The extent to which agreed procedures are followed in assigning duties to post-holders   |
|   | The relevance and clarity of duties assigned to post-holders   |
| Policy and practice in the monitoring and review of duties assigned to post-holders                       |  |



## Aspect C In-school management

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>ii</b></p> <p><b>Management of students</b></p>  | <p>The admission policy of the school, its approval by the board of management and the manner of its application and implementation</p> <p>The school's code of behaviour, its preparation and approval by the board, circulation to parents and its application</p> <p>The extent to which positive relationships are promoted between students and school staff</p> <p>The account taken of the economic, cultural and social circumstances of families and the school's actions in ensuring that students are treated in a non-discriminatory manner in accordance with the <i>Equal Status Act 2000</i></p> <p>Compliance with statutory requirements in the day-to-day management of students</p>  |
| <p><b>iii</b></p> <p><b>Management of relationships with parents and the wider community</b></p> | <p>The quality of partnership with parents, and the degree to which the school facilitates contact between parents and teachers</p> <p>The extent to which management of the school promotes and facilitates the involvement of parents in the school, and the quality of the flow of information between the school and the parents of each student</p> <p>The frequency of parent-teacher meetings, and the extent to which the school facilitates parents to attend</p> <p>Procedures by which individual parents can obtain access to school records relating to their own children and the awareness of these procedures among parents</p> <p>Procedures for facilitating effective collaboration between the school and outside agencies such as local organisations, employers, health boards, and second-level or third-level institutions</p> <p>Liaison with other educational institutions to facilitate induction, progression and transfer of students, including students with special educational needs</p> <p>The extent to which the school engages in regular review, on a partnership basis, of its relationship with parents and the wider school community, including outside agencies</p> <p>The extent of awareness by parents of the procedures which exist, if difficulties arise, for processing complaints</p> |

## Aspect C In-school management

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="292 314 375 364">iv</p> <p data-bbox="244 571 430 621"><b>Management of resources</b></p> | <p data-bbox="513 293 1850 349">The effectiveness of policy and practice in the deployment of members of the teaching staff so as to achieve the aims of the school</p> <p data-bbox="513 405 1773 429">Compliance with Department of Education and Science requirements in relation to material and staff resources</p> <p data-bbox="513 480 1856 536">The effectiveness of the school's application of additional material and staff resources to meet the need for which they were supplied</p> <p data-bbox="513 591 1860 647">The extent to which attention is paid to the responsible, efficient and economic use of materials and resources in order to minimise waste, conserve non-renewable energy, and reduce negative impacts on the environment</p> <p data-bbox="513 701 1504 725">The quality of accommodation, other material resources and standards of maintenance</p> <p data-bbox="513 780 1839 870">The extent to which in-school management seeks the necessary resources, both material and personnel, for all students, including students with a disability or special educational need, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from minority groups</p> |
| <p data-bbox="292 958 375 1008">v</p> <p data-bbox="244 1034 422 1058"><b>Self-evaluation</b></p>       | <p data-bbox="513 954 1856 978">The degree to which ongoing self-evaluation leading to improvement is integral to the work of in-school management</p>  |

# **AREA 2**

**QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING**

## Aspect A The school plan

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="292 303 375 364"><b>i</b></p> <p data-bbox="236 505 437 530"><b><i>Planning process</i></b></p> | <p data-bbox="513 293 1856 349">The involvement and collaboration of patrons or trustees or owners, school management, teaching staff, support staff, students, parents, and the wider school community in the development of the school plan</p> <p data-bbox="513 405 1473 430">The influence of the characteristic spirit of the school on the school planning process</p> <p data-bbox="513 485 1862 541">The extent to which the school planning process identifies priorities for development, taking school context factors into account</p> <p data-bbox="513 595 1549 621">The account taken in the planning process of health, safety and environmental implications</p> <p data-bbox="513 675 1411 701">The process of monitoring, evaluation, review, and updating of the school plan</p> |

## Aspect A The school plan

### Component

### Themes for self-evaluation

ii

#### *Content of the school plan*

Provision within the school plan of a clear vision for the school, such as would be contained in a mission statement, and the extent to which aims and priorities are outlined for the school

The extent to which the school's planning process identifies whole school approaches in relation to teaching and learning

The policy statements contained in the school plan, how comprehensive these statements are and the degree to which these policies are in line with statutory requirements, Department of Education and Science circulars, or other guidelines on best practice

The inclusion of the school's safety statement in the school plan and the level of awareness of the statement among members of the school community

The extent to which the school plan contains action plans that incorporate targets for development with defined time-scales and that take account of available resources

The assignment of staff roles and responsibilities in each action plan

Procedures for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the school plan and the documentation of those procedures

## Aspect B Implementation of the school plan

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="292 303 375 364">i</p> <p data-bbox="244 474 430 560"><b>Implementation and impact of the school plan</b></p>                       | <p data-bbox="513 293 1815 349">The extent and quality of involvement of teachers and members of the board of management in implementing the school plan</p> <p data-bbox="513 402 1856 458">Communication between the school and parents (and students where appropriate) regarding the content of the school plan</p> <p data-bbox="513 511 1342 538">Procedures for implementing the action plans outlined in the school plan</p> <p data-bbox="513 591 1265 618">The extent of implementation of action plans from the school plan</p> <p data-bbox="513 671 1777 698">The degree to which the school is meeting the targets contained in the action plans already being implemented</p> <p data-bbox="513 751 1862 778">The degree of initiative and corporate responsibility demonstrated by the school staff in implementing the action plans</p>                   |
| <p data-bbox="292 893 375 954">ii</p> <p data-bbox="236 1075 437 1191"><b>Monitoring and evaluation of the school plan, leading to review</b></p> | <p data-bbox="513 879 1529 905">Provision for systematic and regular monitoring of the implementation of the school plan</p> <p data-bbox="513 958 1839 1014">The degree of collaboration and consultation, as appropriate, between in-school management and teaching staff and members of the school community in the monitoring process</p> <p data-bbox="513 1067 1862 1094">The manner in which evaluation of the achievement of the school plan objectives takes place and the extent of this process</p> <p data-bbox="513 1147 1752 1174">The manner in which the school plan is reviewed following an evaluation of the achievement of its objectives</p> <p data-bbox="513 1227 1842 1283">The extent to which staff professional development needs are identified and addressed following the monitoring and review of the implementation of the school plan</p> |

# **AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CURRICULUM PROVISION**

## Aspect A Curriculum planning and organisation

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>i</b></p> <p><b><i>Curriculum provision</i></b></p> | <p>The level of accord between the curriculum of the school and the curriculum policy and objectives set out in the school plan</p>   |
|   | <p>The extent to which the school’s curricular planning is referenced to the gender equality and poverty-proofing policies of the school</p>  |
|   | <p>The importance and attention given to addressing educational disadvantage in the planning of the school’s curriculum</p>   |
|   | <p>The process of school curriculum review – how often, and in what manner – as part of the school planning process</p>   |
|   | <p>The extent to which the process for review and determination of the school’s curriculum is characterised by openness and partnership among the members of the school community</p> |
|   | <p>The extent to which curriculum-related documents and materials are readily available and disseminated promptly to relevant school staff</p>  |




## Aspect A Curriculum planning and organisation

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="296 308 375 364">ii</p> <p data-bbox="219 571 457 659"><b><i>Breadth and balance across programmes and subjects</i></b></p> | <p data-bbox="515 293 1245 319">The breadth and balance of the curriculum offered by the school</p> <p data-bbox="515 371 1804 427">The adequacy of the range of programmes and subjects offered by the school in meeting the needs, interests and abilities of students</p> <p data-bbox="515 480 1798 536">The consideration given to the requirements and interests of the students as a factor in determining the range of subjects, levels and programmes offered</p> <p data-bbox="515 589 1819 645">The relative influence and involvement of parents, teachers and students themselves in determining the needs and interests of students</p> <p data-bbox="515 698 1835 790">Programmes of learning support available to students to overcome difficulties in various learning areas; the school's ability to meet the learning-support needs of all students; the adequacy of policy and resources for the school's learning-support provision</p> <p data-bbox="515 843 1860 899">The effectiveness of the school's response to educational disadvantage among its students through use of Department of Education and Science curriculum initiatives</p> |

## Aspect A Curriculum planning and organisation

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="292 303 375 364">iii</p> <p data-bbox="219 505 453 560"><b><i>Deployment of staff and timetabling</i></b></p> | <p data-bbox="513 293 1856 319">Meeting the needs and choices of students as a consideration in drawing up the school timetable and in deploying staff</p> <p data-bbox="513 371 1649 397">The extent to which the school timetable facilitates student choice within and between subject areas</p> <p data-bbox="513 450 1856 506">In deploying staff to implement the school's curriculum effectively, the use made of their strengths in the area of skills, knowledge, and interests</p> <p data-bbox="513 559 975 585">The class time allocated for each subject</p> <p data-bbox="513 638 1183 663">Access by the school community to the school timetable(s)</p> |




## Aspect B Co-curricular and extra-curricular provision

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <br><br><b>Activities that support and enhance learning (co-curricular activities)</b> | The extent to which management and staff of the school are proactive in involving students, including those with a special educational need or from disadvantaged backgrounds or from minority groups, in activities to support and enhance learning |
|   | The range of activities provided in support of learning in subjects  |
|   | The extent to which interdisciplinary project work as well as project work within subject or curriculum areas is encouraged and facilitated by both teachers and management  |
|   | Level of participation by students and teachers in projects such as fieldwork, competitions, and mini-companies  |
|   | The fostering and maintenance of links with outside agencies to augment the learning experience of students  |
|   | The encouragement given to students to contribute to the local community and how that is facilitated   |

## Aspect B Co-curricular and extra-curricular provision

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|--|--|
| <p data-bbox="292 303 375 364">ii</p> <p data-bbox="244 474 426 530"><i>Extra-curricular opportunities</i></p> | <p data-bbox="513 293 1696 319">The range of opportunities provided by the school to enable students to develop personally and socially</p> <p data-bbox="513 371 1835 427">The extent to which the school involves all students, including those with a special educational need and those from disadvantaged backgrounds or from minority groups, in its programme of extra-curricular activities</p> <p data-bbox="513 480 1411 506">The range of extra-curricular cultural, aesthetic and sporting activities available</p> <p data-bbox="513 559 1835 615">The manner in which outside agencies, where appropriate, are employed to enhance the school's provision of extra-curricular activities</p> <p data-bbox="513 668 1871 724">The school's promotion of after-school and holiday-time activities as part of its strategy to identify and support students at risk</p> |

## Aspect C Arrangement for students' choice of subjects and programmes

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <br><b>Subject and curriculum options</b>                | The relative value placed on the needs and interests of the student cohort, organisational needs of the school, or previous practice in determining options within the school's curriculum, and the extent to which those options are reviewed |
|   | The extent to which students are consulted when curriculum options (subjects and programmes) are being prepared  |
|   | The extent to which the school promotes the take-up of non-traditional subjects by either sex  |
| <br><b>Student choice of subject and level</b>           | The degree to which the school itself decides what programmes and subjects students take and the degree to which students themselves are encouraged and facilitated to choose their subjects and levels within subjects                        |
|   | The extent of provision for students to alter their choice of subject or level   |
| <br><b>Provision of information, support and advice</b> | The extent and quality of information available to students to assist them in their subject choices  |
|   | The extent and quality of guidance and advice provided to students to assist them in choosing programmes, subjects and levels within subjects  |
|   | The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by the school to assist students in making choices of subjects and programmes  |

## Aspect C Arrangement for students' choice of subjects and programmes

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|--|---|
| <p data-bbox="292 303 375 364">iv</p> <p data-bbox="209 439 464 470"><i>Parental involvement</i></p> | <p data-bbox="513 288 1835 349">The extent to which parents are both informed and consulted in determining the range of subjects and programmes available to their children</p> <p data-bbox="513 402 1846 462">The range and quality of information and support available to parents, including parents of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to assist them in making informed judgements on the choices available to their children</p> <p data-bbox="513 515 1866 576">The degree to which the school supports active involvement by parents when their children are choosing programmes, subjects and levels</p> |

# **AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF LEARNING AND  
TEACHING IN SUBJECTS**

## Aspect A Planning and preparation

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>i</b></p> <p><i>Planning of work</i></p>        | <p>Long-term planning for the teaching of the subject and its consistency with the school plan</p> <p>The extent to which planning documents describe the work to be completed within the subject</p> <p>The degree to which planning is in line with syllabus requirements and guidelines</p> <p>The extent to which planning provides for differentiated approaches to curriculum coverage in accordance with the spectrum of student ability, needs, and interests</p> <p>The extent to which provision for corrective action for learning problems or difficulties is an integral part of the planning of work in the subject</p> <p>Evidence of cross-curricular planning and integration</p> <p>The provision for monitoring, review and evaluation in the planning of work in the subject</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ii</b></p> <p><i>Planning for resources</i></p> | <p>The inclusion in planning of an outline of the material and other resources required to support the teaching aims and objectives</p> <p>The level and quality of provision made for health and safety requirements in the use of materials or specialist equipment, so as to provide a safe learning and teaching environment</p>   |



## Aspect B Teaching and learning

### Component

### Themes for self-evaluation

i

#### *Methodology*

The appropriateness of teaching strategies and methodologies employed and the account taken of the range of student abilities, needs, and interests

The extent to which lessons are structured so that content and pace are appropriate to the class and to the time available

The degree of variation in teaching strategies and methodologies used in the subject

The effectiveness with which teaching strategies and methodologies in the subject are used

The appropriateness of the range of professional and material resources used to support the teaching of the subject

The account taken of best practice in relation to health and safety and environmental requirements in the teaching of the subject

ii

#### *Classroom management*



The nature and effectiveness of classroom management, and the manner by which discipline is maintained so as to be conducive to safe, orderly and participative learning

The extent to which classroom management ensures that students are challenged and motivated by the teaching and learning activities

## Aspect B Teaching and learning

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>iii</b></p> <p><b><i>Classroom atmosphere</i></b></p> | <p>The quality of classroom atmosphere as it impacts on students’ sense of belonging and security, the nature of classroom interactions and levels of support for learning</p> <p>The physical environment of the classroom in terms of suitability, attractiveness and stimulation for learning and teaching</p> <p>The balance between teacher-focused classroom interaction and the level of encouragement for student contributions to the learning process; the quality of interaction that takes place</p> <p>The standard of students’ behaviour and their response to the code of behaviour</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>iv</b></p> <p><b><i>Learning</i></b></p>              | <p>How students work, and their levels of interest and commitment to the task in hand</p> <p>How actively and independently students engage in learning, and how the quality of their understanding is reflected in their questioning and in their responses to questions</p> <p>Students’ readiness to participate, and their willingness to co-operate with their peers and with teachers in their learning</p> <p>The extent to which the learning that is taking place in the subject is at the level and pace appropriate to the class group</p> <p>The level of independence, responsibility and perseverance shown by students in the completion of their work</p> |

## Aspect C Assessment and achievement

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <br><b>Assessment modes and outcomes</b> | The range of assessment modes used to assess student achievement and progress in the subject  |
|   | The match between assessment modes used and the aims and the objectives of the teaching and learning programme  |
|   | The degree to which assessment procedures are systematically administered   |
|   | The relationship between the outcomes of assessment and the planning, evaluation and modification of teaching strategies  |
|   | How effectively and sensitively assessment outcomes are used to assist students to reflect on their learning  |
|   | The extent to which assessment outcomes are used sensitively and effectively to assist and improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning programme                     |
| <br><b>Record-keeping and reporting</b>  | The manner in which the school records assessment outcomes and the regard given to accessibility and ease of use in that process  |
|   | The level and manner of monitoring of student progress and the extent to which records of progress are shared with other professionals  |
|   | In the case of students with special educational needs, the effectiveness of the liaison between staff, parents and other professionals   |
|   | Provision of written reports to parents, giving a profile of student achievement in the subject in qualitative and quantitative terms that are easily understood and meaningful |
|   | The degree to which parents are facilitated and encouraged to respond to school reports   |

## Aspect C Assessment and achievement

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>iii</b></p> <p><b><i>Student engagement in subject</i></b></p>         | <p>The extent to which students have skills and knowledge in the subject appropriate to their age, ability, and class level</p> <p>The extent to which students demonstrate a level of understanding of the concepts of the subject that is appropriate to their age, ability, and class level</p> <p>The level of enthusiasm shown by students for the subject and the degree to which they demonstrate a curiosity and a desire to further their knowledge</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>iv</b></p> <p><b><i>Overall student achievement in subject</i></b></p> | <p>The extent to which students' results in regular assessments and/or examinations in the subject reflect levels of achievement commensurate with ability and general expectation</p> <p>The extent to which student achievement in the subject is regularly evaluated in comparison with national norms</p>  |

# **AREA 5**

**QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

## Aspect A Provision for students with special educational needs

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>i</b></p> <p><b><i>Principles underlying provision for students with special educational needs</i></b></p> | <p>The extent to which the school has documented appropriate policies, which are consistent with present statutory requirements, on the admission, enrolment and participation of students with special educational needs</p>  |
|  | <p>In line with the characteristic spirit of the school, the level of encouragement and facilitation afforded students with special educational needs to participate fully in the life of the school</p>   |
|  | <p>How well the school adheres to appropriate practice in relation to the social and educational integration of students with special educational needs</p>  |
|  | <p>The degree to which the school seeks the required resources (including accommodation, staff and material) to meet the physical and educational requirements of students with special educational needs</p>  |
|  | <p>The extent and manner of the school's identification of and provision for the educational requirements of students with special educational needs</p>   |
|  | <p>The provision made by the school for professional development of all staff members in the area of special educational needs, including staff members not teaching students with special educational needs</p>   |
|  | <p>The effectiveness of the school's procedures for liaising with other agencies (for example, the National Educational Psychological Service, health boards and the National Educational Welfare Board) in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs</p> |

## Aspect A Provision for students with special educational needs

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">ii</p> <p><b><i>Provision for students who present with general and specific learning disabilities</i></b></p> | <p>The extent to which students who present with mild, moderate, severe or specific learning disability are encouraged and facilitated in participating in the life of the school</p> <p>How effectively and sensitively the results of formative assessment of academic progress and personal development are used in planning suitable learning programmes to meet the needs of students who present with general and specific learning disabilities</p> <p>The level and quality of liaison with parents and appropriate external agencies in meeting the needs of students who present with general and specific learning disabilities</p> <p>The targeting and use of additional resources provided for students who present with general and specific learning disabilities</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">iii</p> <p><b><i>Provision for exceptionally able and talented students</i></b></p>                            | <p>The extent to which students who are exceptionally able and talented are encouraged and facilitated in participating in the life of the school</p> <p>The level and quality of liaison with parents and appropriate external agencies in meeting the needs of students who are exceptionally able and talented</p> <p>The level of emotional and social supports available to students who are exceptionally able and talented</p>   |

## Aspect A Provision for students with special educational needs

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>iv</b></p> <p><b><i>Provision for students who present with physical and sensory disabilities</i></b></p>          | <p>The extent to which students who present with physical and sensory disabilities are encouraged and facilitated in participating in the life of the school</p> <p>The school's arrangements to ensure that students who present with physical and sensory disabilities are facilitated in taking the full curriculum of the school</p> <p>The nature and quality of liaison with parents and appropriate external agencies in meeting the needs of students who present with physical and sensory disabilities</p>                              |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>v</b></p> <p><b><i>Provision for students who present with behaviour problems or emotional disturbance</i></b></p> | <p>The extent to which students who present with behaviour problems or emotional disturbance are encouraged and facilitated in participating in the life of the school</p> <p>The school's efforts in meeting the needs of students who present with behaviour problems or emotional disturbance and the level and quality of support available to them</p> <p>The nature and quality of liaison with parents and appropriate external agencies in meeting the needs of students who present with behaviour problems or emotional disturbance</p> |



## Aspect A Provision for students with special educational needs

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="292 314 375 364">vi</p> <p data-bbox="188 571 486 692"><i>Provision for students who present with specific speech and language disorder</i></p> | <p data-bbox="499 299 1881 349">The extent to which students who present with specific speech and language disorder are encouraged and facilitated in participating in the life of the school</p>   |
|   | <p data-bbox="499 412 1881 462">The school's contact with the appropriate external agencies, including speech and language services, in responding to the needs of students who present with specific speech and language disorder</p>  |
|   | <p data-bbox="499 518 1881 568">The school's provision of appropriate resources for students who present with specific speech and language disorder and how effectively these resources are used</p>  |
|   | <p data-bbox="499 624 1881 674">The extent to which outcomes of formative assessment are used in planning suitable learning programmes to meet the needs of students who present with specific speech and language disorder</p>   |
|   | <p data-bbox="499 730 1881 780">The school's policy and practice in relation to the social and educational integration of students who present with specific speech and language disorder</p>   |
|   | <p data-bbox="499 836 1881 886">The nature and effectiveness of liaison between the resource teacher (or language class teacher) in the school and the speech and language services in relation to the needs of students who present with specific speech and language disorder</p> |

## Aspect A Provision for students with special educational needs

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>vii</b></p> <p><b><i>Provision for students who present with autistic spectrum disorder</i></b></p> | <p>The extent to which students who present with autistic spectrum disorder are encouraged and facilitated in participating in the life of the school</p> <p>The school's arrangements to ensure that students who present with autistic spectrum disorder are provided with appropriate curricula</p> <p>The school's provision of appropriate resources for students who present with autistic spectrum disorder and how effectively these resources are used</p> <p>The school's policy and practice in relation to the social and educational integration of students who present with autistic spectrum disorder</p> <p>The school's contact with the health board in order to ensure that appropriate therapies (for example speech and language therapy) are available to students who present with autistic spectrum disorder</p> |



## Aspect B1 Provision for students from disadvantaged backgrounds

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="292 311 375 371">i</p> <p data-bbox="209 511 464 662"><b><i>Principles underlying provision and support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds</i></b></p> | <p data-bbox="513 296 1790 356">The quality and appropriateness of school policies on access, admission and participation of students from such backgrounds, and their consistency with current statutory requirements</p> <p data-bbox="513 405 1742 465">In line with the characteristic spirit of the school, the extent to which all students from such backgrounds are encouraged, facilitated and supported to participate in the life of the school</p> <p data-bbox="513 514 1757 574">How actively the school seeks, from all available sources, the required resources (including staff, funding and materials) to meet the educational needs of such students</p> <p data-bbox="513 622 1871 683">The extent to which the school collaborates and coordinates with other community providers in planning provision and delivering educational services</p> <p data-bbox="513 731 1825 792">The effectiveness of school procedures for liaison with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, in meeting the needs of students from such backgrounds</p> |
| <p data-bbox="292 904 375 964">ii</p> <p data-bbox="209 1088 464 1214"><b><i>School's provision and support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds</i></b></p>           | <p data-bbox="513 896 1850 926">The manner in which the school identifies and provides for the educational needs of students from such backgrounds</p> <p data-bbox="513 975 1769 1035">The extent to which staff avail of professional development, particularly in the areas of teaching strategies and methodologies, to meet the needs of students from such backgrounds</p> <p data-bbox="513 1084 1763 1144">The support given to parents of students from such backgrounds, and other stakeholders, to participate in the operation of the school, and the way that participation is facilitated</p> <p data-bbox="513 1192 1752 1253">How effectively the implementation of Department of Education and Science schemes for students from such backgrounds is co-ordinated in the school</p> <p data-bbox="513 1301 1653 1332">The connections and structures in place to ensure that out-of-school support activities are optimised</p>   |

## Aspect B2 Provision for students from minority groups

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>i</b></p> <p><b><i>Principles underlying provision and support for students from minority groups</i></b></p> | <p>The quality and appropriateness of school policies on access, admission and participation of students from minority groups, and their consistency with current statutory requirements</p> <p>In line with the characteristic spirit of the school, the extent to which all students from minority groups are encouraged, facilitated and supported to participate in the life of the school</p> <p>How actively the school seeks the required resources to meet the educational needs of such students</p> <p>The effectiveness of school procedures for liaison with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, in meeting the needs of students from minority groups</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ii</b></p> <p><b><i>School's provision and support for students from minority groups</i></b></p>             | <p>The manner in which the school identifies and provides for the educational needs of students from minority groups</p> <p>The extent to which staff avail of professional development, particularly in the areas of teaching strategies and methodologies, to meet the needs of students from such backgrounds</p> <p>The support given to parents of students from such backgrounds to participate in the operation of the school, and the way that participation is facilitated</p> <p>How effectively Department of Education and Science supports for students from minority groups are utilised</p>   |

## Aspect C Guidance

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|--|---|
| <br><b>Guidance policy and organisation of guidance programme</b> | The availability of an appropriate guidance plan for all students to assist them in making choices and successful transitions in the personal, social, educational and career areas   |
|  | The extent to which the school plan encompasses a comprehensive developmental school guidance plan  |
|  | The school's support for the guidance programmes, the adequacy of its allocation of resources and involvement of the guidance counsellor, staff members, parents, students and community agencies                           |
| <br><b>Implementation of guidance policy</b>                      | The extent to which the school guidance plan details balanced and effective provision throughout the school and is available to staff, parents and students   |
|  | The extent to which the school makes full and appropriate use of the allocated resource for guidance  |
|  | The extent to which the school provides and supports an integrated whole-school approach between the areas of guidance, social, personal and health education, links with the home, school and community, and pastoral care |
|  | The extent to which personnel involved in guidance are facilitated in obtaining access to appropriate professional development  |
|  | The extent to which use is made of appropriate referral services  |

## Aspect D Social Personal and Health Education

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation  |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>i</b></p> <p><b><i>Policy and provision</i></b></p> | <p>The extent to which school management, staff, parents and, where appropriate, students are consulted and participate in the development, review and evaluation of the school's overall policy on social, personal and health education and of key elements of that policy (e.g. RSE and Substance Use)</p> <p>The quality of overall provision for social, personal and health education</p> <p>The extent to which the social, personal and health education programme reflects the characteristic spirit of the school and takes a whole-school approach</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ii</b></p> <p><b><i>Implementation</i></b></p>      | <p>The manner of implementation of the social, personal and health education curriculum</p> <p>The effectiveness of the social, personal and health education programme in addressing the needs of students through the formal SPHE curriculum</p> <p>The extent to which parents and students are informed of, and consulted about, the implementation of the social, personal and health education programme</p>  |

## Aspect E Pastoral care

| Component  | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>i</b></p> <p><b><i>Pastoral care provision: policy, organisation, and implementation</i></b></p> | The documentation of the school's policy and programme for pastoral care   |
|  | The extent to which school management, staff, parents and, where appropriate, students are consulted and participate in the development and evaluation of the pastoral care policy   |
|  | The level of staff involvement in the organisation, implementation and evaluation of the pastoral care policy  |
|  | The degree to which parents and, where appropriate, students are consulted in relation to the organisation of pastoral care in the school  |
|  | The level of integration between the code of practice in relation to student behaviour and the school's pastoral care provision, and policy on review of this code   |
|  | Reflecting the characteristic spirit of the school, the manner in which the spiritual development of students is addressed, with particular reference to provision for religious education and chaplaincy                            |
|  | The extent to which the chaplaincy dimension is integrated into the pastoral care policy and practice of the school  |
|  | The extent to which staff members in pastoral roles, such as class tutor and year head, monitor the personal development and academic progress of all students in their care and communicate with other staff members as appropriate |
|  | The extent to which staff members holding specific pastoral roles, such as class tutor, year head, and chaplain, are given access to appropriate professional development  |

## Aspect E Pastoral care

| Component   | Themes for self-evaluation   |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">ii</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Provision for co-operation between school, home, and community</i></b></p> | <p>School policy and documentation on co-operation between home, school and community; the extent to which policy is supported by the management and staff</p> <p>The structures that exist to facilitate co-operation between home, school and community</p> <p>The extent to which support and help from parents and from outside agencies are sought, and the level of provision for joint training for parents and teachers to assist them in working together</p> <p>The extent to which the school collaborates with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, in the wider community, to supplement its own support for children who are at risk</p> <p>School policy and practice in relation to parents' involvement in their children's learning and study, and how they are supported in this involvement</p> <p>The appropriateness of measures in place to enable parents to participate fully in the education of their children, especially to alleviate the effects of disadvantage</p> <p>The use made of referral and counselling services (where appropriate)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">iii</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Involvement of students in the operation of the school</i></b></p>        | <p>Policy and procedures to give the students the skills to become involved in the operation of the school</p> <p>The extent to which the school's student council, in co-operation with management, parents and teachers, promotes the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school</p>   |