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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Enhancing quality in post-primary schools

Whole-school evaluation (WSE) is a process of external evaluation of the work of a school carried out by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science (DES). The process is designed *“to monitor and assess the quality, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the education system provided in the state by recognised schools and centres for education”* (Education Act 1998, section 7 (2)(b)).

WSE is one of a number of external evaluative instruments used by the Inspectorate in schools. At post-primary level, subject inspection is an established approach to evaluating individual subjects and is an integral part of WSE. Subject inspection procedures are set out in *A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level* (2004).

## 1.2 Evaluation teams

A regional assistant chief inspector nominates the reporting inspector and the evaluation team for each WSE. The number of inspectors who work on the evaluation team depends on the size of the school and the subjects to be evaluated. The reporting inspector has overall responsibility for the organisation and co-ordination of the WSE.

## 1.3 First steps: pre-evaluation meetings

Whole-school evaluation is a collaborative process involving the teaching staff, the management of the school, parents, and students. At various stages during the WSE process, members of the school community have the opportunity to interact with the evaluation team to discuss their work, their role, and their vision for the school. These interactions provide the evaluation team with an insight into the structure and dynamics of the school.

## 1.4 In-school evaluation

During a whole-school evaluation the management and planning, teaching and learning and supports for students are evaluated. This enables the evaluation team to identify and affirm the strengths within the school and to make clear recommendations on areas for development and improvement.

## 1.5 Post-evaluation meetings

Following the in-school evaluation phase of the WSE, the evaluation team discusses the findings and recommendations of the WSE with the board of management, principal and deputy principal (or deputy principals), and all members of the teaching staff. During these meetings the work of the school is discussed and the findings of the evaluation are outlined. Strengths and areas for further development are presented.

## 1.6 The whole-school evaluation report

The WSE report deals with the work of the school as a whole. It affirms positive aspects of the school's work and suggests areas for development. The WSE report provides an external view on the work of the school and it is intended that the report's findings and recommendations facilitate further school self-evaluation and development planning.

## 1.7 School self-evaluation

Schools contribute significantly to improving quality through school self-evaluation. To facilitate self-evaluation as a central component of the continuous planning process the Inspectorate published *Looking at Our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Second-Level Schools* (2003). This publication provides schools with a framework for supporting an internal review of school procedures and for promoting school effectiveness and improvement in the broad areas of management, planning, learning and teaching, and supports for students. This framework is also used by the Inspectorate in conducting whole-school evaluations and as a basis for other external evaluations of the work of schools and centres for education.

## 1.8 The role of the Inspectorate

Section 13 of the Education Act 1998 defines the functions of the Inspectorate and clarifies the roles of members of the Inspectorate in relation to evaluation and inspection. (See appendix 1.) The Inspectorate is committed to evaluating schools and teachers in a spirit of professional collaboration and in accordance with the highest professional standards. The *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002) sets out general principles and guidelines under which members of the Inspectorate engage in the process of evaluation and reporting. The general principles of the code are that inspectors will be consistent, fair and courteous and will work with members of the school community in a climate of mutual respect. Inspectors are also committed to basing their judgements on first-hand evidence and to applying evaluation criteria objectively and reliably.

## 1.9 Reviewing evaluations and evaluation reports

In accordance with section 13 (9) of the Education Act 1998, the Inspectorate published a *Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers* (2002). Under the review procedure a teacher or the board of a school may request the Chief Inspector to review any evaluation carried out by an inspector that affects the teacher or the school. The review procedure applies to all evaluations and inspections affecting schools or teachers, including all reports arising from such evaluations and inspections, other than those required under existing procedures for teachers experiencing professional difficulties.

## 1.10 The purpose of this guide

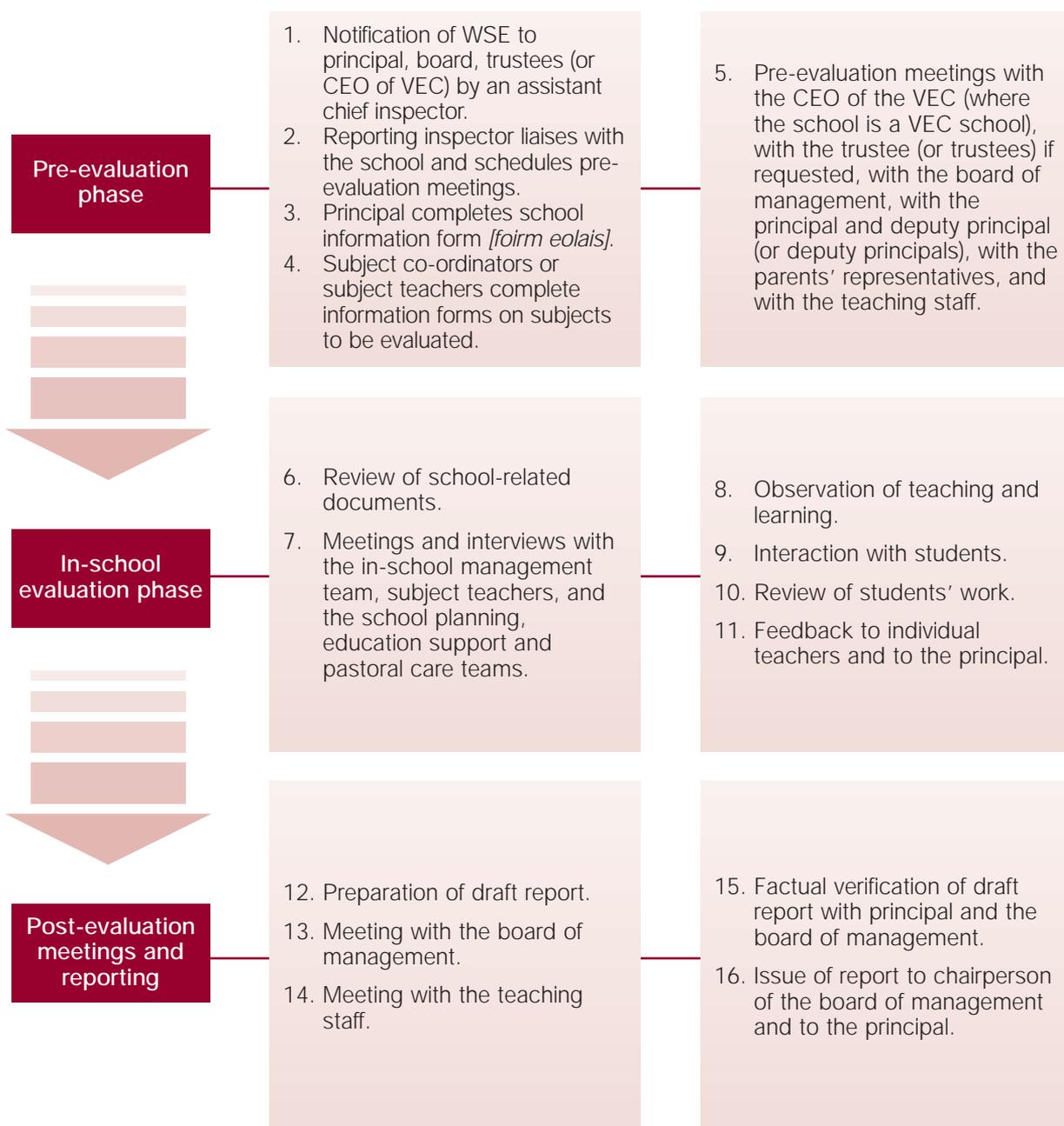
*A Guide to Whole-School Evaluation in Post-Primary Schools* sets out the practices and procedures involved in all aspects of the WSE process. It clarifies the process for all participants and places whole-school evaluations within a legislative and regulatory framework.

## 2 The WSE procedures and processes

The WSE process is divided into three phases:

- Phase 1: the pre-evaluation phase
- Phase 2: the in-school evaluation phase
- Phase 3: the post-evaluation phase.

An outline description of the principal activities during each phase is presented in the following diagram:



## 2.1 The pre-evaluation phase

### Formal notification of the WSE to the school community

A school is notified of a whole-school evaluation at least three weeks before the in-school evaluation phase. A letter issues to the school principal, chairperson of the board of management, and trustees of the school or chief executive officer of the vocational education committee (as appropriate). If the trustees of a school wish to meet the evaluation team before the WSE they should make contact with the reporting inspector, who will facilitate a meeting.

This letter outlines the dates and time scale for the WSE and gives details of the individual subjects to be evaluated during the process. Whole-school evaluations will not take place during the first two weeks of the school year, during the week preceding or succeeding the Christmas holidays, or during the last two weeks of the school year. However, it is recognised that in some instances post-evaluation meetings in relation to WSE may take place during the last two weeks in May if this is necessary to complete the process during a particular school year.

### Contact with the school principal

Following the official notification of the WSE, the reporting inspector contacts the principal to outline the format of the evaluation, to arrange meetings and evaluation visits, and to clarify any specific issues.

## 2.2 Request for school documents

The school principal is requested to complete a school information form. (See appendix 3.) This form includes questions relating to school context, enrolment, attendance patterns, the allocation of teaching staff, and the provision of accommodation and resources. The school principal is requested to ensure that the form is returned to the reporting inspector before the in-school evaluation stage of the WSE.

Subject-specific information is also gathered at the pre-evaluation stage, using information request forms. The subject co-ordinator or a number of the subject teachers normally complete these forms and provide detail in relation to various aspects, including the uptake of the subject in the senior cycle, the uptake of different levels within the subject, or information relating to teaching resources. The school principal is requested to ensure that the forms are returned to the reporting inspector before the in-school evaluation stage.

The inspectors also confirm that the school has formally adopted child protection guidelines as recommended in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (1999).

### Other information and documents

The reporting inspector will request background documents from the principal. Typically, the documents requested include the following:

- The full school timetable and the timetables for all teachers whose subjects will be evaluated
- The school prospectus, leaflets, and newsletters
- Copies of the minutes of the last three meetings of the board of management
- Copies of the school's report to parents on the operation of the school
- The school plan, including the school's admissions policy, code of behaviour, and mission statement
- Curriculum-related documents, including details of optional subjects for junior and senior cycle
- A list of extracurricular activities, including clubs and sporting activities in the school
- The school's homework policy and a copy of the student journal
- The school's procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns
- The school's health and safety statement
- The school's guidance plan
- The school's ICT policy
- The school's handbook for students and for staff
- The school's calendar, including scheduled meetings and events
- Induction programme for new staff members, if available
- Records of meetings of the school development planning, guidance, student support and pastoral care teams
- Copies of the minutes of the last three staff meetings
- The school's policy and practice in relation to student assessment, both on admission to the school and throughout the junior and senior cycle, and any relevant records of students' achievement
- Information about the school's student attendance strategy and summary information in relation to attendance

The reporting inspector also requests information relating to the school from the State Examinations Commission (SEC), the Post-Primary Administration Sections (PPAS) of the Department of Education and Science, and the VEC, if appropriate. The information from the SEC concerns details of results in state examinations in all curricular programmes, normally over the past four years. The analysis of these results gives further insight into school context and achievement throughout all subjects and curricular programmes and provides an insight into uptake of levels within subjects. While the inspectors may discuss examination results or issues arising from them with the school management and teaching staff, marks or grades achieved in examinations are not presented in the WSE report.

Information requests from the PPAS and the VEC mainly concern the schedule of teaching and other posts allocated to the school. Information relating to the allocation of resources for students with special educational needs is also requested, as is information relating to building programmes and plans for the improvement or upgrading of facilities.

### Provision for subjects to be evaluated

The reporting inspector will request information relating to subject provision and whole-school support for the individual subjects to be evaluated during the WSE and will provide this to the individual subject inspectors.

The information requested normally includes the following:

- Student numbers by male / female in both the junior and the senior cycle
- Details of curricular programmes and student numbers within each
- Timetabled allocation to all subjects in the junior and senior cycles
- Information relating to curricular planning
- Details of students who are not studying, and have an exemption from, Irish
- Details relating to subject choice and the subject option process
- Details relating to the assessment strategies employed within junior and senior cycle and within curricular programmes

The reporting inspector examines any other school documents, presented by the school, which are pertinent to the WSE process. This helps to inform the evaluation team regarding the school context and to identify areas for discussion during the in-school evaluation stage. Section 13 (7) of the Education Act 1998, provides that inspectors will be "*accorded every reasonable facility and co-operation by the board and the staff of a school or centre for education*" necessary for the purpose of performing these evaluative functions.

## 2.3 Initial meetings

The reporting inspector discusses arrangements for the pre-evaluation meetings with the school principal. The reporting inspector convenes initial meetings with

- the chief executive officer of the vocational education committee (if it is a VEC school)
- the trustee (or trustees) if a meeting is requested with the evaluation team
- the board of management
- the principal and deputy principal (or deputy principals)
- the representatives of the parents' association affiliated to the National Parents' Council (NPC); alternatively, if the association is not affiliated to the NPC a meeting is held with the parent representatives on the board of management
- all members of the teaching staff.

The meetings generally take place during the week before the in-school evaluation phase and are normally attended by two inspectors on the evaluation team. The reporting inspector or another inspector will chair the meetings. All meetings are conducted in line with the *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002) and in a manner that is transparent and supportive of the school community. In all cases the inspector (or inspectors) will wish to gather information and discuss issues relevant to the context of the whole school.

### Initial meeting with the board of management

The meeting with the board of management outlines the whole-school evaluation process, and the procedures and operation of the board are discussed. Notes taken at these meetings form part of the record of evidence for the WSE and inform the WSE report. The board of management may also use the meeting to raise and discuss issues relating to the WSE.

### Initial meeting with parents

Where a parents' association affiliated to the National Parents' Council has been formed, the association is invited to nominate representatives to meet the evaluation team. The purpose of the meeting is to obtain the views of parents on matters of a whole-school nature. At the meeting, issues related to the WSE framework, and other matters agreed in advance, are included on the agenda for discussion. The work of individual teachers is not discussed at this meeting. Where a parents' association does not exist, a meeting is held with the parents' representatives on the board of management.

A record of this meeting is made available to the board of management at the post-evaluation stage, and any issues raised by the officers that are pertinent to the day-to-day running of the school will be referred to the principal or board of management for comment.

#### Agenda for initial meetings with the board of management and with the parents' association

1. Welcome
2. Explanation of the whole-school evaluation process
3. Discussion of the following whole-school matters:
  - management
  - planning
  - curriculum
  - learning and teaching in subjects
  - support for students.
4. Other matters agreed for discussion
5. Close

### Initial meeting with all members of the teaching staff

This meeting provides an opportunity for all members of the teaching staff, including part-time staff and staff shared with other schools, to meet the inspectors and discuss the whole-school evaluation process. Members of the teaching staff have the opportunity to discuss any issues that refer particularly to the WSE process in the context of both the classroom and the whole school. They also have the opportunity to outline and discuss the context of the school within the wider community.

## 3 In-school evaluation

### 3.1 The evaluation stage

Typically, the in-school evaluation stage of the WSE does not exceed five school days. Members of the evaluation team visit the school on the days notified to the staff during the pre-evaluation meeting. While the team makes every effort to work within the agreed timetable for the WSE, unforeseen events may extend this period. Any changes are discussed with the school principal and the relevant staff members in advance, where possible.

### 3.2 The evaluation framework

The WSE team evaluates and reports on the operation of the school under the following headings or areas of inquiry:

- the quality of the school management
- the quality of school planning
- the quality of curriculum provision
- the quality of learning and teaching
- the quality of support for students.

These areas of inquiry reflect the structure of *Looking at Our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Second-Level Schools* (pages xii-xv). The evaluation framework is further outlined in appendix 2.

### 3.3 Evaluation activities

WSE involves a wide range of evaluation methodologies, including the following:

#### **A review of school documents**

The WSE team examines all relevant school-related documents, including the documents associated with the school planning process, curriculum plans, and documents associated with particular curricular programmes. Samples of documents used to communicate with parents, students and the school community are also reviewed.

#### **Meetings and interviews**

During the in-school evaluation phase, meetings and interviews are typically held with in-school management teams, subject teachers as a group for the subjects being evaluated, and the school planning, education support and pastoral care teams. A meeting is also held with student council representatives. These interviews provide information and evidence to inform the WSE.

### **The observation of teaching and learning**

Subject inspectors observe teaching and learning in a range of classes in the subjects included within the WSE. The subject inspectors examine teaching methods, classroom management, classroom atmosphere, and learning. The subject inspector also evaluates evidence of planning for teaching and learning within the lessons observed. Feedback is provided to individual teachers and to the principal during the evaluation. This aspect of the WSE is carried out in accordance with the practices and procedures outlined in *A Guide to Subject Inspection at Second Level* (2004).

### **Interaction with students**

The inspectors interact with students in classrooms and learning areas. This interaction involves engagement with the class as a whole and may involve targeted or open questioning, the provision of appropriate tasks, or the evaluation of skills. In classes where students are engaged in practical tasks or in group work the inspector may also engage with groups or individuals as the lesson progresses. These interactions provides the inspector with first-hand insight into the level of students' learning and achievement and an understanding of the context of the individual class.

### **Reviewing students' work**

The inspectors review samples of students' work in notebooks, copybooks, folders, workbooks, portfolios, and displays of project work. These samples of students' work give the inspector an insight into the teaching processes in the classroom, the pattern and quality of homework, and the quality of students' learning.

### **Other evaluation activity**

Members of the evaluation team may also visit other school and subject-related facilities, as appropriate. Subject inspection reports completed in the school since February 2006 will also be considered as part of the WSE process.

## 4 The post-evaluation phase

The post-evaluation phase takes a number of weeks, culminating in the issuing of the WSE report to the school principal and the board of management. During this period the evaluation team drafts the whole-school evaluation report in accordance with the evidence collected. The reporting inspector assumes overall responsibility for the drafting of the report. When a draft report is prepared, the reporting inspector arranges the times and dates for the post-evaluation meetings with the school principal. During the post-evaluation phase, meetings are held with

- the principal and deputy principal (or deputy principals)
- members of the teaching staff
- the board of management.

Typically, all post-evaluations meetings are scheduled for the same date.

### 4.1 Post-evaluation meeting with the principal and deputy principal (or deputy principals)

At the meeting with the principal and deputy principal (or deputy principals) the reporting inspector and members of the evaluation team present the draft findings and recommendations of the WSE. The inspectors present the report under its component headings and sub-headings. (See section 5.)

### 4.2 Post-evaluation meeting with all members of the teaching staff

At the meeting with the teaching staff, the reporting inspector and members of the evaluation team present the draft findings and recommendations of the WSE. The inspectors present the report under its component headings and sub-headings. (See section 5.) Members of the staff are encouraged to discuss the outcomes of the evaluation and to clarify any information with the WSE team.

### 4.3 Post-evaluation meeting with the board of management

At the meeting with the board of management the reporting inspector and members of the evaluation team present the draft findings and recommendations of the WSE, including the evaluation of the implementation of the board's plans and policies. Time is allocated for discussion, and the issues raised are recorded. An agenda is issued to the chairperson of the board of management before the meeting. A record of the issues discussed at the pre-evaluation meeting with the parents' association is provided to the board at the meeting. The agenda for this post-evaluation meeting with the board of management, issued in advance to the chairperson, is similar to that of the pre-evaluation meeting with the board:

#### Agenda for the post-evaluation meeting with the board of management

1. Welcome
2. Discussion of the draft findings of the WSE under the following headings:
  - Management
  - Planning
  - Curriculum provision
  - Learning and teaching in subjects
  - Support for students
3. Record of the parents' association meeting
4. Summary comments
5. Close

### 4.4 Factual verification the WSE report

The Inspectorate Secretariat sends a draft copy of the evaluation report to the school principal<sup>1</sup> and to the chairperson of the school's board of management<sup>2</sup>. A factual verification form accompanies the draft report. Using this form, the principal and the chairperson are invited to draw the attention of the Inspectorate to any errors of fact in the draft. The factual verification form should be returned to the Inspectorate Secretariat by the principal or the chairperson of the board of management within 10 school days of the date of issue of the report.

The factual verification form, when returned to the Inspectorate Secretariat by the principal or chairperson, is referred to the reporting inspector and the appropriate assistant chief inspector. If any errors of fact have been drawn to the attention of the Inspectorate, the draft report is amended, as necessary. The evaluation report is then issued to the chairperson and the principal. The school has 20 school days from the date of issue of the report in which to submit a *school response*.

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1. In the absence of the principal, his or her duties, as described above, may be undertaken by the deputy principal.

2. In the absence of the chairperson of the board of management, his or her duties, as described above, may be undertaken by an acting chairperson.

## 5 The WSE report

The WSE report directly reflects the WSE evaluation framework. The text of the report contains a balance between description, in the form of evidence based on the particular area of inquiry, and evaluative statements identifying both strengths and areas that are recommended for development. No person is named in a WSE report. The primary purpose of the report is to evaluate the quality of provision in the areas of inquiry.

### 5.1 Dissemination of the whole-school evaluation report

The WSE report is issued to the school principal and to the chairperson of the school's board of management. In the case of a school managed by a vocational education committee, the report is also issued to the chief executive officer of the VEC.

On receiving the evaluation report, the chairperson of the board of management or a person authorised by him or her should provide a copy of the report to each member of the board of management. It is recommended that the board of management, as part of its agenda for school improvement, discuss the findings and recommendations of the report. The board is required to make the report available to all staff members (Education Act, 1998, section 13 (9)), including any staff members who may have left the school in the period between the evaluation stage and the issue of the WSE report. It is open to the chairperson to provide a copy of the report to other members of the staff; for example, in special schools this may include members of multi-disciplinary teams working in the school.

The members of the school community should reflect upon the report and give consideration to the strengths identified and to the recommendations for further development. These recommendations should be used to formulate the future direction for the development of the school which, in turn, should inform the school development planning process and engage all members of the school community.

### 5.2 Publication of the WSE report

The detailed arrangements for the publication of WSE reports are described in a separate document, *Publication of School Inspection Reports - Guidelines* (2006), which is available on the DES web site ([www.education.gov.ie](http://www.education.gov.ie)).

### 5.3 The structure of the whole-school evaluation report

The WSE report contains the following headings and sub-headings:

## Introduction

### 1 Quality of school management

- 1.1 Characteristic spirit of the school
- 1.2 School ownership and management
- 1.3 In-school management
- 1.4 Management of resources

### 2 Quality of school planning

- 2.1 The school plan

### 3 Quality of curriculum provision

- 3.1 Curriculum planning and organisation
- 3.2 Arrangements for students' choice of subjects and programmes
- 3.3 Co-curricular and extracurricular provision

### 4 Quality of learning and teaching in subjects

- 4.1 Planning and preparation
- 4.2 Learning and teaching
- 4.3 Assessment and achievement

### 5 Quality of support for students

- 5.1 Students with special educational needs
- 5.2 Other supports for students
- 5.3 Guidance
- 5.4 Pastoral care

### 6 Summary of findings and recommendations for further development

### 7 Subject inspection reports

Under heading 6, *Summary of findings and recommendations for further development*, the WSE report lists the findings of the evaluation and identifies strengths and areas that are recommended for development. Under heading 7, *Subject inspection reports*, the full text of the subject inspection reports is provided for the use of the individual subject departments involved in the WSE. These subject inspection reports should be of assistance in guiding the future development of these subjects within the school.

# Appendix 1

## Functions of the Inspectorate and Code of Practice

### Function of the Inspectorate in respect of WSE

Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 1998 defines the function of the Inspectorate as follows:

*To support and advise recognised schools and centres of education and teachers on matters relating to the provision of education . . .*

The Act also sets out the functions of members of the Inspectorate in relation to inspection and evaluation as follows:

*An Inspector shall visit recognised schools and centres of education . . . and following consultation with the board, parents of students and teachers as appropriate . . .*

- Evaluate the organisation and operation of those schools and centres and the quality and effectiveness of the education provided in those schools and centres . . .*
- Evaluate the education standards in such schools and centres.*
- Assess the implementation of regulations made by the Minister.*
- Report to the Minister, or the board, patron, parents of students and teachers as appropriate . . . on these matters and any other matter relating to the activities of those schools or centres and the needs of students attending those schools or centres.*

Section 13 (5) states that, where an inspector has carried out an evaluation,

*he or she may make recommendations to the Minister in respect of improvements that he or she considers appropriate.*

### The professional code of practice

The Inspectorate operates an on-going system of in-school evaluation within this legislative framework. The Inspectorate is committed to evaluating schools and teachers in a spirit of professional collaboration and in accordance with the highest professional standards. The *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002), developed in accordance with the provisions of section 13 (8) of the Education Act, sets out general principles and guidelines under which members of the Inspectorate engage in the process of evaluation and reporting. The code outlines the professional standards to which the Inspectorate works. Among the general principles of the code of practice, the Inspectorate is committed to

- fostering mutual respect, trust, positive professional relations and partnership between the Inspectorate and the school community
- consistent application of evaluation criteria and reliance on first-hand evidence based on observation
- consistency and fairness, taking due account of school context factors and taking cognisance of school self-review
- engaging in dialogue with teaching staffs and the education partners and ensuring confidentiality, while having due regard to statutory provisions
- courtesy, respect and sensitivity towards both individual teachers and the school, and clarity in the manner in which findings are communicated
- acknowledging that the students are the ultimate beneficiaries of the evaluation process.

## Appendix 2

### Framework for whole-school evaluation based on *Looking at Our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Second-Level Schools*

The WSE team evaluates and reports on the operation of the school under the following headings or areas of inquiry:

- the quality of school management
- the quality of school planning
- the quality of curriculum provision
- the quality of learning and teaching
- the quality of support for pupils.

#### Area 1: The quality of school management

##### **The characteristic spirit of the school**

The WSE team examines the characteristic spirit of the school and the awareness of that characteristic spirit within the school community. The team explores its expression and the policies that reflect that spirit. They also observe how the characteristic spirit is reflected in activities, communications and relationships within the school.

##### **School ownership and management**

The WSE team examines the composition, role and functioning of the board of management. This area of the WSE also examines the operation of the board of management and its policies and procedures.

##### **In-school management**

The WSE team examines the in-school management of the school, including the role of the principal, the deputy principal (or deputy principals), and the middle management team. It looks at the management of students and the management of relationships with parents and the community. It also looks at the level of self-evaluation that is carried out within the school. The evaluation team examines the allocation of members of the teaching staff and compliance with DES requirements relating to material and staff resources. The quality of accommodation in the school, including specialist areas and teaching resources, is also considered.

### **The management of resources**

During the meetings with the in-school management and during the in-school evaluation phase the WSE team evaluates the effectiveness of the management and allocation of members of the teaching staff, the policy and support for professional development, and the management of external personnel, such as visiting teachers and tutors. The evaluation team also reviews the management of material resources and the use of DES grants and evaluates students' and teachers' access to resources in the various areas of the curriculum.

## **Area 2: The quality of school planning**

### **School plan**

The WSE team examines the school plan and the school planning process, including the monitoring and review of the process. It also examines the action plans set out and staff members' roles and responsibilities within the process. The team also evaluates the implementation, dissemination and impact of the school plan.

## **Area 3: The quality of curriculum provision**

### **Curriculum planning and organisation**

The WSE team examines curriculum planning and provision in the school, with an emphasis on the breadth and balance in curriculum provision and how the needs of all students are being met. The team also examines the school timetable and the allocation of staff members.

### **Arrangements for students' choice**

The WSE team examines the subject and curriculum options available to all students in the school. It examines subject choice and the provision of guidance, support and advice within this process. This area of inquiry also examines the involvement of staff members, parents and students in the subject choice process.

### **Co-curricular and extracurricular provision**

The team seeks information relating to co-curricular activities (activities that enhance teaching and learning). Equally, the range of extracurricular activities is considered, as is the extent to which all these activities are inclusive of the whole school community.

## Area 4: The quality of teaching and learning

### Planning and preparation

The subject inspectors evaluate the level of planning for the teaching of individual subjects. They look for evidence of collaborative curricular planning within subjects and planning by individual teachers.

### Quality of learning and teaching

The subject inspectors evaluate methodology, classroom management, classroom atmosphere and learning within the lessons observed.

### Assessment and achievement

The subject inspectors consider the range of assessment modes, record-keeping, and reporting on students' achievement. Through engagement with the students, the subject inspectors evaluate the level of students' understanding, achievement and enthusiasm for the subject.

## Area 5: The quality of support for students

### Students with special educational needs

The WSE team examines the school policy on the enrolment and participation of students with general and specific educational needs (SEN). This aspect of the evaluation considers the number of students with SEN and the provision for both classroom inclusion and individual support. The team examines the communication and dissemination of information concerning these students and the provision of learning support and resource teaching.

### Other supports for students (disadvantaged, minority and other groups)

The evaluation team examines the support strategies that acknowledge the diversity of the school community and the inclusion of all students in the activities of the school. The team examines special initiatives to meet the needs of these students. It also explores the participation of the parents of these students in the school and any collaboration with other community agencies supporting these students.

### Guidance

The evaluation team assesses the provision of individual and group guidance and counselling support in the school. The team examines personal supports for students and liaison with parents and support bodies.

### Pastoral care

The evaluation team examines the pastoral care structure and the operation of the care team in the whole school. It assesses the levels of communication within this structure and the involvement of parents. In this area the team also examines the code of student behaviour and the roles of the chaplaincy and the students' council.

# Appendix 3



## WSE: School Information Form

School name:			
School address:			
School contact details:	Telephone:	Fax:	
	Email:	Website:	
School roll number:			
Principal:			
Chairperson of board of management:			
CEO of VEC (if appropriate):			
School Type:			

Enrolment:	2003	2004	2005	Current year
Males (mainstream)				
Females (mainstream)				
PLC students				
Adult and continuing education students				
<b>Total:</b>				

<b>Main Feeder Primary Schools</b>	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
<b>Subjects to be evaluated</b>	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	

Enrolment:	Total	Males	Females
Junior Certificate			
Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)			
Transition year: Optional / compulsory (delete one)			
Established Leaving Certificate			
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)			
Leaving Certificate-Applied (LCA)			
Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC)			
Adult and continuing education courses			





## WSE: School Information Form

Please provide the evaluation team with any of the following documents in relation to the operation of the school. The list is divided into priority information required and additional information (if available):

### Area 1: Quality of school management

Priority information
The full school timetable, with explanatory codes
The individual timetables of teachers whose subjects will be evaluated
The school prospectus, leaflets, and newsletters
Minutes of the three most recent meetings of the board of management
The report by the board of management to parents on the operation and performance of the school
Code of behaviour or conduct, including policy on suspension and exclusion
School admissions policy and procedures, copies of application forms, and related material
The school's health and safety statement
The school's procedures in relation to child protection
Additional information (if available)
Information on assessment and procedures for incoming students
Copy of the school student journal
Induction programme for new staff members, if available
Attendance report to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)
The school's handbook for staff members
Minutes of the last three staff meetings
Copies of newsletters or other communications to parents
The school's ICT policy

### Area 2: Quality of school planning

Priority information
The school plan
Transition-year plan
School guidance plan
Additional information (if available)
Minutes of school planning meetings for the past two school years
Records of school development planning activities
Records of staff day activities

### Area 3: Quality of curriculum provision

Priority information
Material given to students and parents regarding programme and subject choices
Additional information (if available)
Class period allocation to all subjects at junior and senior cycle
A list of extracurricular and co-curricular activities
School calendar, schedule of meetings, events, etc.
The records of students who are not studying, and have exemptions from Irish



## WSE: School Information Form

### Area 4: Quality of teaching and learning in subjects

#### Priority information

Subject information forms (provided by the reporting or support inspector)

#### Additional information (if available)

The school's homework policy

### Area 5: Quality of supports for students

Copy of a blank school report for students

Records of plans and meetings of the guidance, student support and care teams

Please provide short statements for the following areas of inquiry, as appropriate to the school. This information will help the evaluation team to gain an understanding of the school community before the in school evaluation stage of the WSE:

#### School management

1. A short written account of the school's location, history, and context

2. Short written statements describing the characteristic spirit, mission statement and vision of the school and the role of the trustees in maintaining this

3. A description of the board of management: members and nominating groups, awareness and fulfilment of role, functions and responsibilities, statutory obligations

4. The priorities for school development identified by the board of management



## WSE: School Information Form

5. The history and present role of the student council

6. The history and present role of the parents' association

### School management

7. Progress so far and future priorities for school development planning

8. Progress so far and future priorities for curricular planning

9. Progress so far and future priorities for programme planning: TYP, LCA, LCVP, guidance



## WSE: School Information Form

### Curricular provision

10. Any issues arising in relation to curricular provision

11. How the subject options or subject choice structure operates in junior cycle, senior cycle, PLC (if applicable)

12. ICT in the school: availability and access

### Supports for students

13. The school attendance strategy

14. The type of supports provided for the inclusion of students with special educational needs



## WSE: School Information Form

15. The type of supports provided for the inclusion of students from minority and disadvantaged groups

16. Guidance and counselling support provided in the school

17. How the school communicates with the diversity of parents

18. The pastoral care structure and the roles of year head and class tutors, if applicable

Go raibh míle maith agat as do chomhoibriú ag líonadh na foirme seo.  
Cabhair mhór atá ann don phróiseas *Meastóireacht Scoile Uile*.