# *Chapter 6*

# School evaluation:

# From compliancy to quality

*School evaluation plays an important role in the evaluation and assessment framework and can exert considerable influence. This chapter presents evidence on different approaches to external school evaluation, school self-evaluation and the use of comparative school performance measures. It examines governance issues, different procedures used, the capacity for undertaking and using the results of school evaluation and the reporting of results. It then presents some options seeking to promote a balance of policies to better serve school improvement.*

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

## Introduction

This chapter analyses approaches to school evaluation within the evaluation and assessment framework. School evaluation refers to the evaluation of individual schools as organisations. This chapter covers internal school evaluation (school self-evaluation or review), external school evaluation (e.g. school reviews, school inspections) and the comparison of schools on different performance measures.

School evaluation is increasingly considered as a potential lever of change that could assist with decision making, resource allocation and school improvement, especially as: further autonomy is given to individual schools, market forms of accountability gain in importance, and the school is increasingly recognised as the key agency within the education system for improving student learning.

The effective monitoring and evaluation of schools is central to the continuous improvement of student learning: Schools need feedback on their performance to help them identify how to improve their practices; and schools should be accountable for their performance.

This chapter is organised in eight sections. After this introduction, the second section lays out the analytical approach, followed by a third section on impact, drivers and contextual developments. The following four sections describe key features of school evaluation and country practices, structured along the four main topics of the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: governance, procedures, capacity and use of results. The final section provides pointers for policy development.

## Analytical approach

### *Scope and definitions*

School evaluation concentrates on key processes such as teaching and learning, school leadership, educational administration, school environment and the management of human resources. It does so in association with an analysis of student outcomes, both the achievement/progress of students and the equity of student results. It also takes into account inputs such as the infrastructure, funding and characteristics of the school staff. This report defines school evaluation as an evaluation of the following major aspects:

- the effectiveness of the structures and processes in place within a school
- the implementation of national educational policies and regulations within the school
- the quality of student learning outcomes at the school
- the capacity for schools to improve.

This chapter examines three major approaches to school evaluation:

- **School self-evaluation or review**: This concerns an evaluation or review conducted by members of the school to assess the effectiveness of structures and processes in place and the quality of student learning outcomes. Such internal reviews of school effectiveness and quality may draw on input from school leadership, teachers, other staff, students, parents and the school community.

- **External school evaluation or review**: This concerns the evaluation or review of the quality of structures and processes operating within a school and the quality of student learning outcomes as judged by an external body. External reviews may be conducted by specific national or state institutions, such as Inspectorates or Quality Review Agencies, by a group of officials within a government department or Ministry of Education or by accredited individuals. In these cases, external review typically involves a strong focus on accountability, but increasingly aims to give feedback for school development. External reviews may also be conducted by professionals in other schools in the nature of "collegial" or "peer" reviews. In these cases, external review typically focuses on school improvement and can be taken up by schools as part of their own self-evaluation activities.
- **The comparison of schools on different performance measures**: This typically aims to compare schools on standardised measures to allow the benchmarking of their performance in relation to other schools, particular districts or regions or national averages. Such comparative performance measures may be reported to schools for internal use in their own evaluation processes and/or may be reported publicly to allow a wider audience to compare schools. The argument for the latter is generally linked to providing parents and students with information on which to base decisions of school choice.

## *Conceptual framework*

The OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes uses a conceptual framework to summarise the aspects involved in school evaluation and the way these interconnect (see Figure 6.1). The overarching policy objective is to ensure that school evaluation contributes to the improvement of student outcomes through improved school practices. There is a complex range of features associated with school evaluation. This chapter presents these in four major areas:

- **Governing school evaluation**: This addresses the purpose of school evaluation and includes the major responsibilities for devising and conducting school evaluation and setting a legal framework for school evaluation. It also refers to how external school evaluation and school self-evaluation are articulated.
- **Procedures used in school evaluation**: This aspect refers to the features of a given approach to school evaluation, that is, the mix of instruments, criteria and standards, knowledge and skills used in a specific school evaluation model. It also includes decisions about the population of schools involved, the reference standards, the character of the evaluation, the nature of externality, the steps of the process, and the frequency.
- **Competencies to evaluate schools and to use the results of school evaluation**: This aspect concerns the preparation to evaluate, to be evaluated and to use the results of an evaluation as well as the choice of the groups undertaking these functions. It includes issues such as: the choice of the evaluators and the development of the skills to perform the evaluation of a school; the preparation by schools to be the subject of an evaluation; the development of competencies to effectively use the results of an evaluation for the improvement of school practices; and the design of agencies to review school evaluation results with a view to hold schools accountable and to inform policy development.

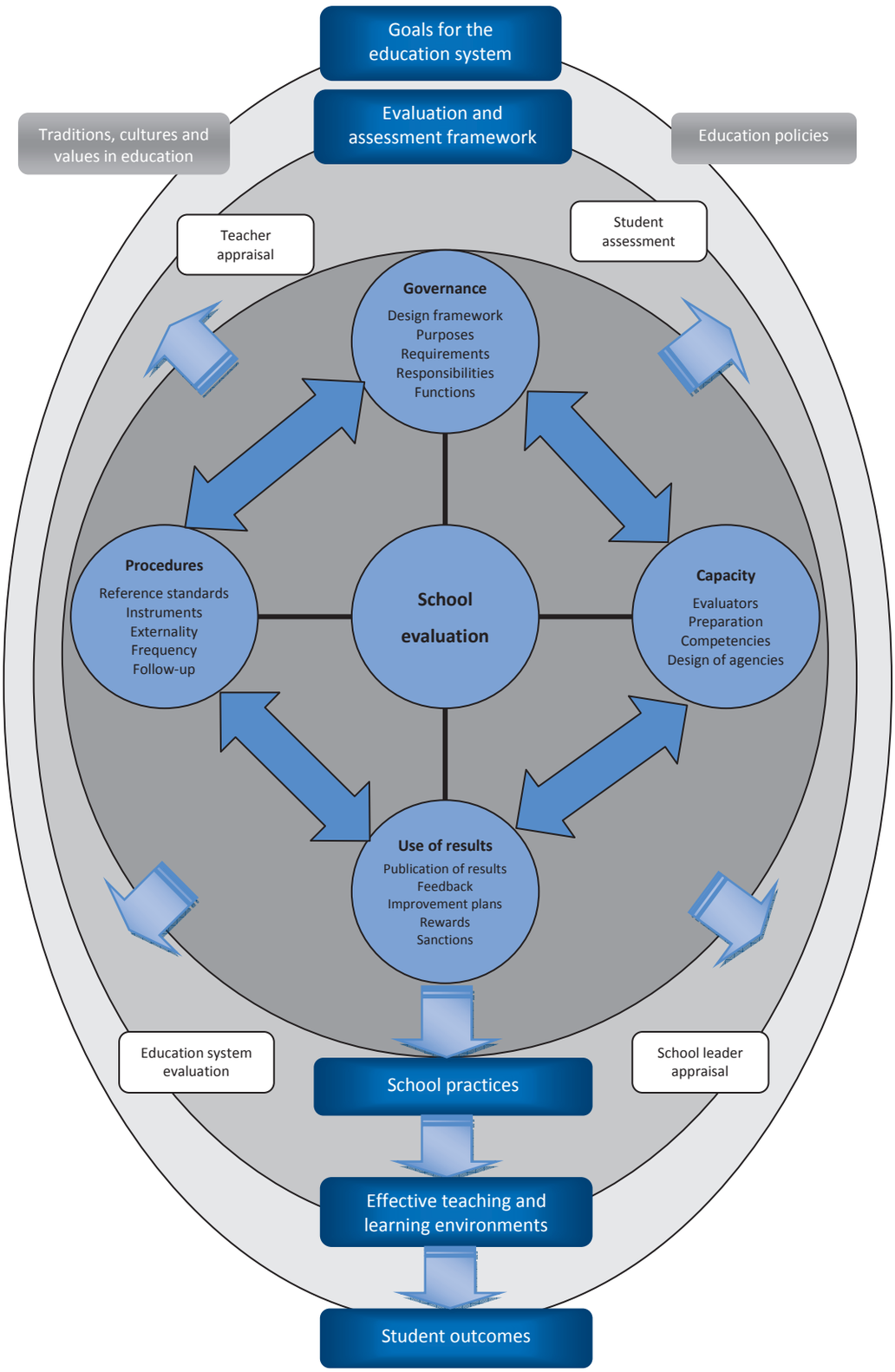
- **Using the results of school evaluation**: This encompasses the objectives of a particular school evaluation process and the mechanisms designed to ensure that evaluation results are used in a way such objectives are reached. The objectives of school evaluation typically consist of feedback for improvement, accountability for performance and information about the quality of school practices. Examples of mechanisms to use evaluation results include feedback and recommendations for improvement, an improvement plan, publication of school-level results, financial and other rewards as well as sanctions.

## Impact, drivers and contextual developments

School evaluation policies, like all components of the evaluation and assessment framework, have been influenced and shaped by wider trends in public management (see Chapter 2). With devolved responsibilities, there are greater demands to hold schools accountable for their quality. This means a greater level of responsibility at the school level for quality improvement; a greater focus on the outcomes a school secures for its students; and demands for the public to have access to information on school quality. For example, in Mexico the National Model for Total Quality in Mexico, which was drawn up to promote a general management approach for quality assurance in public services, led to the development of a voluntary System for School Self-Evaluation for Quality Management in 2007 (SEP and INEE, 2011). In the Flemish government, trends for greater transparency with the "Active publicity" policy led to the publication of inspection reports for individual schools on the Inspectorate's website from 2007 (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010).

Perhaps the most specific external policy influence on school evaluation has been the wider policy trends on the approach to external evaluations in the public sector. This has impacted the approach to external school evaluations significantly. There is an increasing focus on a need to maximise the benefits of external school evaluation activities, but to minimise the potential burden that these may place on school time. This is often in the larger context of public sector reform to place more emphasis on outcomes and impact, coupled with robust self-evaluation and a reduced, more proportionate approach to external supervision. It is also fundamentally linked to a concern to make more effective use of the resources available for external evaluation. For example, in the Netherlands there is a programme to reform national inspections in various domains, such as health care, labour environment, education, food production and restaurants, with the slogan "more effect, less burden". This sets targets for different inspectorates to both reduce the overall burden of inspection by 25% and to ensure a more effective and efficient approach (Inspection Council Bureau, 2009). In a similar vein, within the United Kingdom the Scottish Government commissioned a "reducing the burden of scrutiny action group" to examine possible ways to reduce the workload created by external evaluation efforts in the public sector (RBAG, 2008).[1]

**Figure 6.1 Conceptual framework for school evaluation**



Paradoxically, this lighter touch external school evaluation approach has further increased the importance of the school's self-evaluation activities and introduced new evaluation demands at the school level. There is, therefore, a concern at the national level to provide supports to these activities, typically via the provision of guidelines and tools for self-evaluation and via systems to feedback results from national student assessment activities to schools for use in their self-evaluation. The provision of benchmarked student performance data to schools is gradually gaining importance across countries. Further, the use of online data systems aims to increase the efficiency of compliance-related reporting and to reduce the time this takes for schools.

Finally, there is a shift in the focus of external school evaluation. Compliance is no longer the sole objective and there is an increasing focus on the quality of teaching and learning. This may be explicit via a judgement on the school's capacity to improve or implicit via the less frequent external supervision of schools judged to have good capacity for self-evaluation or review, thus representing a trust in the school's ability to improve.

## *Do external school evaluations lead to school improvement?*

There is a lack of research into the impact of external school evaluation on school improvement. The only country with any research tradition in this area is the United Kingdom (Ehren and Visscher, 2008), although more recently research has started in Germany, Korea, the Netherlands and New Zealand. The Flemish Inspectorate of Education refrains from measuring its impact due to the difficulty of such research: external school evaluation has direct and indirect effects, as it fosters a school's awareness of its autonomy and accountability to improve its own quality (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010).

### *The purpose of external school evaluation and the nature of follow-up by external evaluators*

Matthews and Sammons (2004, p. 153) in their in-depth evidence-based evaluation of the English inspectorate in the United Kingdom argue that assumptions that external school evaluation has a direct effect on school improvement are unrealistic without changing the nature of external school evaluation and giving external school evaluation bodies greater powers of follow-up or intervention. External school evaluation does not promote improvement by direct intervention, but rather by professional influence, fair and accurate reporting and informed analysis and comparison (idem). Indeed, Dedering and Müller (2010) argue that – in contrast to existing external school evaluation systems in England and the Netherlands – the purpose of recently introduced external school evaluation mechanisms in Germany is mainly for school improvement including an advisory and support function. They present research evidence from a survey administered to school principals in North Rhine-Westphalia that external school evaluations are discussed by a large group of stakeholders and are leading to the planning and implementation of school improvement and development actions.

### *External school evaluation impacts different schools in different ways*

Existing research suggests that external school evaluation has differing impact on schools and that certain conditions are associated with schools accepting and acting on feedback from external school evaluation. For example, research on the impact of external school evaluation in England within the United Kingdom shows: this did lead to change in internal school structures in schools that had either received a negative

assessment or had areas to improve (Ouston et al., 1997; Kogan and Maden, 1999); secondary schools with lower or higher than average achievement did see slight improvement (Shaw et al., 2003); and the most and least effective schools made the most use of external school evaluation results, but that external school evaluation had made a substantial improvement to the education system as a whole (Matthews and Sammons, 2004). Parsons (2006) found that there was variability in how external reviews were conducted and received by schools in New Zealand, but judged the influence of external evaluation to be "pervasive, multi-faceted and subtle".

### *Clear feedback from external evaluators and acceptance of feedback by schools*

There is evidence from different countries that the nature of feedback from external school evaluation has an important influence over its impact on school improvement. Matthews and Sammons (2004, p. 164) identify clear reporting of external school evaluation results and recommendations for improvement to be an important condition for the implementation of recommendations made by external evaluators. In ten case studies in Dutch primary schools, Ehren and Visscher (2008) found that all schools used external school evaluation feedback and six months after the external evaluation were still carrying out improvement plans and had already launched improvement initiatives that were relatively easy to implement. A combination of factors were identified as contributing to this: an assessment by external evaluators that certain points of the school's provision were "unsatisfactory", together with feedback from external evaluators on these weak points and agreement between the external evaluators and the school on improvement activities. Individually these factors did not explain the number of improvement initiatives launched by a school after an external evaluation. Therefore, the nature of feedback from external evaluators had a greater impact on school improvement than the amount of feedback they provided.

Two recent studies in the Netherlands also find that schools make use of external school evaluation reports and school quality report cards and that these do impact school policies and management (Bekkers et al., 2012; Janssens, 2012). In New Zealand, Nees (2007) studied six schools in the Wellington area following an external school review and found that all schools had made progress towards achieving recommendations made in external school review. In Korea, feedback from schools indicates that they find external evaluation reports considerably useful as they provide schools with practical assistance when designing education plans for the next year and establishing mid- to long-term school development plans. Schools also report appreciation of the dissemination of best-performing school cases (Kim et al., 2009). In Sweden, an audit of the external school evaluation process between 2003 and 2006 found that most schools constructively used feedback from external evaluation to improve their work and that the most important impact was that external school evaluation had brought about improvement sooner than would otherwise have been the case (Ekonomistyrningsverket, 2006).

### *Expectations that schools follow up on external evaluation results and school capacity to do so*

There is also evidence that an external expectation for schools to follow up on feedback and school capacity to follow up on results play an important role. Matthews and Sammons (2004, p. 164) identify the following main conditions for the implementation of recommendations from external school evaluation: "understanding and acceptance of the findings by the provider; leadership that can generate and implement a

strategy for implementing inspection outcomes, including effective action planning; identification of any resources and support needed to effect improvement; planned external follow-up to assess the progress made; high stakes, where inspection has the potential to affect funding or public esteem for the provider." In the Flemish Community of Belgium, follow-up external evaluation of schools receiving extra funding under the equal opportunities policy found considerable improvement in schools in 2008 that had received negative evaluations from the Flemish Inspectorate of Education in 2005 (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010). The policy included requirements for schools to self-evaluate their use of funding and its impact; plus the recommendations from external school evaluators and subsequent follow-up had fostered schools towards more policy-oriented reflection and practices.

Ehren et al., 2013 find that although expectations set in external school evaluation and stakeholder sensitivity to its results are related to schools accepting feedback from external school evaluation, the feedback is not connected to school improvement actions, i.e. the results indicate that accepting external school evaluation feedback does not motivate schools to improve (see Figure 6.2). This "unsettling" finding may be due to a lack of communication from external school evaluation bodies on the expectation that feedback is used by schools for improvement, or a lack of capacity – or even resistance – to act on feedback at the school level (Ehren et al., 2013). In the French Community of Belgium, teacher representatives report that the acceptance of feedback from external school evaluation by pedagogical teams within schools is an important aspect for integrating feedback into the school's evaluation culture (Blondin and Giot, 2011).

In Korea, there is concentrated management and follow-up of schools that fail to reach certain quality levels (Kim et al., 2010). External school evaluation is conducted by metropolitan/provincial offices and some differentiate external school evaluation, i.e. schools gaining excellent results are exempted from external evaluation, but underperforming schools receive focused external evaluation and consulting. Linking external school evaluation results to requirements for external school evaluation and other administrative measures is found to be an effective means of raising the impact of external school evaluation (Jung et al., 2008). Almost all metropolitan/provincial offices of education use a system of rewards to provide schools with incentives according to their evaluation results. However, the absolute amount of incentives and the width of level-differentiation are not very significant and so the system is judged to have no major impact on schools (Jung et al., 2008). Further, feedback from school principals indicates that the incentive and reward system has little relevance to school improvement (Kim et al., 2009). In the Netherlands, the adoption of a risk-based approach to external school evaluation with a targeted focus on underperforming schools has seen an initial decline in the number of "very weak" schools within the system (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2010a, 2010b). In Ireland, a School Improvement Group was established in 2008 to follow up on underperforming schools and has found that this is a lengthy process, but that such targeted follow-up is starting to see results in schools (see Box 6.18).

### *Setting expectations of school quality, reporting findings to stakeholders and stimulating school self-evaluation*

Of course, the stated purpose of external school evaluation often includes school improvement along with the major purpose of holding schools accountable by controlling aspects of their provision and quality. An ongoing research project funded by the European Union has analysed official documentation from external evaluation bodies (inspectorates) in six systems (Styria in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the

Netherlands, Sweden and England in the United Kingdom) and conducted interviews with representatives from external evaluation bodies and ministries to help map out how the design of each external evaluation system intends to impact school improvement (Ehren et al., 2013). Three common factors are identified as being expected levers for school improvement:

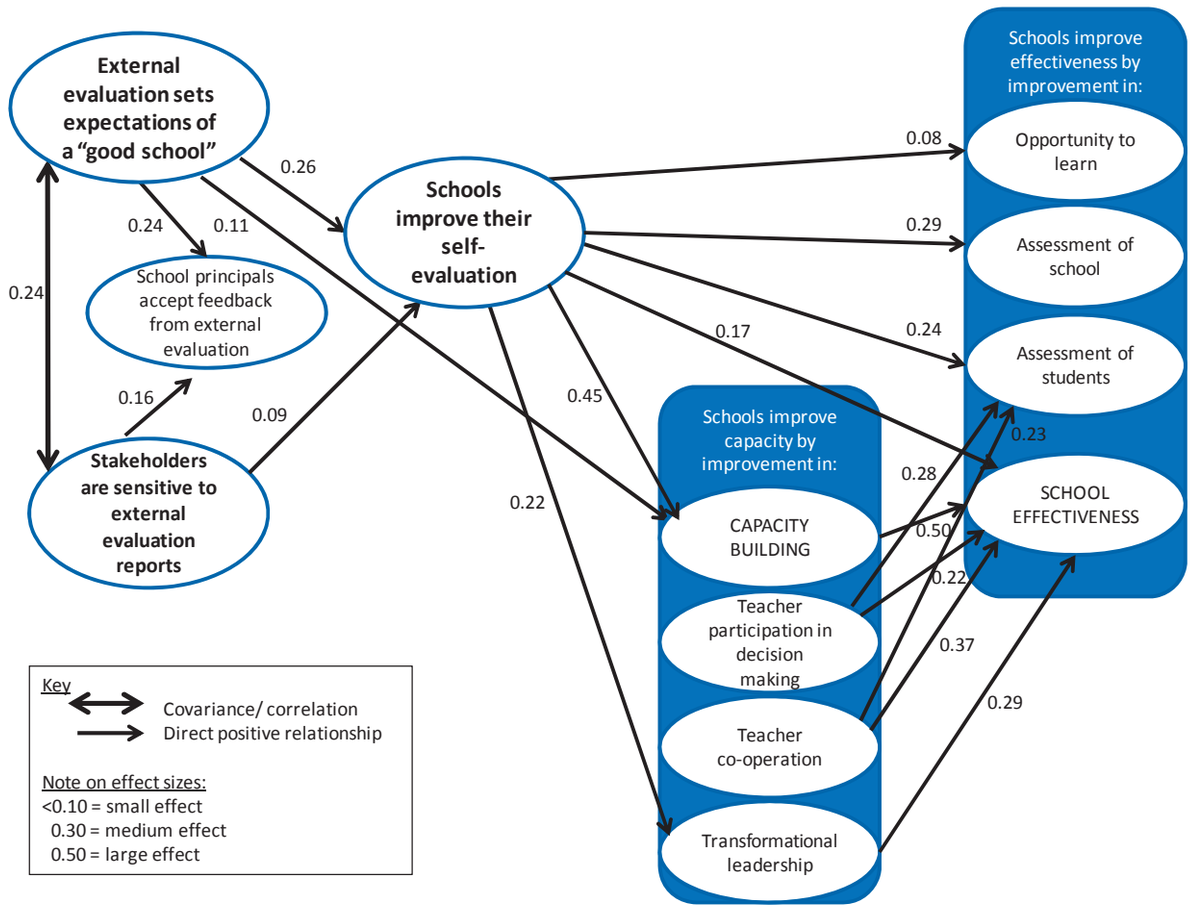
- External school evaluation sets expectations on school quality (i.e. with evaluation criteria and standards indicating a "good school");
- The results of external evaluation are shared with stakeholders (school boards/management, parents and students), stakeholders are sensitive to the results and this leads to pressure for improvement;
- External school evaluation promotes and stimulates improvement of school self-evaluation processes.

A preliminary testing of these theoretical levers has been conducted via the analysis of feedback from surveys administered to school principals in representative samples of schools in the six participating European systems (about 2 200 responses). Results indicate that clear expectations in external school evaluation and stakeholder sensitivity to the results of external school evaluation are correlated and are strong determinants of improvement actions reported at the school level (see Figure 6.2).[2] These findings suggest that where external school evaluation sets clear expectations, norms and standards and stakeholders are engaged with and knowledgeable about the external evaluation process, this has significant impact on schools (Ehren et al., 2013). Expectations set in external school evaluation and stakeholder sensitivity to the results of external school evaluation are also significantly related to schools improving their self-evaluation processes. There is also a direct influence of expectations set in external school evaluation over schools to build their capacity for improvement. These findings suggest that schools improving see systematic self-evaluation as a vital developmental strategy (Ehren et al., 2013).

Importantly, the findings indicate that various processes stressed by external school evaluation bodies to stimulate school improvement, such as school self-evaluation, transformational leadership and collaborative staff activities are important and effective (Ehren et al., 2013). Improvements in school self-evaluation are related to many school improvement actions. Figure 6.2 presents two distinct blocks of improvement actions at the school level. The first relates to the broad concept of improvements in capacity building, comprising improving teacher participation in decision making, improving teacher co-operation and improving transformational leadership. The second relates to the broad concept of improvements in school effectiveness, comprising improving opportunity to learn, improving assessment of the school and improving student assessment. School principals reporting that they are implementing or improving their self-evaluations, also report: taking more actions to build their capacity for improvement and change, notably, improving their transformational leadership; and improving their assessment of the school and students. In turn, schools reporting that they take more actions to build capacity for improvement and change, also report taking more actions to improve school effectiveness.

**Figure 6.2 Evidence on reported improvement actions in schools following external school evaluation**

Path analysis of school principal reports on external school evaluation in Styria in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and England in the United Kingdom




*Source*: Ehren et al. (2013).

Research in New Zealand also indicates that the focus on school self-review during the external review process can effectively stimulate schools' approaches to improvement. Schagen and Wylie (2009) found that three-quarters of the primary school principals in their survey reported that the external review's affirmation of their approach to improvement was the main outcome of the most recent external review. According to feedback received from a survey in 2008-09 sent to a random sample of school principals 15 months after an external review, their perceptions of the review process and final report were that it had been useful in informing school developments and had most impact on improving the school self-review, building on strengths and addressing weaknesses.

Evaluation of the external school evaluation process in Korea has shown that it gives schools the opportunity to reflect on their educational activities and it promotes information sharing and exchange among school members, and helps them broaden their interest and understanding of overall school affairs (Jung et al., 2008). The majority of teachers report that school evaluation gives the opportunity to refresh the school atmosphere, and that it provides a venue for discussion and consultation on the school's strengths and weaknesses.

In Portugal, feedback collected by the Inspectorate from schools inspected in 2008/09, indicated that the majority found a positive impact on the development of their self-evaluation process (Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science, forthcoming). At the end of the first school inspection cycle (2006-11), school external evaluation was judged to have contributed to the development of self-evaluation in schools. In the French Community of Belgium, school principal representatives report that the focus of external evaluations on student results is a way to bring together the teaching staff to work on improvement (Blondin and Giot, 2011).

### *Unintended impact on schools*

The above discussion examines evidence on the expected impact of external school evaluation. However, research also reveals examples of external evaluation impacting schools in unexpected ways. Unintended impact can include, for example, schools undertaking extensive preparation for external school evaluation and paying less attention to the teaching and learning process during that period (e.g. Rosenthal [2004] suggests this as a possible explanation of the finding that secondary schools had a drop in student achievement in the year of inspection) and undue stress for school staff in anticipation of an external school evaluation (e.g. Döbert et al. [2004] argue that this was the case for the assessment of school quality in France). An overview of empirical studies (mainly in the United Kingdom) finds that school staff report complaints of preparations for external school evaluation being stressful and time consuming, but finds no empirical studies on potential limitations on school diversity and innovation, via a "teaching to inspection" phenomenon (De Wolf and Janssens, 2007). Preliminary findings from an ongoing project funded by the European Union suggest that schools reporting they had accepted feedback from external school evaluation bodies did not perceive unintended consequences of external school evaluation (Ehren et al., 2013). However, schools reporting that they feel the external school evaluation body determines their expectations of good education, also reported unintended consequences of external school evaluation. Results indicate that new teaching approaches and curriculum experimentation may be hindered by school principals' concerns that these could distract staff from concentrating on meeting the expected external school evaluation standards (Ehren et al., 2013).

## Governance

This section examines the purpose of school evaluation, which bodies are responsible for devising and organising school evaluation, the extent to which a legal framework is set to specify school evaluation activities, other policies systems use to stimulate school evaluation activities and how external school evaluation and school self-evaluation are articulated.

### *Purpose of school evaluation*

As with all components of the evaluation and assessment framework, school evaluation has two major functions:

- **School development**: School evaluation identifies strengths and areas for school development with the aim to improve teaching and learning within schools, to close achievement gaps between schools and to enhance the performance of all students. This would necessitate a robust evaluation of the processes and strategies associated with student learning to allow the identification of areas for

school improvement. School evaluation can also be used to judge a school's capacity to enhance its effectiveness and therefore improve student learning.

- **School accountability**: School evaluation generates information for education authorities, the school community and other stakeholders to hold schools accountable for their performance. Information may include how a school complies with national standards and regulations, professional judgement on the quality of the services provided by the school, the learning outcomes and progressions of students within the school and judgements on the quality of outputs of a school based on its resources and other inputs ("added value" and "value for money").

Across countries, aspects of both purposes of school development and accountability can be found to varying degrees in self-evaluation and external school evaluation activities and in the comparison of schools on different performance measures. Typically, however, the last two are more associated with accountability purposes and school self-evaluation processes more with school development purposes.

School evaluation frameworks can draw on a significant body of research over the past 30 years that has defined the characteristics of effective schools and the processes to improve school effectiveness. This can help to devise an overall approach to school evaluation that strives for school improvement by use of evaluation for both school accountability and school development. Yeung (2011) provides a helpful summary to compare the school effectiveness and school improvement literature in the context of school evaluation (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1 Purpose of school evaluation**

| Accountability purpose "School effectiveness" | Development purpose "School improvement" |
|---|---|
| Focus on schools | Focus on teachers |
| Focus on school organisation | Focus on school processes |
| Data-driven, with the emphasis on outcomes | Empirical evaluation of effects of changes |
| Quantitative in orientation | Qualitative in orientation |
| Lack of knowledge about how to implement change strategies | Exclusively concerned with change in schools |
| More concerned with change in student outcomes | More concerned with journey of school improvement than its destination |
| More concerned with schools at one point in time | More concerned with schools as changing |
| Based on research knowledge | Focused on practitioner knowledge |
| Concerned with schools that are effective | Concerned with how schools become effective |
| Static orientation (school as it is) | Dynamic orientation (school as it has been, or might be) |

*Source*: Reynolds et al. (1996) and Chapman (2005) in Yeung (2011).

The mix of school evaluation policies needs to fit into the wider governance context in a school system. For example, the Swedish system is strengthening external national control at a time of market orientation and greater choice and privatisation in the Swedish school system (Ronnberg, 2011). To better fit a wider move to promote "good governance" in the Netherlands, the results of external school evaluations are now communicated directly to the competent school authorities and not directly to schools (Scheerens, et al. 2012). In France, there has not been much support for the development

of whole-school evaluation given the limited autonomy for primary schools in particular, but also for secondary education providers (Dos Santos and Rakocevic, 2012). However, central education authorities (general inspectorate and directorates for evaluation and school education) are committed to working towards a better school external evaluation system. They put special emphasis on close co-operation between schools and regional education authorities. Boxes 6.1 and 6.2 present some examples of country initiatives to strengthen the purpose for school development or for school accountability.

### Box 6.1 Strengthening the focus on school development

**Korea: Shifting the purpose from compliancy to providing direction for improvement**

As a result of strengthened school autonomy, Korea introduced a school evaluation system in 1996 to enhance the quality of education and hold schools accountable (Kim et al., 2010). The focus was on school compliancy with national and local policies. From 2000-2004 there was a dual system of national "qualitative reviews" on a sample of schools and Metropolitan/provincial offices of education (MPOEs) evaluated how well schools implemented local policy projects. In 2005 a national model for school evaluation was introduced comprising an element of "external review", a national school evaluation framework with core common quality indicators and both external and self-evaluation activities. However, external school evaluation is conducted solely by the MPOEs. MPOEs include local indicators in addition to the common national indicators. The national school evaluation framework was introduced to allow the evaluation of the whole school system against the standard of the ideal school education and to provide direction for school education reform. Prior to this, supervision and inspection focused only on checking whether schools were carrying out policy projects specified by central and local education offices and abiding by educational laws.

**Luxembourg: Stimulating school use of data for development planning**

Since 2009, fundamental schools (ISCED 0 and 1) have been required to set a 4-year development plan. This is within the context of a reform to focus fundamental education on competency development at different key stages and has been accompanied by the introduction of national student assessments at two of the four key stages (Cycles 3 and 4). The Ministry has strongly followed schools in their development planning and by the end of 2011 all fundamental schools had developed a 4-year plan (Shewbridge et al., 2012). A major focus from the Ministry has been to help schools with analysing data and it offers feedback from national assessments, other assessment tools, as well as advice and analytical expertise. Each year the school team should evaluate its implementation of the school development plan. This implies reviewing the achievement of annual school objectives and adapting those to be implemented in the following year.

**Denmark and the Flemish Community of Belgium: Introducing robust performance data for schools to use in self-evaluation**

In 2010, Denmark introduced a suite of computer-based national assessments with the aim of providing schools and teachers with rapid feedback on how students perform in discrete areas of the national common objectives. Such information is fed back to schools via analytical software which can be used to compare student performance to national averages and various student groupings within the school. Both the speed of feedback of results (the day after the student is tested) and the flexibility of analytical functions in the software used heighten the relevance of student performance data to school self-evaluation activities (Shewbridge et al., 2011b).

The Flemish Community of Belgium provides feedback reports to schools on their performance in both the national sample assessments and international assessments. Further, it offers schools which have not participated in the national sample the possibility to conduct the assessments and to receive feedback. The results included in the feedback reports are benchmarked against averages in the Flemish Community, as well as adjusted to allow comparison to schools with similar student characteristics (Shewbridge et al., 2011a).

### Box 6.2 Strengthening the focus on school accountability

**Sweden: Strengthened national capacity to conduct external school evaluation**

External school evaluation was introduced at the national level in 2003 and initially conducted by the National Agency for Education. In 2008, a new agency was established: the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. The first round of external school evaluation was conducted over a 6-year period. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate plans to evaluate each school on a 3-year cycle. External school evaluation follows nationally established standards and external school evaluation reports are published on line to complement performance information in the national reporting systems (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2010).

**Netherlands: School compliancy re-emphasised in external school evaluation**

A revision to the Supervision Act in 2012 corroborates the responsibilities specified in the 2010 "Good governance, good education" Act, i.e. that the competent school authorities are held accountable for student results and school governance and financial compliance (Scheerens et al., 2012). External school evaluation criteria (as specified in the "school inspection framework") have always included school compliance to educational laws, but now explicitly state certain laws, e.g. parental participation in school decision making. Further, the 2012 Act introduces the new aspect of the evaluation of a school's teacher personnel policy.

**Australia: Easy access public website providing performance data on schools**

A major school reporting system was launched in Australia in 2010 (*www.myschool.edu.au*). The My School website continues to evolve and each annual release includes more information on schools. The major impetus initially was to provide transparent performance information on each school in Australia. My School currently presents a suite of information on school context and mission, in-depth presentation of the school's performance on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), as well as funding information for the school. There is also a mechanism for visitors to the site to compare both a given school's performance and its performance progress to the national average and to a group of statistically similar schools (see Box 6.20).

### *School accountability takes multiple forms*

The OECD Review has revealed a complex mix of different types of school accountability co-existing in many countries. Schools are increasingly held accountable to multiple levels of educational authorities and to the wider community in which they are involved (Faubert, 2009). In most countries, schools provide information to the relevant public authorities (local or national) (OECD, 2011). This is the traditional vertical or hierarchical external accountability, but schools may also be accountable to their supervisory boards (OECD, 2011). The publication of school performance measures and the results of external school evaluation aims to introduce another form of external accountability, in which schools are accountable to the market, i.e. parents choosing a school. More recently, a horizontal accountability has emerged and schools provide their community and stakeholders with insight into their processes, choices and results (Faubert, 2009). This is also linked with the development of a strong role for school self-evaluation. For example, in Scotland in the United Kingdom, external school evaluators validate a school's self-evaluation results and only where there are concerns about the school's effectiveness in serving its community will there be more intensive external school evaluations. This reflects the horizontal accountability of the school to its students, their parents and the community (Hutchinson and Young, 2011).

Across the OECD, school compliancy with legislation is an important part of external school evaluation. This may be complemented by an evaluation of the quality of the processes developed by schools in order to meet the goals set by educational authorities.

Where evaluation exclusively monitors compliance with regulations, this can include aspects such as the composition of classes, the tasks and workload of teachers, the use of school infrastructure, and the management of human and budgetary resources, but it does not include educational tasks (Faubert, 2009).

In addition, most countries include a focus on outcomes, including student cognitive and social skills (Faubert, 2009). The major information base for outcomes at the school level is aggregate performance measures on student results in national assessments or examinations. In the United States, this is the major focus in the approach to school accountability. Among the OECD Review countries, Hungary and Mexico have a strong reliance on school performance measures.

However, in most countries there is a mix of a focus on processes and outcomes. Masters (2012) reviews research on outcomes-based incentive schemes and argues that a system to reward school improvement should be based on both outcomes-based measures and practice-based measures. It is logical to use evidence of improved practices and processes in a system that aims to improve school quality.

### *Risks that compliancy dominates school evaluation*

There is a risk that external evaluation may be predominantly associated with compliance to procedural requirements, instead of with school improvement. This may be inherent in both the design of the evaluation system and what is assessed and choices to introduce shorter inspections drawing heavily on school documentation. There is a risk that external school evaluation does not yet place adequate focus on teaching and learning and misses the opportunity to contribute to school improvement. This means that the external school evaluation process sends ambiguous signals about what matters and forms judgements on proxy indicators, the evidence for which is open to manipulation and misrepresentation.

Increased pressure stemming from external school evaluation might create incentives for mere compliance to administrative requirements at the expense of improvement and innovation (Faubert, 2009). An approach that is largely top-down and that imposes changes on schools is believed to create a "culture of compliance" among teachers at the expense of innovation (Datnow et al., 2000; Leithwood et al., 2000). It may also be the perception of school principals that external school evaluation is only an exercise in compliancy to ensure continued recognition or funding and that it is not a useful stimulus for school improvement. Such perceptions may reflect a lack of follow-up by external authorities on the implementation of recommendations within the evaluation reports. The association of external school evaluation with compliancy may also mean that school principals do not promote and seriously discuss the results of external school evaluation with the full school staff and parents, thereby severely reducing their impact on school improvement.

The purpose of the evaluation exercise and who has control over it are sensitive issues (Simons, 1987; Ball, 2003). Looney (2011) finds that the misalignment of views among different stakeholders on the role and purpose of evaluation poses significant challenges to the effective use of evaluation for reform. A study commissioned by the National Union of Teachers in the United Kingdom (MacBeath et al., 1996, p. 92) stated four key priorities for improving the school evaluation process: self-evaluation should be central in any national approach to school improvement; accountability and self-improvement should be seen as two strands of the one inter-related strategy; provision of time and resources have to feature as a key issue in school improvement; and external school

evaluation should continue to be a feature of the drive towards school improvement, but as part of a collaborative strategy with schools and local authorities.

West, Mattei and Roberts (2011) argue in the presence of multiple types of accountability for schools in England within the United Kingdom, that hierarchical and market accountabilities (e.g. schools demonstrating improvements on measures published in school league tables), as well as legal accountability (e.g. schools facing potential sanctions) carry most influence. As such it is argued that compliancy dominates the school accountability system. Network, participative and professional accountability are perceived to be comparatively weak forms of accountability, although they could help to foster greater social cohesion.

Within the United Kingdom, Scotland has a clear policy for school self-evaluation to be central to school self-evaluation. However, a change of culture requires sustained effort and capacity building. Croxford et al. (2009) comment that a strengthened role for self-evaluation has been hindered by: the historical context of strong central influence; and other policies regarding the setting of targets by local authorities and the use of standard performance measures. They argue that school self-evaluation has become an accepted procedure in schools, but that some undertake this "enthusiastically", while others "treat this with cynical compliance". Hutchinson and Young (2011) identify that the new policy emphasis on assessment for learning (encouraging teachers to make professional judgements on student learning progress and to minimise reliance on standardised tests) articulates well with the external school evaluation policy. However, it is necessary to build professional and public understanding of the new assessment and evaluation models and to build capacity for using and interpreting data. Teachers will need appropriate professional development and support from authorities to avoid the risk of slipping back into the old paradigm of using external tests to provide robust, reliable and objective evidence to external school evaluators and authorities (University of Glasgow, 2008). This echoes warnings that reliance on a heavy test-based accountability system may threaten professional development and capacity building and result in a culture of dependence (Earl et al., 2003).

In Norway, the Norwegian Labour Inspectorate conducts inspections of the health, environment and safety in Norwegian schools, but it does not focus on the education provided in schools or the quality of teaching and learning. Typically, local and regional authorities, as part of their obligation to monitor schools, take note of school results, sometimes require schools to submit annual strategic plans and/or improvement plans and occasionally visit schools to interview senior staff and check compliance with legislation. They do not generally undertake more in-depth school reviews or inspections involving the direct observation and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning (Nusche et al., 2011a). Similarly, the typical approach of the regional representatives of the central authorities in monitoring local approaches is to simply monitor results and check compliance at an administrative level.

In Denmark, the annual requirement for local authorities to produce a quality report has been beneficial in promoting dialogue between local authorities, school boards and schools and making the work of schools more transparent (Shewbridge et al., 2011b). The use of a national template, but with local adaptations has promoted a sense of ownership of the quality reports, providing that schools and school boards actively participate in their development and see value in the data and information they contain. The evolutionary process of developing these reports involves dialogue about what is worth reporting and how it can be measured and estimated. However, the reports typically contain indicators

that are not sufficiently scientific or focused to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the core processes relating to teaching and learning and leadership. This reporting process does not guarantee an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and notably does not necessarily stimulate a culture of teacher appraisal and classroom observation.

In the Slovak Republic, there have been increased demands on the State Schools Inspectorate to conduct different types of external school evaluations, including "information inspections" (Shewbridge et al., forthcoming). These types of external school evaluation focus on documentation, are conducted in a single day and do not include classroom visits. For example, recent information inspections have included verification of the content of the school educational programme against the national educational programme. Schools and other stakeholders report experiencing information inspections as bureaucratic exercises placing demands on school time, but not providing useful feedback for the school. Although schools are supposed to have an external whole-school evaluation (complex inspection) every five years, this external evaluation cycle appears to be under pressure and some schools may wait longer. During an external whole-school evaluation, external evaluators conduct a number of classroom observations using a stable analytical observation and judgement instrument and often ask the teacher to give a brief self-evaluation of the lesson before giving feedback. Stakeholders during the OECD review in the Slovak Republic expressed strong support for these whole-school evaluations.

In Mexico, there is no systematic external school evaluation. However, there is a long-established tradition of oversight of school work by supervisors and other personnel external to the school, but their role has been largely associated with ensuring schools' compliance with regulations and other administrative tasks. The traditional role and functions of supervisors, relating to regulations, control, administrative operation of schools and supervision of the political and ideological standpoints of teachers do not appear to have evolved or to respond appropriately to the needs of the education system (Santiago et al., 2012). However the OECD Review did reveal some examples of supervisors providing feedback to school principals and teachers and their role could evolve to one that can support school self-evaluation.

### *Responsibilities for external school evaluation*

Responsibilities for devising external school evaluation lie firmly in the realm of educational authorities (central, regional/provincial and local) and specific external school evaluation bodies such as inspectorates or school review bodies. In the majority of education systems operating a system for external school evaluation, this is devised and organised at the central or state level (Table 6.2).

In education systems operating a system for external school evaluation, the major capacity lies with:

- **Central or state authorities**: The Ministry of Education is responsible for external school evaluations in Denmark, Iceland, Israel and Norway. In Australia, arrangements vary among states and territories, but are generally managed by government departments. For example, in Western Australia there is an Expert Review Group within the Department of Education and Training, but in Victoria external reviews are commissioned to external, accredited individuals but review processes are evaluated by officials in the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Santiago et al., 2011). In Ireland and Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom an inspectorate sits within the Department of Education.

- **A specific body beyond the Ministry of Education**: Typically, in European systems this is a national or state level school inspectorate *(*e.g. the Slovak State Schools Inspectorate, the Flemish Inspectorate of Education, etc.). In New Zealand this is the national Education Review Office. Sweden established the Swedish Schools Inspectorate in 2008, following the commencement of external school evaluation activities in 2003 by the National Agency of Education. In Germany, all 16 federal states have implemented some form of external school evaluation between 2004 and 2008. In six states there are specific institutions responsible for external school evaluations (Agency for Quality in Bavaria; Institute for School Development in Bremen; Department of the Institute for Educational Monitoring in Hamburg; Institute for Quality Development in Hesse; Agency for Quality in Rhineland-Palatinate; Department in the Institute of Education in Saxony) (Dedering and Müller, 2010).

In Chile, the Czech Republic and Poland, external school evaluation responsibilities are divided among the central and provincial/regional levels. Korea provides an example where such division of responsibilities was formerly the case (2000-04), but responsibilities were changed to reduce overlap of evaluation activities (Kim et al., 2010). Metropolitan/provincial offices of education now have full responsibility for conducting external school evaluations, but these are based on a national school evaluation framework. Other countries where responsibilities lie at the provincial/regional level include Austria and France (secondary schools) and Turkey (primary schools). In France, where there is not a unique school evaluation protocol, the school evaluation bodies based in the regions participate in school evaluation, in addition to different directorates of the Ministry of National Education and to the national inspectorate. The regional inspectors take stock of the situation in the school with the school principal, usually during their visit for teacher appraisal. The ministerial directorates (especially the Directorate of Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance, DEPP) are responsible for elaborating performance indicators. The national inspectors evaluate the implementation of particular reforms and policies in different types of schools, for example an evaluation in 2012 of educational reintegration programme schools.

It is far less typical for external school evaluation responsibilities to lie at the local level. In Austria and France, this is the case for the external evaluation of primary schools. In France this is the traditional individual inspection by local inspectors called National Education Inspectors (IEN), but changes are currently being discussed. In Norway, external school evaluation responsibilities lie at the local level for primary and lower secondary education. However, since 2009 regional representatives of the central authorities are obliged to monitor local approaches to school evaluation. It is of note that in Luxembourg there is no external school evaluation, but there is a system of "inspectors" at the primary level. These are the hierarchical heads of primary schools, but they are not physically located at the school and are responsible for all primary schools in a given local authority.

In both Finland and Hungary, national school inspectorates were abolished (in 1991 and 1985, respectively) and no systematic external school evaluation is conducted, although in both cases there is nationally recognised capacity for external school evaluation, should schools choose to commission this. It is of note that in Hungary governance structures are changing from 2013 and that this will have implications for school evaluation (see Chapter 2). In Denmark, it is possible for private schools to nominate a person of their choice to conduct external school evaluation, but this person must be accredited by the Danish Ministry of Education.

## Table 6.2 Responsibilities for external school evaluation

| | Major bodies responsible for conducting external school evaluation |
|---|---|
| **Australia** | Some states organise external review of public schools typically conducted by special groups within the government department of education. May also conduct external reviews of private schools as part of the registration process. Evaluations may also be organised at the local level by some non-government school systems (e.g. Catholic sector). |
| **Austria** | Local (ISCED 1); local and provincial/regional (ISCED 2); regional (ISCED 3) |
| **Belgium (Fl.)** | State: Flemish Inspectorate of Education |
| **Belgium (Fr.)** | State: General Inspection Services (*Service général de l'inspection*) |
| **Canada** | The Atlantic provinces require the external review of schools which is typically conducted by a member of the department of education and representatives from other school boards. |
| **Czech Republic** | Central: Czech School Inspectorate and regional (ISCED 2 and 3) and municipal (ISCED 1 and 2) education authorities |
| **Denmark** | Ministry of Education monitors school performance in lower and upper secondary schools and in all private independent schools. As of 2010, private schools can either nominate an accredited external inspector or conduct school self-evaluation. |
| **Estonia** | Central |
| **Finland** | No central external school evaluation (School Inspectorate abolished in 1991). Education providers may commission and pay for external school evaluations by the Education Evaluation Council (the same body that conducts national evaluations). |
| **France** | Local (ISCED 1): school inspection visits undertaken by National Education Inspectors (IEN)<br>Regional (ISCED 2 and 3): Regional Pedagogical Inspectors (IAIPR); General Inspectorate of National Education (IGEN); General Inspectorate of the Administration of National Education and Research (IGAENR) |
| **Germany** | State: in nine states the Ministry of Education or other government department; in six states an institute external to the Ministry of Education; in one state an autonomous body of school governors. |
| **Greece** | No external school evaluation |
| **Hungary** | No external school evaluation (inspection activities abolished in 1985 Education Act). National Register of Experts contains names of individuals who are competent and permitted to perform external school evaluation. |
| **Iceland** | Central and local (ISCED 1 and 2); central (ISCED 3) – Ministry of Education, Science and Culture |
| **Ireland** | Central: Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills |
| **Israel** | Central: Ministry of Education |
| **Italy** | No external school evaluation |
| **Japan** | No external school evaluation (ISCED 1, 2 and 3 general.); Central (ISCED 3 [pre-]vocational) |
| **Korea** | Provincial: metropolitan/provincial offices of education |
| **Luxembourg** | No external school evaluation |
| **Mexico** | No external school evaluation |
| **Netherlands** | Central: Dutch Inspectorate of Education |
| **New Zealand** | Central: Education Review Office |
| **Norway** | Local (ISCED 1 and 2): municipalities. Regional (ISCED 3): counties. Local and regional authority representatives may visit schools to interview leadership, but generally do not conduct reviews or inspections. Regional representatives of central government (County Governors) ensure that local and regional authorities have an effective quality system in place. |
| **Poland** | Central and regional: Ministry of Education and regional superintendants |
| **Portugal** | Central: General Inspectorate of Education and Science (IGEC) established in current form in 1979 |
| **Slovak Republic** | Central: State Schools Inspectorate |
| **Slovenia** | Central: The Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport |
| **Spain** | State |
| **Sweden** | Central: Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2008); National Agency for Education (2003-07) |
| **Turkey** | Provincial/ regional (ISCED 1); Central (ISCED 3) |
| **United Kingdom (England)** | Central: Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) established in 1992 as a non-ministerial government department |
| **United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)** | State: Education and Training Inspectorate of the Department of Education |
| **United Kingdom (Scotland)** | State: Education Scotland – Her Majesty's inspectors (2011); 2001-10 executive agency Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) |
| **United States** | State, local and school |

*Source*: OECD Review; OECD (2011).

### *Setting requirements for external school evaluation*

The vast majority of OECD countries have established a legal basis for undertaking external school evaluation, although the extent and type of requirements set vary enormously. The only OECD countries in which there are no external school evaluation requirements are Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan (with the exception of upper secondary vocational education programmes), Luxembourg and Mexico.

When setting a legal framework for external school evaluation, the typical approach across OECD countries is to set conditions for highly structured external school evaluations (Table 6.3). That is, specifying that similar evaluation activities should be completed at each school based on a specific set of data collection tools (OECD, 2011). Austria is the only system where external school evaluations are entirely unstructured, that is evaluation activities may vary depending on the strengths and weaknesses in different schools. In other systems, external school evaluations may fall between these two extremes in different ways.

Some systems establish requirements for annual reporting systems and these may to varying degrees include specifications on common indicators to be included. For example, in Norway a revision to the Education Act in 2009 established the basis for a degree of external evaluation. This aimed to address concerns that local authorities (ISCED 1 and 2) and regional authorities (ISCED 3) were not implementing adequate external school evaluation procedures (Nusche et al., 2011a). Local and regional authorities are obliged to develop a "quality framework" to guide their schools' self-evaluation activities and produce an annual status report. In addition, regional representatives of the central government are obliged to hold local and regional authorities accountable with regard to their duty to have effective quality monitoring systems in their schools. There is a centrally specified set of quality indicators (some mandatory and some recommended) that local and regional authorities are advised to include in their quality frameworks (and monitor in their schools), but local and regional authorities are also free to specify and add different quality indicators that are tailored to the local context (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2011). Further, the annual status report should form the basis of a programme of quality improvement and development activities for the year ahead. This is similar to a policy introduced by Denmark in 2006 for local authorities to produce an annual quality report on their schools. Again, the reports should address nationally specified indicators, but there are ongoing experiments to reduce the level of mandatory indicators and allow greater local flexibility. This is an attempt to respond to criticisms from both local authorities and schools of the burden that the quality report design placed on them (Shewbridge et al., 2011b). Indeed, the long established requirements for local authorities in Sweden to produce annual quality reports on their schools was dropped in 2010 due to similar concerns raised by local authorities on the amount of resources required to produce such reports (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2010). However, the context in Sweden was different given a more highly developed mechanism for external school evaluation with the establishment of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate in 2008. Similar concerns are raised by educators in Korea, claiming that the burden of preparing a self-evaluation report distracts teachers from their class instruction hours and that the reported information is not usually related to the core educational activities of teachers (Kim et al., 2010). As of 2011, there is a new initiative in Korea to give more local freedom over the content of self-evaluation reports.

## Table 6.3 Legal frameworks for external school evaluation

| | Degree to which external school evaluation is structured and legal framework |
|---|---|
| **Australia** | Partially structured: all states and territories (for public schools) and non-government schools in the Catholic education sector provide school evaluation frameworks, although external evaluation for Catholic schools follows internal processes of school evaluation |
| **Austria** | Unstructured |
| **Belgium (Fl.)** | Highly/partially structured: 2009 Decree on Quality of Education ("differentiated" inspection in terms of intensity and frequency depending on the school quality) specifies that the focus of the inspection may change depending on the specific school, although all inspections are based on highly structured framework; whole-school evaluation since 1991 |
| **Belgium (Fr.)** | Partially structured: 2007 revision of Inspection Act; Inspection of different study disciplines (e.g. mathematics); schools should be inspected in one discipline at least once every three years |
| **Canada** | Partially structured: the Atlantic provinces legislate School Improving Planning, which includes a final stage of external review (typically after 3-4 years) to validate a school's self-review against its school development plan. |
| **Chile** | Highly structured: Provincial Departments of Education (DEPROVs) responsible for the technical and pedagogical support, and the administrative and financial situation of schools that are under their jurisdiction (section 16 of Law No. 18,956) |
| **Czech Republic** | Highly structured: Education Act 2004 authorises the Czech School Inspectorate to inspect schools; 2008/09 inspectorate monitors school education programmes against national framework for education programmes. 2012/13 introduces a 4 year inspection cycle for schools at ISCED 1 and 2 (previously on a 3-year cycle). ISCED 3 schools remain on a 3-year cycle. |
| **Denmark** | Partially structured: system of local authority (municipal) quality reporting requirements introduced in 2006, based on common national indicators. Local authorities must publish an annual quality report on their schools and present an action plan for any school with identified quality concerns. |
| **Estonia** | Highly structured |
| **Finland** | No central external school evaluation |
| **France** | Partially structured |
| **Germany** | Highly structured: school inspections were implemented between 2004 and 2008 in all of the 16 federal states in Germany. Each state uses its own school quality framework including standardised criteria to evaluate "good instruction" and "good schools". |
| **Greece** | No external school evaluation |
| **Hungary** | Unstructured: No external school evaluation requirements, but nationally accredited evaluators available. |
| **Iceland** | Partially structured: Compulsory School Act (2008) strengthens evaluation and monitoring of school operations, specifies local authority supervision responsibility and requires 3-year plan for national evaluations. |
| **Ireland** | Highly structured: Education Act 1998, plus regulation in 2006 with respect to publication of inspection reports. |
| **Israel** | Highly structured |
| **Italy** | No external school evaluation |
| **Japan** | Highly structured (ISCED 3 pre-voc/voc.); no external school evaluations at other levels. |
| **Korea** | Highly structured: Primary and Secondary Education Act and the Enforcement Decree (1996). |
| **Luxembourg** | No external school evaluation |
| **Mexico** | No external school evaluation |
| **Netherlands** | Partially structured: Supervision Act (2002, revised in 2012) describes the inspection framework, interventions for failing schools and quality standards. Inspection of regulations specified in the Acts on Primary Education, Secondary Education and "Good education, good governance". |
| **New Zealand** | Partially structured: since 2009 differentiated approach to review schools with strong performance and self-review capacity every 4-5 years, schools performing well every 3 years and schools experiencing difficulty an ongoing review over a 1-2 year period. |
| **Norway** | Partially structured: local (ISCED 1 and 2) and regional (ISCED 3) authorities must establish and maintain a quality framework and prepare an annual status report including some mandatory indicators (Education Act revision in 2009). |
| **Poland** | Highly structured |
| **Portugal** | Highly structured: 2002 Evaluation Law established external and internal school evaluation requirements. First full inspection cycle completed between 2006 and 2011. |
| **Slovak Republic** | Highly structured: Act in 2003 (Inspectorate's role) and Decree on School Inspection in 2005 (types of inspection); the School Act 2008 |

**Table 6.3 Legal frameworks for external school evaluation (*continued*)**

| | Degree to which external school evaluation is structured and legal framework |
|---|---|
| **Slovenia** | School Inspection Act (1996; last revision 2005) regulates matters of compliance with school regulations in pre-tertiary education |
| **Spain** | Partially structured |
| **Sweden** | Highly structured |
| **Turkey** | Highly structured |
| **UK (England)** | Highly structured: Education Act 1992 establishing Ofsted; Education Act 2005 |
| **UK (Northern Ireland)** | Highly structured: The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (Articles102 and 102A) |
| **UK (Scotland)** | Highly structured: starting point is external review of school's own self-evaluation conducted following a centrally devised framework |
| **United States** | Highly structured: the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) requires the public reporting of school performance on national standardised tests and specifies requirements for adequate yearly progress on these measures. |

Note: Highly structured external school evaluation means that similar activities are completed at each school based on a specific set of data collection tools; unstructured external school evaluation comprises activities that vary at each site depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

*Source*: OECD Review; OECD (2011).

In the case of the French Community of Belgium, schools may be inspected in different study discipline areas, although following a standard evaluation approach (Blondin and Giot, 2011). In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the inspection framework is based on common criteria, but schools may be evaluated against a subset of these criteria according to what is judged most pertinent to that school in terms of their quality improvement needs (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010). In both the Netherlands and New Zealand a common external school evaluation framework is used, but external school evaluations are differentiated depending on the evaluation of the school's quality. Such legal frameworks aim to better target external school evaluation to both the schools that are in most need of improvement and to particular areas of development required within each school. It is hoped that this will increase the impact of external school evaluations.

### *Balancing a need for regular external school evaluation and minimising the demands on school time*

External school evaluation can be carried out at regular intervals (e.g. every four years), be a one-off event such as when the risk of underperformance is considered high, or may happen as the result of a complaint. However, systems operating external school evaluations often follow a set cycle and may specify the maximum period (usually number of years) between external evaluations conducted in a given school. For example, schools should have an external evaluation every five years in Slovenia and the Slovak Republic, every four years in the Netherlands and every three years in the Czech Republic. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, new regulations in 2009 saw the reduction in frequency of external school evaluations from at least once every six years to every ten years, although schools with identified quality concerns would be supervised more frequently (Shewbridge et al., 2011a). Ireland is an example of where there has been concerted effort to increase the frequency of external school evaluations. Reports from lower secondary teachers in the international TALIS survey indicated that just 43% were in schools where an external evaluation had happened over the past five years. In

response to this finding, the frequency of external evaluation has increased since 2009, "partly through the introduction of a range of new models of inspection and unannounced short inspections. In 2011, for example, inspections were conducted in over one-sixth of all primary schools and in over 600 of the 740 secondary schools in the country" (Irish Department for Education and Skills, 2012).

There may be a policy to introduce a "proportionate" approach to external school evaluation. This may still keep a regular cycle of external school evaluation in all schools, but include shorter school visits with smaller external evaluation teams in schools where there are no quality concerns detected. Or this may involve visiting better performing schools less often and schools with quality concerns more often. Moves to "proportionate" approaches to external school evaluation have taken place in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand and in Scotland within the United Kingdom. Since 2009, the Flemish Inspectorate follows a "differentiated" approach to external school evaluation. This means that external school evaluations are differentiated according to both their frequency and their focus and coverage according to which areas of the external school framework are most pertinent to the particular school being reviewed (Shewbridge et al., 2011a). In Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria have introduced variants of a risk-based determination for external reviews in public (government) schools (Santiago et al., 2011). Western Australia varies the length of the external review cycle depending on the school's performance, as annual reviews were deemed unnecessary for high performing schools. Victoria uses four increasingly intensive forms of external review depending on an assessment of a school's performance levels: negotiated, continuous improvement, diagnostic, and extended diagnostic. In New Zealand the frequency of external school evaluation is linked to an evaluation of the school's capacity to conduct self-evaluation (see Box 6.4).

External school evaluations may place significant demands on school time and resources. The time that a whole-school evaluation takes may not be worth its potential impact on school improvement. Some schools may benefit more than others from external school evaluations and may need more frequent evaluation than that scheduled in a regular cycle of external school evaluation.

In Hong Kong-China curriculum leaders, that is senior teachers within schools, report that they used certain coping strategies to deal with external school review demands, including groups to study external review criteria, planning and acting to meet performance indicators standards, preparing teachers to cope with classroom observation, help with compiling documentation and learning how to present evidence well (Yeung, 2012). However, the demands for external school review had also stimulated peer observation of teaching and engaging external consultants.

In the Netherlands, evaluations conducted by the Inspectorate of Education showed that the new approach of "risk-based inspection" entailed a lower administrative burden for schools, as well as providing efficiency gains for the Dutch Inspectorate of Education (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2010a, 2010b).

### *Setting requirements for school self-evaluation*

In many countries (e.g. Australia, Germany and England within the United Kingdom) school self-evaluation activities have been initiated by individual schools or groups of schools through partnership with a university or school district (MacBeath, 2008). In Canada, there has been a distinct approach in developing evaluation practices from the bottom-up (Fournier and Mildon, forthcoming). For example, in the Atlantic Provinces in

Canada, school self-evaluation activities pre-dated legislation for school improvement planning. However, across countries there has been an almost universal focus at the national policy level to stimulate school self-evaluation. The vast majority of OECD countries have legal requirements in place for schools to conduct self-evaluation, although these vary significantly in nature (Table 6.4). For European systems, there has been a supra-national influence over the development of school self-evaluation. The European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2001) made a clear recommendation in 2001 for European countries to "encourage school self-evaluation as a method of creating learning and improving schools". In fact, nearly all European Union members already had some form of support for school self-evaluation in place at that time (Eurydice, 2004).

**Table 6.4 Requirements for school self-evaluation**

| | Level responsible | Legal framework |
|---|---|---|
| **Australia** | State/territory and school | Partially structured: all schools must publish an annual report including school performance information on key outcomes and satisfaction, as well as contextual information about the school. |
| **Austria** | Schools and regional authorities | The 2011 Schools Inspectorate Act provides for the introduction of mandatory self-evaluation. School development plans are being piloted in some schools and will be mandatory for schools offering general education in 2013/14. |
| **Belgium (Fl.)** | No explicit self-evaluation requirements | 2009 Decree on quality of education states that schools "need to be able to account for their efforts to monitor and enhance their quality";<br>Partially structured: self-evaluation requirements for schools receiving support as part of the Equal Educational Opportunities (GOK) policy. |
| **Belgium (Fr.)** | No explicit self-evaluation requirements | 1997 Act specifies that each school should draw up a "School Plan" (*Projet d'établissement*) and produce an annual activity report against objectives in the plan. |
| **Canada** | School and province/territory | The Atlantic Provinces in Canada are required to conduct School Improvement Planning: Schools are expected to establish a common school vision, long-range 3-to-4 year goals, specific annual objectives, sources of data or indicators, annual reviews and renewal of plans. Schools must produce an annual report for their community and the education authorities evaluating their progress towards goals. Legislation underpins school community (parents) rights to contribute to school improvement planning. |
| **Czech Republic** | School | Partially structured (ISCED 2 and 3); highly structured (ISCED 1): Education Act 2005 – schools must conduct self-evaluation and reflect results in an annual school report. |
| **Denmark** | No explicit requirements (ISCED 1 and 2); central (ISCED 3) | Partially structured (ISCED 3): although public schools (ISCED 1 and 2) are not required to develop an annual report, this is typically requested by their municipality as part of its legal requirement to produce an annual municipal quality report (*Folkeskole* Act 2006). The municipal report must include nationally specified core indicators. |
| **Estonia** | School | Partially structured: Since 2006 schools must conduct self-evaluation using centrally established evaluation criteria. Every 3 years each school must produce a self-evaluation report. |
| **Finland** | Local authorities | Education providers evaluate the education they provide, but may decide on the scale, target and implementation of the evaluations. |
| **France** | Regional (ISCED 2 and 3); local (ISCED 1) | Partially structured: since 1989 all schools must develop a school plan (*projet d'école ou d'établissement*) with precise goals (in relation to national objectives and curricula) and evaluation procedures to measure the achievement of results. In addition, all secondary education providers must establish a contractual strategic plan for development (*contrat d'objectifs*) with the regional authorities and conduct a self-evaluation providing indicators and evidence. |
| **Greece** | None | Not applicable |
| **Hungary** | School | Partially structured: schools must have quality management programmes and these should be aligned with local authority quality management programmes (Public Education Act 2006) |
| **Iceland** | Central | Partially structured: each compulsory school systematically evaluates the achievements and quality of school activities (Article 35, Compulsory Education Act 2008) with active participation from school personnel, pupils and parents. Each school reports publicly information on its internal evaluation, its connections with school curriculum guide and plans for improvement. |
| **Ireland** | Central and school | Since 2012 schools are required to engage in systematic school self-evaluation. They must produce a school self-evaluation report and a school improvement plan annually on aspects of teaching and learning and make a summary of both available to their school community. The 2011 government literacy and numeracy strategy includes a strong focus on school self-evaluation. |

## Table 6.4 Requirements for school self-evaluation (*continued*)

| | Level responsible | Legal framework |
|---|---|---|
| **Israel** | School and central | Partially structured |
| **Italy** | None | Not applicable |
| **Japan** | School | Unstructured; Highly structured for ISCED 3 pre-voc/voc. |
| **Korea** | Provincial/ regional | Highly structured: Primary and Secondary Education Act and the Enforcement Decree (1996). Notably, schools must develop school reports and such documentation is heavily used in external school review processes. |
| **Luxembourg** | Central and school (ISCED 1) | Highly structured: The 2009 law for fundamental schools obliges school committees to write and implement a school development plan every four years (describe strong and weak points, define goals to achieve, identify the means to achieve these goals and evaluate the progress they are making). Schools use a pre-defined standard form designed by the Ministry and must define two to five goals related to either "the school as a learning organisation" or "living in the community". |
| **Mexico** | None | Not applicable |
| **Netherlands** | No explicit requirement | Unstructured: Law on the Supervision of Education (2002) – school's own "quality care" is one of the pillars of the "proportional supervision" approach. Schools must produce an annual school report, a school plan, a school prospectus and an arrangement for complaints (Acts for Primary School and for Secondary School). Schools are obliged to devise a plan for their quality assurance and improvement and must report to parents on results of this plan. Schools must also report to inspectors on student results and progress. |
| **New Zealand** | School and central | Unstructured/partially structured: Compulsory audits and self reviews (Education Act 1989). No standard reporting format for annual school plans and reports. National guidelines state that Boards of Trustees together with school principals and teaching staff must develop a strategic plan, maintain an ongoing programme of self-review and report to students, parents and the school community on achievement and progress. Since 2003, schools have been required to produce an annual school plan and report. From 2012/13 schools will need to report student achievement against national standards. |
| **Norway** | Central | Partially structured: The Education Act stipulates that schools shall regularly evaluate the extent to which the organisation, facilitation and delivery of teaching are contributing to the objectives laid down in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion. |
| **Poland** | Central and school | Partially structured |
| **Portugal** | School | Partially structured: 2002 Evaluation Law established internal school evaluation requirements, but no prescribed approach. The Inspectorate ran a project to evaluate school self-evaluation from 2004-2006. One purpose of the second inspection cycle started in 2011 is to validate school self-evaluation practices. |
| **Slovak Republic** | Central | Partially structured: Act in 2003 obliges schools to submit a Report on school educational activities, results and conditions. A 2006 decree specifies the content and structure of these reports. |
| **Slovenia** | Central | Organisation and Financing of Education Act 2008: schools must conduct self-evaluations annually and report the results to the body that manages each school. |
| **Spain** | None | Not applicable |
| **Sweden** | School | Unstructured: Schools and municipalities must document quality management, but are not obliged to use a particular format (from the late 1990s until 2010 schools and municipalities had to produce annual quality reports). |
| **Turkey** | Central and school | Highly structured |
| **UK (England)** | Central | Highly structured |
| **UK (Northern Ireland)** | State | Highly structured: Schools must produce a School Development Plan. The Education and Training Inspectorate evaluates and reports on the school's self-evaluation including how effectively it is used to manage and advance self-improvement of the quality of its provision. |
| **UK (Scotland)** | State | Highly structured: Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 requires public schools to produce an annual self-evaluation report and a plan for improvement and to report on a range of indicators to their local authority. Approaches to self-evaluation and the effectiveness of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are evaluated as part of the inspection process in all schools. |
| **United States** | State, local and school | This varies among states. |

Note: Highly structured self-evaluation means that similar activities are completed at each school based on a specific set of data collection tools; unstructured self-evaluation comprises activities that vary at each site depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

*Source*: OECD Review; OECD (2011).

There are striking differences in how "self-evaluation" is conceptualised in different countries. In the vast majority of countries, this is stated as a requirement for schools to produce a status report on the school's activities or a strategic report on school development, or indeed both. In Sweden it more generally refers to schools having a quality assurance or management system and does not require the production of specific reports (the requirement for specific reporting was dropped in 2010). However, in some systems schools may be required to produce annual reports or development plans, but there is no explicit requirement for school self-evaluation (the French Community of Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands). This was the case for many years in Ireland, but a specific requirement of self-evaluation was introduced in 2012. From 1998 until 2012 schools were required to produce a school development plan and self-evaluation was conceived as the first step in this process, although not explicitly stated (Irish Department for Education and Skills, 2012).

Although some systems may not have specific legal requirements for schools to conduct self-evaluation, there may be self-evaluation requirements attached to particular policy programmes and funding arrangements. For example, the educational equal opportunities policy in the Flemish Community of Belgium places demands upon schools receiving additional funds to introduce a quality cycle and planning process (Shewbridge et al., 2011a). This quality cycle is similar to school development planning cycles in a number of European countries that are an important feature of school improvement (Creemers et al., 2007). At the end of a three year quality cycle the Flemish Inspectorate of Education examines the school's self-evaluation and makes a recommendation to the authorities on whether or not to continue the funding. In Mexico, over the past 15 years, a number of federal educational programmes have included as a condition for funding a requirement for schools to conduct a self-evaluation exercise and to produce a plan for improvement. Such plans are known variously as "strategic plans for school transformation", "school project" or "strategic plan for school improvement" and currently around 66 000 schools are involved in major programmes (SEP and INEE, 2011).

In the majority of systems specifying self-evaluation requirements, all schools within the system are expected to conduct self-evaluations on an annual basis (although in France and in Scotland within the United Kingdom, the frequency is not specified for independent private schools) (Table 6.5). Evidence from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2008 allows an insight to actual frequency of self-evaluation activities (Table 6.5). Schools are expected to conduct self-evaluations more frequently (more often than once a year) in Israel (secondary schools) and Poland. However, in TALIS, reports from lower secondary school teachers in Poland indicate that such requirements are not implemented in all schools. Indeed, with the exception of the Slovak Republic and Korea, reports from lower secondary teachers on the frequency of self-evaluations undertaken in their schools appear to be in stark contrast to official requirements – in all cases less frequent than would be expected. One can speculate that some of these teachers may be in schools where self-evaluation exercises do not involve them and these remain in the realm of school leadership. Whatever the interpretation, the TALIS data indicate that setting requirements on the frequency of school self-evaluations does not suffice to actually stimulate self-evaluation practices. That said, in three systems where there were no official requirements for self-evaluations in 2008, but there were external school evaluations (Austria, the Flemish Community of Belgium and Ireland), less than 15% of lower secondary teachers reported that school self-evaluation happens at least on an annual basis. In systems specifying self-evaluation requirements, this proportion was at least double (with the exception of Portugal). Interestingly, in both Italy

and Mexico around 50% of lower secondary teachers report that school self-evaluation happens at least once a year, despite the lack of both self-evaluation and external school evaluation requirements.

### Table 6.5 Frequency of school self-evaluations

| School self-evaluation is required as part of the accountability system | Frequency of school self-evaluations (2009) | | | Percentage of lower secondary teachers reporting this is at least annual (TALIS, 2007-08) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public schools | Government-dependent private schools | Independent private schools | |
| **Canada (Atlantic Provinces)** | Annual | Annual | Annual | a |
| **Czech Republic** | Annual | Annual | a | a |
| **Denmark** | No requirements | Once every three years (as an alternative to inspection) | a | 33% |
| **Estonia** | Annual | Annual | a | 30% |
| **Finland** | Unspecified | Unspecified | a | a |
| **France** | Annual | Annual | Unspecified | a |
| **Germany** | Unspecified | Unspecified | a | a |
| **Hungary** | Annual | Annual | a | 60% |
| **Iceland** | Annual | Annual | Annual | 31% |
| **Ireland**[1] | Annual | Annual | a | 11% |
| **Israel** | More often than once a year (ISCED 2 and 3)<br>Annual (ISCED 1) | More often than once a year (ISCED 2 and 3)<br>Unspecified (ISCED 1) | m | a |
| **Japan** | Unspecified (ISCED 3 [pre-] vocational) | a | Unspecified | a |
| | Annual (ISCED 1, 2 and 3 general) | a | Annual | a |
| **Korea** | Once every three years | Once every three years (except ISCED 1) | Once every three years (except ISCED 2) | 56% |
| **Netherlands** | Unspecified | Unspecified | Unspecified | a |
| **Norway** | Annual | Annual | Unspecified | 41% |
| **Poland** | More often than once a year | More often than once a year | More often than once a year | 52% |
| **Portugal** | Annual | Annual | Annual | 19% |
| **Slovak Republic** | Annual | Annual | a | 85% |
| **Sweden** | Annual | Annual | a | a |
| **Turkey** | Annual | a | Annual | 45% |
| **UK (England)** | Unspecified | Unspecified | Unspecified | a |
| **UK (Northern Ireland)** | Annual | Annual | Annual | a |
| **UK (Scotland)** | Annual | Annual | Unspecified | a |
| **Systems in which school self-evaluation is NOT required as part of the accountability system[2]:** | | | | |
| **- External school evaluation is conducted:** Austria (12%)[3], Flemish Community of Belgium (14%), French Community of Belgium, Chile and Spain (37%). | | | | |
| - **No external school evaluation:** Greece, Italy (49%), Luxembourg and Mexico (53%). | | | | |

Notes: The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable and the symbol "m" denotes that information is missing. (1) Self-evaluation requirements introduced in 2012; (2) Where available, the percentage of lower secondary teachers reporting that self-evaluation is at least annual is given in brackets; (3) Self-evaluation requirements are being introduced. See Table 6.4.

*Source*: OECD (2011, 2009).

### *Stimulating self-evaluation for school development, accountability or both*

A study among European school inspectorates (SICI, 2003) revealed a lack of official definitions of self-evaluation. Following on from this, an exploratory study of self-evaluation in eight European systems with external school evaluations (Janssens and van Amelsvoort, 2008), identified various informal definitions of self-evaluation and distinguishes two major concepts:

- A process, directly or indirectly aimed at school improvement – ranging from a narrow definition of a "verification or measurement phase within a quality assessment system or school development plan" to a wider definition of a "systematic process, which includes cyclical activities such as goal-setting, planning, evaluation and defining new improvement measures". This process includes the assessment of quality and the judgement and evaluation of learning, teaching and performance.
- A product which is usually perceived as a source for accountability – ranging from a comprehensive document such as self-evaluation forms designed by external bodies to short overviews of self-evaluation results that refer to other source documents.

The importance of this distinction is that school self-evaluation is generally conceptualised as being an internal matter with a firm focus on school development (e.g. Livingston and McCall, 2005; Maes et al., 2002; Yeung, 2011), but specific products of school self-evaluations are often conceptualised for accountability purposes. For example, the product of self-evaluation can be a source of information for the school community. This is an important form of horizontal accountability. Also – to varying degrees in European countries – the product of self-evaluation may feed into external school evaluation processes (see below). Scheerens et al. (1999) identify the strongest interconnection of self-evaluation with external accountability when results of self-evaluation are subject to meta-evaluations by external school evaluation bodies and serve internal and external purposes, and when results from national or district level assessments are fed back to individual schools. Hooge et al. (2012) argue that school self-evaluation providing real insight into school's quality and processes will play a key role in establishing multiple school accountability. Emerging evidence from an ongoing European project indicates that horizontal accountability to stakeholders coupled with clear expectations in external school evaluation are strong determinants of improvement actions at the school level (Ehren et al., 2013).

It can, therefore, be observed that the setting of requirements for schools to produce specific reports – although it may be primarily aiming to stimulate school self-evaluation – introduces an element of accountability to the self-evaluation process. This may hinder the development function of school self-evaluation. However, sharing school evaluation results with school boards/management, parents and students, per se, is associated with school improvement actions.

## *Articulating external school evaluation and school self-evaluation*

School self-evaluation and external school evaluation can be linked in a variety of ways. Alvik (1996) identifies three predominant models depicting the coexistence of self-evaluation and external evaluation in different countries:

- parallel – in which the two systems run side by side each with their own criteria and protocols
- sequential – in which external bodies follow on from a school's own evaluation and use that as the focus of their quality assurance system
- co-operative – in which external agencies co-operate with schools to develop a common approach to evaluation.

The parallel and sequential models imply that external evaluation should dominate the agenda of accountability; the parallel model implies school self-evaluation is solely for the purpose of school development; the sequential model implies both that self-evaluation results are the basis for external evaluation and that the results of external evaluation are expected to feed into school self-evaluation (Kyriakides and Campbell, 2004). As a school system matures there would be a progression from the parallel, through the sequential to the co-operative model, e.g. schools judged to be performing well receive a "light touch" external evaluation (idem). This concept of maturity underlies the push to integrate external school evaluation and school self-evaluation, as schools are assumed to have the will to drive their performance improvement (Barber, 2004). In reality, different aspects of the parallel and sequential models (and less so the co-operative model) are mixed in European systems and no system uses a purely parallel or sequential model (Ehren and Hendriks, 2010). Among the OECD Review countries, New Zealand provides an example of a system close to the co-operative model (see Box 6.3). Overall, New Zealand's evaluation and assessment agenda has been characterised by strong collaborative work and is conceived as a reciprocal learning process (Nusche et al., 2012).

The degree of articulation between external evaluation and school self-evaluation varies across OECD countries. In the majority of systems with both requirements for self-evaluation and external school evaluation, a school's self-evaluation is a component of this external school evaluation process (Table 6.6). With the exception of Iceland and Korea, schools share the results of their self-evaluation directly with external school evaluation bodies. Indeed, many external school evaluation bodies provide access to their quality indicators (e.g. in inspection frameworks) or provide specific quality indicators to guide school self-evaluation (see below). In Portugal, there is an explicit link between external school evaluation and school self-evaluations, but the government does not impose any particular self-evaluation approach, preferring an approach based on diversity and organic growth (Santiago et al., 2012a). The only European systems with external school evaluation and self-evaluation requirements, but where self-evaluation is not a component of external school evaluation are Estonia, Germany and Turkey. However, in Estonia schools share their self-evaluation results directly with the external school evaluation body.

In Iceland, Korea, the Slovak Republic and Scotland within the United Kingdom, a school's self-evaluation results have a high level of influence on the evaluation of school performance (Table 6.6). In Scotland, this also has a high influence over decisions on possible school closure. This is due to the fact that a school's self-evaluation is at the heart of the external school evaluation approach in Scotland (Box 6.3 provides an example of a similar approach in New Zealand). Schools are expected to take responsibility for their quality and demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous improvement (van Bruggen, 2009). Approaches to self-evaluation and the effectiveness of self-evaluation and planning for improvement are evaluated as part of the external evaluation process in all schools. The external school evaluation, therefore, aims to challenge the school's self-evaluation procedures in a way that minimises intrusion to schools, but drives improvement at the national level.

### Table 6.6 Links between external school evaluation and school self-evaluation (2009)

| | School self-evaluation results are shared directly with[1]: | | | Influence of school self-evaluation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | External school evaluation bodies | Higher level education authorities | External audience | Evaluation of school performance | Evaluation of school administration | The size of the school budget | The provision of another financial reward or sanction | The likelihood of a school closure |
| **Component of external school evaluation** | | | | | | | | |
| **UK (Scotland)** | Yes | Yes | Yes | High | High | High | a | High |
| **Czech Republic** | Yes | No | Yes | Moderate | Low | Moderate | Moderate | Low |
| **Slovak Republic** | Yes | No | Yes | High | High | Low | Low | Moderate |
| **Korea** | a | a | No | High | High | a | Low | a |
| **Iceland** | a | No | Yes | High | High | None | None | a |
| **Israel** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Moderate | None | None | None | None |
| **Poland** | Yes | No | Yes | Moderate | Moderate | None | m | None |
| **UK (England)** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Low | Low | None | None | Low |
| **France** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Low | Low | None | None | None |
| **Portugal** | Yes | No | Yes | Low | Low | None | None | None |
| **Canada** (Atlantic Provinces) | Yes | Yes | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **New Zealand** | Yes | Yes | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Japan[2]** | Yes | Yes | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Norway** | m | m | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Netherlands** | Yes | No | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Sweden** | Yes | Yes | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Not a component of external school evaluation** | | | | | | | | |
| **Estonia** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Moderate | High | Moderate | Low | None |
| **Turkey** | a | a | No | Moderate | Moderate | None | None | None |
| **Germany** | No | No | No | Moderate | Moderate | None | Low | None |
| **No external school evaluation** | | | | | | | | |
| **Hungary** | a | Yes | Yes | m | High | None | None | None |
| **Denmark[3]** | a | Yes | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Japan[4]** | a | Yes | Yes | m | m | m | m | m |
| **Finland** | a | a | No | m | m | m | m | m |

Notes: The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable and the symbol "m" denotes that information is missing.

(1) The designated group receives school self-evaluation results without having to request them.

(2) Upper secondary pre-vocational and vocational programmes.

(3) Only independent private schools are subject to external evaluation and there are no self-evaluation requirements for these schools.

(4) Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general programmes.

*Source:* OECD (2011).

It is of note that not all systems with external school evaluation have explicit requirements for schools to conduct self-evaluations. In the Flemish Community of Belgium school self-evaluation and external school evaluation are deliberately disconnected from each other. In respect of the freedom of education principle, the Inspectorate of Education is not entitled to obtain the school's self-evaluation results, unless the school offers to provide these (Shewbridge et al., 2011a). Although there are no explicit requirements for school self-evaluation in the Netherlands, the Inspectorate of Education evaluates a school's quality assurance policy and this would include a school's

self-evaluation processes if these are in place (Scheerens et al., 2012). In Ireland, a self-evaluation requirement was introduced in 2012 linked to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. This hopes to address concerns that only a low proportion of schools were identified through external school evaluation as conducting robust self-evaluation, despite the fact that the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills has offered schools a model of self-evaluation since 2003 (Irish Department for Education and Skills, 2012).

### Box 6.3 Self-review at the heart of school evaluation: New Zealand

New Zealand strives towards a collaborative model of school evaluation where school self-review and external school review are complementary and build on each other. A high level of trust on each side is essential to such a model. Over the past five years the external review body (Education Review Office, ERO) has pushed the agenda of placing school self-review at the core of the school evaluation process. Schools are increasingly seen as responsible for providing their own accountability information, whereas the ERO guides schools toward continuous improvement. The Ministry of Education and the ERO do not prescribe methods for self-review, but provide tools and offer professional development services. The ERO provides guidance documents, where school self-review is conceived of as a rigorous process in which schools systematically evaluate their practice, using indicators as a framework for inquiry and employing a repertoire of analytical and formative tools. It is expected that schools develop understanding of learning progressions, involve students in the assessment and self-regulation of their own learning and analyse assessment data targeted on underachievement.

On the schools' side, there appears to be a commitment to build a data-driven evidence base and to engage in student surveys. The ERO promotes self-review as something embedded in teachers' thinking and practice. While this may be a challenging goal for many schools, at the leading edge there is evidence of schools in which dialogue around achievement data is ongoing and rooted in classroom practice. There is an emphasis on participatory approaches to school self-review, involving both teachers and students in the process. Students have a part to play in evaluating the quality of their school as well as contributing to external review. Including them in this way requires that they are party to the language of assessment and evaluation and that they have the confidence to articulate their views as well as their concerns. The OECD Review revealed exemplary evidence from schools visited that school principals and teachers have taken this issue seriously and have equipped their students with the skills and vocabulary to talk to external visitors on achievement and quality issues. While this may only be practice at the leading edge rather than system wide, the potential for wider engagement is a clear strength.

The ERO has been engaged over the last few years in advocating evidence-informed inquiry, helping schools to engage in that process, and advising on how to use assessment information for improvement and accountability purposes. Dissemination of good practice, reassuring school staff and equipping them with tools of self-evaluation is promoted through workshops. These can serve to demystify self-review and external review and clarify the links between them. Good practice case studies are used as a catalyst for discussion, as illustrations of what effective quality assurance can look like and how it can improve practice, rather than being seen as simply another ministerial demand. The ERO's definition of factors found in effective schools is also disseminated through a series of monographs, highlighting trends, providing commentary and analysis, and pointing to policy implications and system-wide improvements.

*Source*: Nusche et al. (2012).

### *Combining the accountability and development functions*

In research commissioned by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, it is argued that (Janssens and van Amelsvoort, 2008): an inherent imbalance in external school evaluation would mean that the external evaluator's judgement lacks independence due to an urge to advise the school, e.g. external school evaluation report includes too many detailed recommendations and suggestions for improvement or the same national body conducts inspections and offers school support functions; and an inherent imbalance in school self-evaluation would be where the accountability demands impede the school development function, e.g. self-evaluations are written for the external school evaluation body and no longer serve the goal of improving education. The researchers find that the position of school self-evaluation in external school evaluation is weaker in national school evaluation systems placing higher emphasis on the development function (Belgium, Denmark, Hesse and Lower Saxony in Germany) and stronger in systems placing more accountability demands on school self-evaluation activities (the Netherlands, and England, Northern Ireland and Scotland in the United Kingdom). The latter group of systems is judged as being "equally supportive of accountability-oriented and improvement-oriented school self-evaluations". The main conclusion is that accountability demands imposed on school self-evaluation generate accountability-oriented self-evaluations, while improvement demands generate improvement-oriented self-evaluations. The authors, therefore, argue that a mixture of a strong position for school self-evaluation in the external school evaluation, transparent external evaluation criteria, and considerable support for schools in steering towards improvement is the most promising combination for bringing about effective school self-evaluation.

Both New Zealand and Scotland within the United Kingdom attach much importance to ensuring that school self-evaluation and external school evaluation use "the same language". Livingstone and McCall (2005) argue that such an approach means "teachers are much more likely to see external inspection in a developmental perspective rather than a judgemental one". External school evaluations may also change the culture in schools towards more formalised and extended processes of evaluating teaching and learning and data analysis (Rudd and Davies, 2000).

Research on self-evaluation in Dutch primary schools indicates the importance of consistency in accountability and improvement policies (Hofman, Dukstra and Hofman, 2009). Among the 939 schools in their study, 81 were linked with information in the Dutch Inspectorate of Education's database concerning official evaluations of the school quality control, quality of the teaching and learning process and the quality of school outcomes. The researchers conclude that "school self-evaluation policies that are strongly driven by both accountability and desire for improvement have a positive impact" (p. 65). Other research conducted in the Netherlands experimented with an approach in which 27 primary schools were free to adopt their own style of self-evaluation and this was then validated during visits from critical friends and the Dutch Inspectorate of Education (Blok, Sleegers and Karsten, 2008). The researchers highlight that training and guidance is crucial for finding a good balance between school self-evaluation and external school evaluation. Such a balance is defined as "a responsive form of accountability" (p. 393).

## Procedures

In this section, school evaluation procedures are discussed with respect to the type of reference standards that are used for school evaluation and how evidence is collected against these.

## *Aspects assessed*

International comparison shows a remarkable degree of convergence on the areas addressed during school evaluation (Table 6.7). While limited data are available, these are grouped into three major areas: educational practices; outcomes; and compliance with rules and regulations. Available information on educational practices is restricted to the quality of instruction. With these caveats, the overview in Table 6.7 shows that most countries cover each of these major areas. It is of note that outcomes are restricted to student performance measures and do not include student, parent and staff satisfaction in the United States (although of course there may be varying practices among different States or districts, for example, New York does administer satisfaction surveys to staff, students and parents as part of its school evaluation). Further, in Estonia satisfaction is covered as part of self-evaluation, but not included in external school evaluation. While Norway addresses satisfaction in both types of school evaluation, student performance is only covered in school self-evaluation and not in external school evaluation.

**Table 6.7 Areas addressed during school evaluation**

(lower secondary schools, 2009)

| | Educational practices: quality of instruction | | Outcomes: student performance | | Outcomes: student, parent and staff satisfaction | | Compliance with rules and regulations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | External evaluation | Self-evaluation | External evaluation | Self-evaluation | External evaluation | Self-evaluation | External evaluation | Self-evaluation |
| **France, Germany, Iceland, Korea, Netherlands, Poland, Slovak Republic and United Kingdom (England)** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Portugal** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| **Estonia** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Belgium (Fl.) and Spain** | Yes | a | Yes | a | Yes | a | Yes | a |
| **Hungary and Japan** | a | Yes | a | Yes | a | Yes | a | Yes |
| **United Kingdom (Scotland) and Canada (Atlantic Provinces)** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| **Norway** | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **United States** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| **Czech Republic** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |

Note: The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable.

*Source*: OECD (2011).

In many countries there are attempts to better integrate external school evaluation with school self-evaluation and/or to better target external school evaluation to those schools in most need of improvement. This has led to a new (or more explicit) emphasis on school leadership and on school policies and effectiveness of practices in school self-evaluation. There are different approaches used to this effect, but the underlying aspect is a school's capacity for improvement. There may be an explicit evaluation of the school's capacity to improve or this may be evaluated as part of the judgement on a school's ability to implement policies and practices that lead to improvement, for example, by conducting effective self-evaluations (see Box 6.4).

## Box 6.4 Evaluating a school's capacity for improvement

### Judging a school's capacity for improvement: Scotland and England in the United Kingdom and the Flemish Community of Belgium

In Scotland, the United Kingdom, a new approach to external school evaluation (Education Scotland, 2011) includes a specific evaluation and report on the evaluated school's capacity to improve (one of three professional judgements: confident; partially confident; not confident). This is a further step in an approach emphasising that the purpose of school evaluation activities is for school improvement. Scotland has also developed and promoted a self-evaluation model for schools including a set of quality indicators for schools to use ("How good is our school?") (HMIE, 2007). One of six key questions in the self-evaluation model is "What is our capacity for improvement?". This is a core aim of self-evaluation activities: "Self-evaluation is forward looking. It is about change and improvement, whether gradual or transformational, and is based on professional reflection, challenge and support." (p. 6). "The emphasis on impact and outcomes reinforces the principle that self-evaluation is not an end in itself. It is worthwhile only if it leads to improvements in the educational experiences and outcomes for children and young people, and to the maintenance of the highest standards where these already exist." (p. 2).

In England, the United Kingdom, the inspectorate provides a clear definition of the school's capacity to improve in a glossary included in each school's inspection reports. It is defined as "the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement". One of four possible judgements is made on the school's capacity for improvement. Such information is considered in determining the intensity of future inspections.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, a school's "policy making capacity" is a central concept defined as "the extent to which schools use the available room for policy making to come to a continuous process of retaining or changing their work in order to improve their educational quality and attain both the external and self-imposed objectives" (Van Petegem and Vanhoof, 2009). The Inspectorate does not directly "measure" the policy-making capacity of schools, it is seen as a conditional and relative characteristic: the degree to which a school develops policies to foster student achievement considering its context, resources and student intake. If a school has policy-making capacity, it is expected to improve eventual shortcomings by itself, without help from others. Because policy-making capacities function as a lever for school improvement, they serve as the purpose for the focus of inspection in the preliminary phase and as a discriminating variable between a straightforward negative and a restricted positive recommendation in inspections (Shewbridge et al., 2011a).

### Judging a school's self-evaluation capacity: New Zealand

In New Zealand, good self-review capacity is one important aspect in deciding the frequency of external school reviews. Since 2009, the New Zealand Education Review Office (ERO) has adopted a differentiated approach, whereby it reviews: schools with strong performance and self-review capacity every 4-5 years; schools performing well every three years; and schools experiencing difficulty on an ongoing basis over a 1-2 year period. ERO validates the self-review results of schools where self-review practices are well established and investigates these further in the external review where this is not the case (Nusche et al., 2012). A school being reviewed every 4-5 years will convincingly demonstrate that "a school-wide culture of rigorous critical reflection and self review is contributing to sustaining the school's positive performance and continuous improvement" (ERO, 2011). In a school being reviewed every three years (most schools fall into this arrangement) "there is evidence of critical reflection and established processes for conducting and using self review which support improvement". Finally, in a school being reviewed on an ongoing basis "evidence of self-review practices that are helping to lift student achievement and are likely to support school improvement" may influence the duration of the review over the 1-2 year period.

*Sources*: Education Scotland (2011); HMIE (2007); Van Petegem and Vanhoof (2009); Shewbridge et al. (2011a); Nusche et al. (2012); ERO (2011).

## *Reference standards used in school evaluation*

### *Legal standards*

A school's compliance with rules and regulations is a fundamental aspect of school evaluation. This is typically referred to as administrative or procedural evaluation. International data indicate that across 27 education systems, school compliance with rules and regulations is an aspect evaluated in all systems conducting external school evaluations, with the exception of the Atlantic Provinces in Canada and Scotland in the United Kingdom) (Table 6.7). In Hungary and Japan, where there are no external school evaluations, school compliance with rules and regulations is evaluated as part of required school self-evaluations. In Hungary, the authorities may also occasionally check school compliancy. Although in Scotland in the United Kingdom school evaluation criteria do not include aspects of school compliancy, public schools are expected to submit compliance-oriented reports (OECD, 2011).

In several systems (see Table 6.3), external school evaluations are based on a legal framework in a general education act and would include verification that schools comply with different regulations specified in those acts. For example, in both the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, revisions to education acts required that external school evaluation bodies undertake new responsibilities to check the implementation by schools of the content specified in national education programmes in their specific school programmes. The Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic are among 14 systems in which information on the curriculum is collected during external school evaluation (see Table 6.8). In New Zealand, schools are required as part of their self-evaluation activities to submit both a compliance-oriented report (audit) and an evaluative report on their self-review (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010). In Sweden, the checking of school compliance with rules and regulations is the major basis of external school evaluation (Nusche et al., 2011b).

### *Criteria to evaluate the quality of educational processes and outcomes*

Several systems have developed a common definition of a "good school" in order to provide a common base for the evaluation of the quality of educational processes and outcomes. Such definitions aim to provide standard criteria to evaluate quality and these are typically underpinned by educational research and evidence of good practice. Effective schools have students that make more progress than expected given social background factors and prior attainment (e.g. Creemers, 2007; Reynolds and Teddlie, 2000) and have processes in place to improve their effectiveness (e.g. Creemers et al., 2007; Harris and Chrispeels, 2006). The characteristics for effective schools are well understood (Sammons et al., 1995) and are broadly common to many national systems and school cultures. They relate to the quality of teaching and learning; the way teachers are developed and helped to become more effective throughout their careers (e.g. Robinson et al., 2008); the quality of instructional leadership in schools (Leithwood et al., 2006) as well as factors concerning the curriculum, vision and expectations, assessment for learning, the rate of progress of students and their educational outcomes. Factors such as these are generally associated with the quality and standards of schools.

Often criteria for school evaluation are presented in an analytical framework comprising: context; input; process and outcomes or results (see Box 6.5).

## Box 6.5 Example of areas addressed in school evaluation: Canada and the Flemish Community of Belgium

### Prince Edward Island, Canada

| Type of indicator | Description | Example in education |
|---|---|---|
| Input indicators | exist within the environment of the school and can be considered controllable variables; resources allocated to or consumed by the school | curriculum, years of teaching experience, class size |
| Context indicators | reflect each student's home experience; information on factors that impact on results that may or may not be in the control of the school | socio-economic status of students, satisfaction levels, ethnicity, demographics |
| Process indicators | activities associated with the school or what is done at and/or by the school; what the school does to fulfil its mandate | number of classes taught, number of extracurricular activities |
| Results indicators | benefits for students during and after completing school | student achievement, learning outcomes |

### Flemish Community of Belgium

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">Context</th></tr>
<tr><td>Identification</td><td>Situational location</td><td>History</td><td colspan="2">Regulatory framework</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="5">Input</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Personnel characteristics</td><td colspan="3">Student characteristics</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Process</th><th colspan="2">Output</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">GENERAL<br>Leadership<br>Development of school vision<br>Decision making<br>Processes and procedures<br>Quality assurance</td><td>PERSONNEL<br>Staff management<br>Professional development</td><td rowspan="2">EDUCATIONAL POLICY<br>Curriculum<br>Coaching and counselling<br>Evaluation</td><td>STUDENT PERFORMANCE<br>Developmental objectives<br>Attainment targets</td><td>OUTCOMES<br>Subsequent education<br>Job market</td></tr>
<tr><td>LOGISTICS<br>Infrastructure and equipment<br>Well-being</td><td>SCHOOL CAREERS<br>Progress<br>Enrolment</td><td>SATISFACTION<br>Staff<br>Students<br>Partners</td></tr>
</table>

*Sources*: Fournier and Mildon (forthcoming); Flemish Ministry of Education and Training (2010).

In Australia, a National School Improvement Tool was developed in 2012 and is based on nine interrelated domains of practice that have been shown to be characteristics of highly effective schools: an explicit improvement agenda; analysis and discussion of data; a culture that promotes learning; targeted use of school resources; an expert teaching team; systematic curriculum delivery; differentiated teaching and learning; effective pedagogical practices; and school-community partnerships.

In Finland, quality criteria were developed in 2009 as a tool to underpin school evaluation in basic education (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, forthcoming). Four major areas relate to the quality of structures and include governance, personnel, economic resources and evaluation. Six major areas relate to students: implementation of the curriculum; instruction and teaching arrangements; support to learning; growth and well-being; inclusion and influence; school-home co-operation; and safety of the learning environment.

In the Czech Republic, evaluation criteria used in external school evaluation vary from year to year, although there is a relatively stable coverage of broad evaluation areas (Santiago et al., 2012). For example in 2010/11 and 2011/12 the following areas were included: equal opportunities for education; school education programmes; school management; personnel conditions; material prerequisites; financial prerequisites; effective organisation of education; effective support of personality development of students; partnership; effective support of development of student key competencies; systematic evaluation of individual and group education results of students; and system evaluation of overall results in education.

In Portugal, there is an explicit evaluation of school self-evaluation (Santiago et al., 2012). The school evaluation criteria cover three main evaluation areas: results; provision of the education service; and leadership and management. Leadership and management comprises Leadership, Management and Self-evaluation and improvement. The particular criteria for self-evaluation and improvement include: coherence between self-evaluation and action for improvement; use of results of the external evaluation in the preparation of improvement plans; involvement and participation of the educational community in the self-evaluation; continuity and scope of self-evaluation; and impact of self-evaluation in planning, organisation and professional practices.

### Enhancing the transparency and objectivity in external school evaluation

Faubert (2009) finds anecdotal evidence that a lack of clarity of the criteria used in external school evaluation can undermine the legitimacy of the external school evaluation process. School staff may complain about the lack of clarity of the criteria used, and what are perceived as arbitrary statements from the external evaluators. In countries where the standards and criteria used in external school evaluation are not published, there may be a perception that the conditions under which different external school evaluations take place vary significantly. Where external school evaluation sets clear expectations, norms and standards and stakeholders are engaged with and knowledgeable about the external evaluation process, this has significant impact on schools (Ehren et al., 2013).

In New Zealand, the Education Review Office publishes the criteria it uses in external school evaluation. Systematic feedback collected from school principals following an external review indicates higher levels of confidence in the clarity of the review process (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010). There is appreciation that the review process and criteria used are open and transparent. In general, there is much less anxiety in schools about the review process compared to when it was first introduced 20 years ago.

In Portugal, feedback collected by the Inspectorate from schools in 2008/09 shows a high appreciation for access to inspection frameworks, external evaluation methodology and its instruments (89%, 82% and 79% of school principals reported this, respectively) (Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science, forthcoming).

Standard school evaluation criteria may also aim to make the different judgements made by external evaluators more objective and transparent, by specifying the different weight and contribution each indicator takes in forming a judgement on school quality (see Box 6.6).

### Box 6.6 Indicators used to judge school quality: The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, to assess the quality of primary and secondary schools, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education has established a set of about 45 indicators in five broad categories: Output; teaching and learning process; care and support; quality assurance; law and regulations. Among the 45 indicators is a subset of standard indicators, which play a crucial role in distinguishing between different recommendations made by the Inspectorate.

The standard indicators used in decision rules[1] for primary education are:

- Output
  - Student achievement at the end of primary education is at least at the level to be expected based on the characteristics of the student population in the school.
  - Student results in Dutch language and arithmetic during their schooling are at least at the level to be expected based on the characteristics of the student population in the school.
- Teaching and learning process
  - The learning content for Dutch language and mathematics covers all the school attainment targets as objectives to be achieved.
  - The learning content for Dutch language and mathematics is offered to a sufficient number of students up to the level of Year 8.
  - Schools with a substantial proportion of students classified with language needs provide Dutch language learning content that fits their educational needs.
  - The teachers give clear explanations of the material.
  - The teachers realise a task-oriented work environment.
  - The students are actively involved in educational activities.
- Care and support
  - The school uses a comprehensive system of standardised tools and procedures for monitoring the performance and development of the students.
  - The school carries out the care in a planned way.

The decision rules for judging the quality of primary schools are set as follows:

Weak school – insufficient student achievement results at the end of primary education, plus an insufficient rating on a maximum of one standard indicator in the areas of teaching and learning process or care and support

Very weak school – insufficient student achievement results at the end of primary education, plus an insufficient rating on two or more standard indicators in the areas of teaching and learning process or care and support

Note: (1) For clarity, an abbreviated form of the decision rule is presented.

*Source*: Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2012).

### Developing criteria for school self-evaluation

The development of specific evaluation criteria for school self-evaluation activities has the benefit of engaging the wider school community in the self-evaluation procedure from the start and creating a sense of ownership over the process. The advantage of engaging school principals, teachers, parents and students in creating their own criteria is that it enables discussion and negotiation of criteria which is a valuable process, but it is also a time-consuming process (Kyriakides and Campbell, 2004). Box 6.7 shows an example of a study involving different schools in the development of self-evaluation criteria.

#### Box 6.7 Developing evaluation criteria for school self-evaluation

A study on how to effectively design and undertake school self-evaluation was commissioned by the National Union of Teachers in the United Kingdom. Over a seven month period, ten schools participated in developing a school self-evaluation framework. There were striking commonalities among the ten schools in terms of the areas they identified to include in the framework, despite the fact schools were in different locations and sectors (primary, special and secondary schools). Participants were asked to identify criteria for "a good school" and as a separate exercise to rate 23 official inspection criteria in use at the time. The first exercise generated six different perspectives (students, teachers, parents, management, support staff and school governors) and showed much overlap in their choice of criteria, although each group's choices reflected different emphases. To a great extent, the criteria chosen by the different groups also reflected many factors that had been identified in research, but also offered some new perspectives and challenged these. Ten areas were identified: school climate; relationships; classroom climate; support for learning; support for teaching; time and resources; organisation and communication; equity; recognition of achievement; and home-school links.

In rating the official inspection criteria again there was strong agreement on criteria related to meeting students' needs (staff understanding and curriculum); conversely, one in three students supported the criterion on promoting moral principles, but these were not selected by any teachers or school governors; the criterion rated most highly by teachers and support staff was "staff working collaboratively towards shared goals"; only a small proportion of students rated this and when asked about it said that they did not recognise it as a feature of their school (p. 63).

The study found that any self-evaluation framework should (p. 73):

1) Have a convincing rationale (why are we doing this?)
2) Reflect the key priorities of the school/authority/national priorities (what is important in this school?)
3) Enable all of the stakeholders to participate (how can we involve everyone who matters?)
4) Allow for the participation of a "critical friend" (how can we ensure a measure of objectivity?)
5) Lead to action/improvement (what do we hope to do with the evidence?).

*Source*: MacBeath et al. (1996).

### Promoting the use of common criteria in external school evaluation and in school self-evaluation

The common coverage of areas addressed in both external school evaluation and school self-evaluation is largely driven by the development of a common set of school evaluation criteria. This is typically by the promotion of the criteria used for external school evaluation or developed by external evaluation bodies for schools to use in self-evaluation. Already in 2001, self-evaluation criteria and models (typically known as "inspection frameworks" or "self-evaluation frameworks") were available to schools in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom (Eurydice, 2004). With the exception of Finland and Sweden all these systems had established external school evaluation procedures in place. In France and the Slovak Republic, schools had access to the criteria, indicators and procedures used in external school evaluation. Many European inspection frameworks and self-evaluation frameworks developed by external evaluation bodies are based on school effectiveness research. Further, a European professional collaboration network (the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates, SICI) actively promotes exchanges among different external school evaluation bodies. This research base and professional collaboration means there are common themes in the major areas included in inspection frameworks and a growing consensus across systems on core criteria that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a given school.

Importantly, in the interest of promoting a common vision of a "good school", Ministries and external school evaluation bodies typically involve educators and other professionals in developing school quality indicators and criteria. In the case of the Dutch inspection framework this was developed in collaboration with educators and allows a shared understanding of quality in primary and secondary schools (Scheerens et al., 2013). The Korean school evaluation framework was developed with careful attention to educational research on school effectiveness in Korea and internationally, by undertaking original research on effective schools and at the final stages included expert contributions from teachers, school principals and the research community (Kim et al., 2010). In New Zealand, the Education Review Office has developed evaluation indicators that are "underpinned by research, such as the Ministry of Education's Best Evidence Syntheses, and ERO's experience of effective schools" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010; see also Chapter 8).

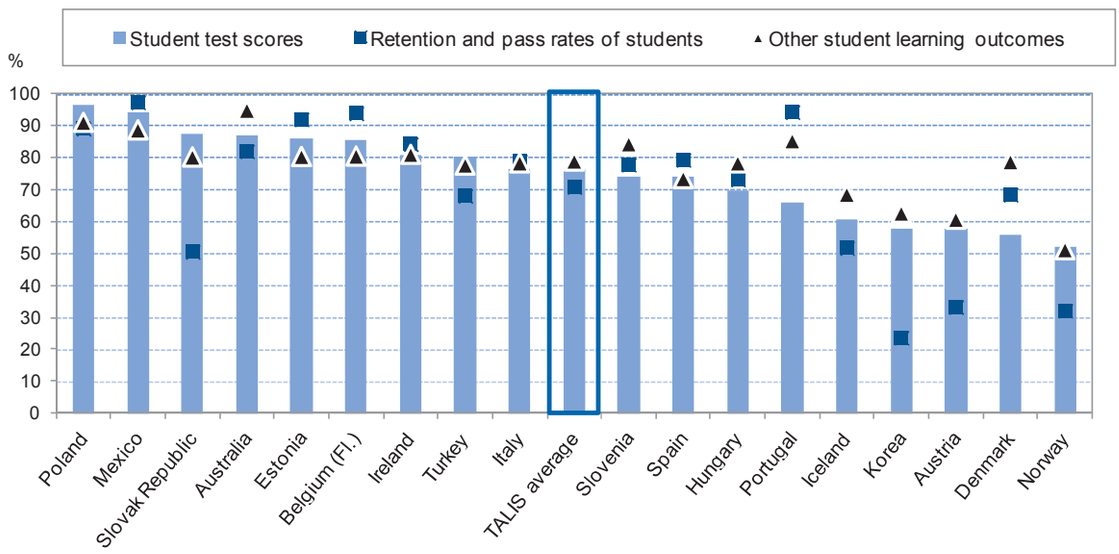
In particular, with regard to frameworks for self-evaluation, it would be remiss not to point out the considerable influence that "the Scottish approach" has had. External school evaluators in Scotland in the United Kingdom are frequently invited to participate in different events across Europe and the external evaluation body (Education Scotland) also receives many international guests (van Bruggen, 2009). Notably, the European Commission funded project on Effective School Self-Evaluation was managed by Scottish external evaluators and an important part of this work focused on the presence of inspection frameworks (SICI, 2003). The Scottish influence has spread beyond Europe also, for example: In Australia, the New South Wales Catholic Education Authority adapted the Scottish inspection framework to develop a rigorous and systemic approach to self-evaluation (Santiago et al., 2011); In Mexico, two major publications that were distributed to schools to promote self-evaluation in 2003 and 2007 were heavily inspired by the quality indicators and other materials developed to support self-evaluation in Scotland (SEP and INEE, 2011).

### *Student learning objectives*

The coverage of outcomes in school evaluation means that student learning objectives should be prominent in reference standards for school evaluation. These may well be incorporated in other reference standards included, for example, in school development plans or as a criterion in external school evaluation. In general, the evidence from TALIS indicates a degree of variation how important student learning outcomes are in both school self-evaluation and external school evaluation (see Figure 6.3). In some systems these seem to be important criteria in school evaluation processes, as reported by the majority of lower secondary teachers. In other systems, significant proportions of lower secondary teachers do not report that student learning outcomes are important criteria in school evaluation.

Schools may be evaluated on the extent to which their students achieve specified learning objectives. In the case of national objectives, these are often measured by proxy with student performance on standardised national assessments or examinations. Standardised national assessments are used in the majority of OECD countries and typically assess student performance in the language of instruction and mathematics (see Chapter 8). Information on student graduation and repetition rates is also used in school evaluation and is often widely available. In the majority of OECD countries participating in TALIS, at least 70% of lower secondary teachers reported that student pass and retention rates are important criteria in school evaluation (see Figure 6.3).

**Figure 6.3 Criteria for student learning outcomes used in school evaluation (2007-08)**




StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932791400

Note: Percentage of teachers of lower secondary education whose school principal reported that these criteria were considered with high or moderate importance in school self-evaluation or external evaluation. Data are shown for participating OECD countries.

*Source*: OECD (2009), *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

In the United States, student learning outcomes measured in standardised national assessments form the core of school accountability. Schools must report on student achievement in English language arts, mathematics and on a third indicator that is specified by the particular State (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Schools report on the achievement of students overall, plus for different specified groups of students (racial or ethnic groups; special educational needs; economically disadvantaged).

Student performance in national assessments and national examinations also form an important information base for external school evaluations. In France, the mission for external school evaluators (IA-IPR and IEN) is to monitor the implementation of national education policy, laws and regulations in primary and secondary schools in order to contribute to the constant improvement of student knowledge and competencies as defined in programmes for different education levels (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, 2009). External school evaluators pay particular attention to ensuring and promoting good practices in the follow-up and analysis of results in national assessments and examinations.

Student performance may be included in explicit criteria in external school evaluation frameworks. For example, one of the major quality aspects in the Dutch inspection framework is that "The outcomes of students are at the level that may be expected on the basis of the characteristics of the student population" (Scheerens et al., 2013). The mission for the external school evaluation body in Portugal is to "promote student results and learning progressions, identifying strengths and priority areas for improvement in the work of schools" (Santiago et al., 2012a). This includes specific attention to both academic results (progress of contextualised internal and external student results; quality of success; dropouts) and social results (participation in school activities and acquisition of responsibilities; compliance with rules and discipline; forms of solidarity; impact of schooling on student pathways). In New Zealand, schools will be required to include in their self-evaluation and reporting activities the percentage of their students achieving national standards as of 2012/13 (Nusche et al., 2012).

## *Instruments and information sources*

In collecting evidence for school evaluation, many different methods may be used. This can encompass the use of different tools and instruments designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative information, as well as the direct observation of teaching and learning processes. Further, this may be collected by several different actors.

### *Administrative reporting by schools*

Across OECD countries it is common practice for public schools to submit compliance-oriented reports to education authorities, whether these are at the national, regional or municipal or local level (OECD, 2011).

Administrative reporting by schools includes information on student data in 27 of the 28 systems for which comparable information is available (Table 6.8). Educational authorities typically collect reports from public schools on their facilities and grounds, on teachers' qualifications/credentials, safety issues and closing budget or financial audit from the previous year (OECD, 2011). Among the seven systems where public schools do not report information on the curriculum to the educational authorities, schools in five of these systems report this to their school boards. It is less typical for public schools to report information on governance issues to educational authorities (OECD, 2011). In Austria, the Flemish Community of Belgium and Turkey, school compliancy on governance issues is checked during external school evaluation (Table 6.8).

## Table 6.8 Collecting information for compliance-related reporting

| | Student data | Teachers qualifications/ credentials | Curriculum | Safety issues | Facilities and grounds | Proposed budget for subsequent year | Closing budget or audit (previous) year | Issues related to governance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Austria** | Internet | Internet | Internet | a | Internet | Internet | Internet | Inspection |
| **Belgium (Fl.)** | Internet | Internet | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | No | Internet | Inspection |
| **Belgium Fr.)** | a | Internet | a | a | a | a | a | a |
| **Chile** | Internet | Internet | Internet | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper |
| **Czech Republic** | Internet | Internet/ inspection | Internet/paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Internet | Paper | Paper/ inspection | Internet/paper |
| **Denmark** | Internet | No | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | No |
| **Estonia** | Internet | Internet | Internet | Inspection | Internet | Internet/ inspection | Internet | Internet |
| **Finland** | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet |
| **France** | Internet | a | a | a | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet |
| **Germany** | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Paper | Paper | Paper | m |
| **Greece** | Internet | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | a | Paper | Internet |
| **Hungary** | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet |
| **Iceland** | Internet | Paper/ inspection | Internet | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper | Paper | Paper/ inspection |
| **Ireland** | Internet/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper/ inspection |
| **Israel** | Internet | Internet | Paper/ inspection | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper |
| **Italy** | Internet | No | Internet | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | No |
| **Korea** | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection |
| **Luxembourg** | Internet | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper | Paper |
| **Mexico** | Paper | Paper | a | a | a | a | a | a |
| **Netherlands** | Internet | Paper | Paper | Internet | Internet | a | Internet | Internet |
| **Poland** | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection |
| **Portugal** | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection |
| **Slovak Republic** | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet | Internet | Internet/ inspection |
| **Spain** | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet | Internet |
| **Sweden** | Internet | a | a | a | a | a | a | a |
| **Turkey** | Internet | Inspection | Paper/ inspection | Inspection | Inspection | Paper/ inspection | Paper/ inspection | Inspection |
| **United Kingdom (England)** | Internet/ inspection | a | Inspection | a | Inspection | a | a | a |
| **United Kingdom (Scotland)** | Internet | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet/ inspection | Internet | Internet | Internet |

Note: The terms "paper" or "Internet" denote the method of administrative reporting by schools. "Inspection" denotes that school compliance is checked during external school evaluation. The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable and the symbol "m" denotes that information is missing.

*Source*: OECD (2011), with updated information from the OECD Review.

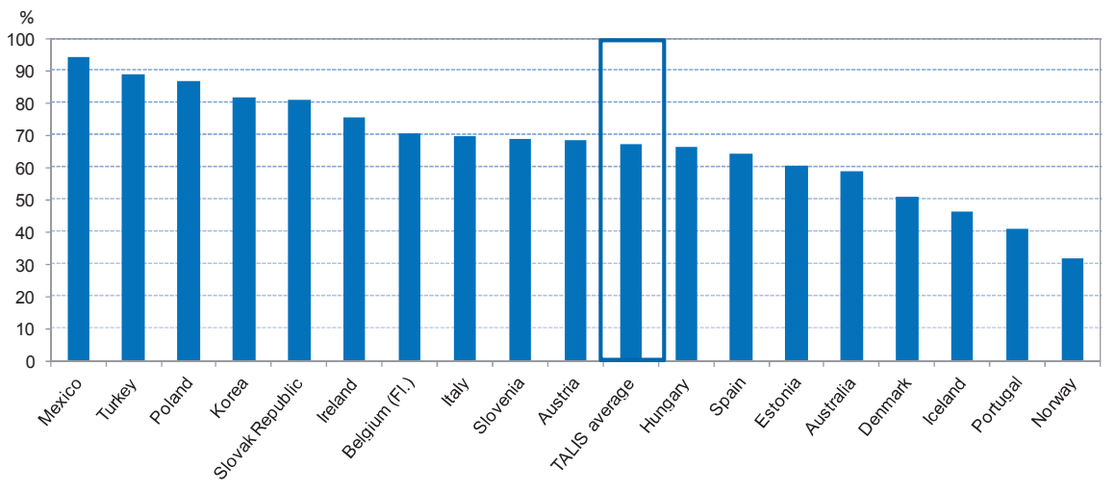
In many countries there are efforts to streamline collection of such information and to ease the reporting burden on schools. Table 6.8 presents an overview of the role of technology in compliance-related school reporting in public schools. Information is collected via Internet-based forms in all countries to some extent, with the exception of Mexico. In some countries, schools have the possibility to submit required information via Internet-based forms in all of the specified areas (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Korea, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Spain and Scotland within the United Kingdom).

In several systems, compliance information is also collected during external school evaluation, notably on the curriculum, teachers' qualifications and the facilities and grounds. In Korea and Poland information is collected during external school evaluation in all of the specified areas (Table 6.8).

### *Classroom observation*

The quality of the teaching and learning process is arguably at the heart of school improvement. Therefore, the direct observation in classrooms of the teaching and learning process should provide key information to school evaluation processes. In systems with school inspections or external reviews, classroom observations are a typical and key part of external school evaluation processes. Here, the emphasis has shifted over the years to an evaluation of teaching quality in the school and not of the individual teacher. However, external school evaluation does have a moderate degree of influence over the evaluation of individual teachers in eight OECD systems and a high degree of influence in the French Community of Belgium, Ireland, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Turkey and England in the United Kingdom (see Table 6.12). Chapter 5 presents an overview of classroom observation for teacher appraisal.

**Figure 6.4 Direct appraisal of classroom teaching in school evaluation**




StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932791419

Note: Percentage of teachers of lower secondary education whose school principal reported that this was considered with high or moderate importance in school self-evaluation or external evaluation. Data are shown for participating OECD countries.

*Source*: OECD (2009), *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Information collected from lower secondary school principals in the OECD's 2007-08 survey of teaching and learning indicate that classroom observation is accorded relatively less importance compared to other measures of the quality of instruction (OECD, 2009). At least 80% of teachers surveyed were in schools whose principal reported that the direct appraisal of classroom teaching was considered with high or moderate importance in school evaluations in Mexico, Turkey, Poland, Korea and the Slovak Republic (Figure 6.4). In contrast, this was less than 50% of teachers in Norway, Portugal, Iceland and Denmark. In both the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic the OECD Review found an "open class" culture where the direct observation of classroom teaching was a well established part of school life (Santiago et al., 2012b; Shewbridge et al., forthcoming).

In addition to adequate training, developing and using a set of common indicators for classroom observation can bring more coherence to classroom observations conducted by external school evaluators. For example, an international instrument for teacher observation and feedback (ISTOF) has been developed by educational effectiveness researchers in 19 countries (Teddlie et al., 2006) (see Chapter 5). There has also been an international effort to develop observational instruments for use by external school evaluators. The International Comparative Analysis of Learning and Teaching (ICALT) was a collaboration among European external school evaluation bodies to develop an instrument to observe and analyse the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. This was developed and piloted by external school evaluation bodies in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Lower Saxony in Germany, the Netherlands and England in the United Kingdom. The study found that the following five aspects could be compared in a reliable and valid way and that these were positively correlated with student involvement, attitude, behaviour and attainment: efficient classroom management; safe and stimulating learning climate; clear instruction; adaptation of teaching and teaching-learning strategies (van de Grift, 2007). The observation instrument was further developed and complemented with a few interview questions (see Table 6.9 for an illustration). The final observation instrument was adopted for use by external school evaluation bodies in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Lower Saxony in Germany, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, and Scotland in the United Kingdom (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2009).

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Flemish Inspectorate of Education has developed a Quality Indicator Model to improve the inter-rater reliability of judgements on the quality of school processes (as specified in the inspection framework) (Shewbridge et al., 2011a). This helps external school evaluators to map out differences among schools in judging the way processes within a school lead to its output – an important part of the external school evaluation approach. The model includes four inter-related categories: Result orientation (drawing up clear and concrete objectives and ways to account for these); Support (staff capacity and material and structural support to achieve objectives); Efficiency (accounting for how school processes contribute to achieving objectives); and Development (attention to continuous development and quality improvement).

### Table 6.9 Classroom observation indicators to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning

Rate[1] – Please circle the correct answer: 1 = predominantly weak; 2 = more weaknesses than strengths; 3 = more strengths than weaknesses; 4= predominantly strong.
Observed[2] – Please circle (voluntary) the correct answer: 0 = no, I did not observe this; 1 = yes, I have observed this.

| Safe and stimulating learning climate (5 indicators): The teacher… | Rate[1] | Good practice examples: The teacher… | Observed[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| …ensures a relaxed atmosphere | 1 2 3 4 | …addresses the children in a positive manner<br>…reacts with humour and stimulates humour<br>…allows children to make mistakes<br>…demonstrates warmth and empathy toward all students | 0 1 |
| …shows respect for the students in behaviour and language use | 1 2 3 4 | ...allows students to finish speaking<br>…listens to what students have to say<br>…makes no role-confirming remarks | 0 1 |
| …promotes the mutual respect and interest of students | 1 2 3 4 | …encourages children to listen to each other<br>…intervenes when children are being laughed at<br>…takes (cultural) differences and idiosyncrasies into account<br>…ensures solidarity between students<br>…ensures that events are experienced as group events | 0 1 |
| …supports the self-confidence of students | 1 2 3 4 | …feeds back on questions and answers from students in a positive way<br>…pays students compliments on their results<br>…honours the contributions made by children | 0 1 |
| …encourages students to do their utmost | 1 2 3 4 | …praises students for efforts towards doing their utmost<br>…makes clear that all students are expected to do their utmost<br>…expresses positive expectations to students about what they are able to take on | 0 1 |
| **Involvement of students (3 indicators): Students…** | **Rate[1]** | **Good practice examples: Students…** | **Observed[2]** |
| There is good individual involvement by the students | 1 2 3 4 | …are attentive<br>…take part in learning/group discussions<br>…work on the assignments in a concentrated and task-focused way | 0 1 |
| …are interested | 1 2 3 4 | …listen to the instructions actively<br>…ask questions | 0 1 |
| …are active learners | 1 2 3 4 | …ask “deeper” questions<br>…take responsibility for their own learning process<br>…work independently<br>…take initiatives<br>…use their time efficiently | 0 1 |

Note: These are a subset of the observation indicators. Twenty-seven additional teacher-focused observation indicators include: Clear and activating instruction (10); Classroom management (4); Adaptation of teaching to diverse needs of students (4); and Teaching learning strategies (9). There are also four additional student-focused indicators for Reflexivity and discursiveness. The full set of observation indicators is complemented by nine interview questions to assess: Opportunity to learn the minimum objectives (e.g. How many weekly hours are spent on arithmetic?); Monitoring of student progress (How many times a year are the achievements of students tested with standardised tests?); and Special measures for struggling learners (e.g. Does the teacher diagnose the learning problems of students at risk?).

*Source*: Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2009).

### *Student performance data*

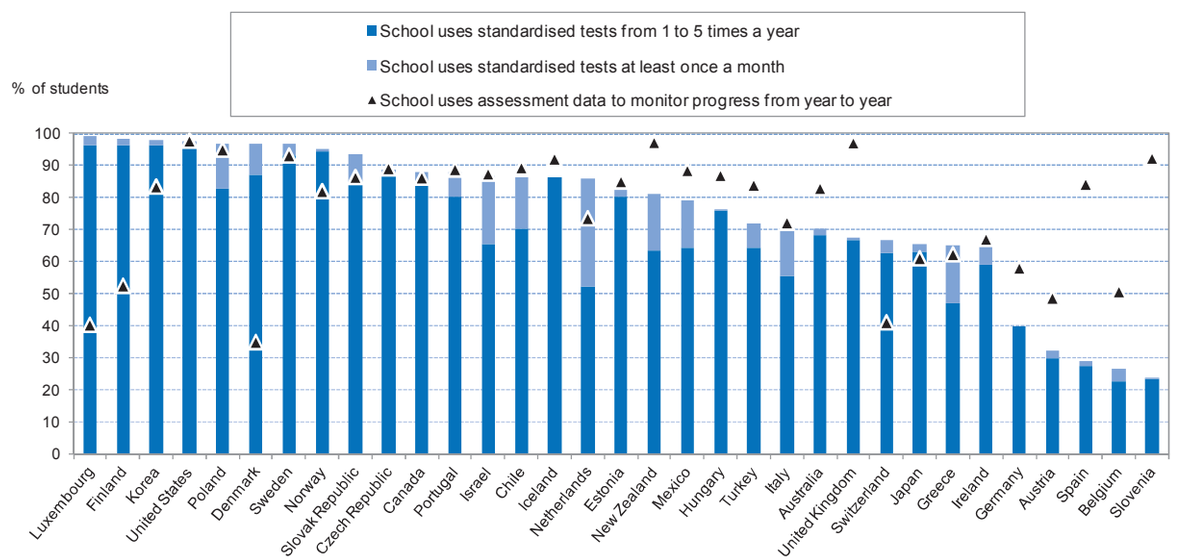
The use of student performance data can make an important contribution to both self-evaluation and external school evaluation. Many systems administer national examinations and national assessments (see Chapters 4 and 8). The use of standardised assessments allows the comparison of different schools on measurements in discrete areas of the curriculum. Assessments that are administered to all students in all schools will provide information that can feed into school reporting systems. In many systems, where

such assessments exist, the results are reported publicly as a form of accountability. In some systems, the results from national assessments are communicated back to schools for their use in self-evaluation activities.

The use of school performance information can increase the efficiency of external school evaluations by helping to target schools that would most benefit from external evaluation. In particular, the use of value added performance information is seen as an ideal complement to the subjective nature of external school evaluations of "what works" as it provides an accurate measure of school performance (OECD, 2008).

Surveys administered to school principals during the PISA 2009 assessment allow a glimpse into the use of standardised tests in secondary schools (Figure 6.5). When answering this question, school principals may have considered not only national assessments, but also commercial tests purchased by schools, or indeed, only commercial tests. The use of standardised tests is clearly a well-established form of collecting information on student performance. In all but five countries over 60% of students were in schools where these were reportedly used at least once a year. It is also clear that secondary schools use other data from other types of student assessment in their self-evaluation activities. In several of the systems where at least 80% of students are in schools reporting the use of assessment data for monitoring, much lower proportions of students are in schools reportedly using standardised tests – notably in Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Schools in these and several other systems do not always draw on standardised tests for their monitoring purposes. Indeed, there is a weak correlation across the OECD between the use of assessment data to monitor the school's progress and the use of standardised tests in schools (correlation of 0.22).

**Figure 6.5 School use of standardised tests and assessment data (PISA 2009)**




StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932791438

Note: Percentage of students in schools where the principal reported this happens in the national modal grade for 15-year-olds. Data are shown for OECD countries.

*Source:* OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful?: Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV)* , OECD Publishing, Paris.

### *Collecting feedback from key stakeholders*

Feedback from students, parents, teachers, school leadership and school governing boards can help give a more rounded evaluation of a school's quality. External school evaluations generally incorporate visits to the school. In this case, interviews and discussions with key stakeholders is an important way to collect evidence on how the school is performing. Prior to external school evaluations, external school evaluation bodies may also draw on feedback from parents to help determine the focus and frequency of external school evaluation. For example, in the Netherlands the Inspectorate of Education takes account of parental complaints in its risk assessment when planning external school evaluation activities. The use of questionnaires and surveys may also be an important component of the actual external school evaluation. Surveys may be administered to parents, teachers and staff. For example, in England in the United Kingdom the external school evaluation body offers an online survey for parents and will use this as part of its deliberations in determining the frequency of external school evaluation.

Systems may also develop surveys to collect feedback from key stakeholders and offer these to schools for use in their self-evaluation activities (see Chapter 8). Some examples of different stakeholder surveys are shown in Box 6.8. In some systems, there are also processes to ensure qualitative feedback and evaluation from the school board in annual school reports (see below).

#### Box 6.8 Collecting feedback from students, teachers and parents

**For school self-evaluation**

In Norway, an annual survey of all school students in Years 7 and 10 of compulsory schooling is undertaken. This forms an important part of the evaluation of the school system in Norway and the reporting and analysis of national average results have a prominent position in the annual summary report on schooling in Norway. However, results from this are also made available to schools via the School Portal for use in self-evaluation activities. Results are benchmarked to national and regional results, but schools cannot see the results of other schools (Nusche et al., 2011a). Nationally developed surveys for parents and teachers are also available for schools to use in their self-evaluation activities. However, these results are not collected and presented on the School Portal. They are conceived as tools for school self-evaluation to allow triangulation of results from pupils, teachers and parents and to thus provide a richer set of information on that particular school.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, there are no specific standardised surveys used for the collection of feedback from stakeholders. While this general approach to resist standardised surveys is supported by students, the secondary student organisation has developed a suite of possible self-evaluation tools that teachers can use to get feedback from their students on their perception of the teaching and learning experience. This aims to strengthen student voice while remaining non-threatening to teachers, as the major purpose is to provide constructive feedback for improvement (Shewbridge et al., 2011a).

**For the reporting of comparative measures on school performance**

In the United States, the city of New York (NYC) systematically collects information from parents, teachers and students. The "NYC School Survey" is administered each year to all students in Years 6 to 12. This collects information on the school's learning environment, including questions on school safety and respect, academic expectations, student engagement and communication among the school community. Results feed into external accountability measures (the school's progress report) and form between 10-15% of the school's overall assessment. Average results for NYC are compiled and reported to the public and can be used for school benchmarking, thus also feeding into school self-evaluation activities.

Collecting feedback from stakeholders on the external school evaluation process is also an important way to improve external school evaluation capacity (see below).

Some systems allow a mechanism for the school to verify and comment on the content of the external evaluation report before it is published. It is typical practice for external school evaluators to discuss briefly an overview of their findings at the end of the actual visit (Faubert et al., 2009). However there may also be possibilities for schools to provide written comment on the report prior to publication.

In the Czech Republic, the content of the external school evaluation report is discussed between school inspectors and the school principal (Santiago et al., 2012). The school principal confirms through his/her signature that the report/protocol has been discussed. The school principal may submit his/her comments on the external school evaluation report to the Czech School Inspectorate (within 14 days after it was submitted) or objections to the protocol (within 5 days after it was submitted). These comments are included in the final report which will be sent to the organising body and the school board. The external school evaluation report is published on the Czech School Inspectorate website and is kept for a period of ten years.

### *Compiling an evidence base for external school evaluation*

There are various approaches to compiling an evidence base for external school evaluation. In addition to conducting observation of teaching and learning or administering special survey questionnaires to stakeholders, external evaluators may draw on centrally compiled statistical information on schools, or review extensive documentation on the school and developed by the school, or conduct interviews with members of the school.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Inspectorate of Education uses information in a Data Warehouse system provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (Shewbridge et al., 2011a). Data are compiled from compliance reports submitted by schools. The Inspectorate of Education constructs an individual school profile including indicators on output, input and context over a six year period. Each school is benchmarked against a group of comparable schools. This supports the Inspectorate of Education in its preliminary risk analysis to decide the focus of external school evaluation. In addition, during the actual external school evaluation, to assess the context, input and process factors, the investigation draws most heavily on document analyses, interviews with teachers, students and school leadership, as well as classroom observations. A challenge for external school evaluation is to have adequate information on student outcomes at the risk analysis phase. Further, schools are not obliged to share their self-evaluation results with external school evaluators during the external school evaluation.

In the Czech Republic, the approach to external evaluation is designed to be evidence driven (Santiago et al., 2012b). The provision of a data profile for an inspection team, provided by the Institute of Information on Education, offers outcome information, aids efficiency by allowing the team to focus its attention on key issues and can help to benchmark and contextualise judgements. Similarly, documentation is sought and analysed as a key part of evidence gathering and a sample of stakeholders is interviewed in the course of the external school evaluation. As a result, evaluation teams have a wide body of evidence upon which to base their judgements. Moreover it appears that the external school evaluation process seeks to take into consideration contextual factors that

influence performance such as school type and location, kinds of students served, although this is not done systematically.

In Portugal, each externally evaluated school completes a "presentation" document. This provides information mapped to the areas analysed in external school evaluation and linked to its self-evaluation (Santiago et al., 2012a). The General Inspectorate of Education and Science provides the external school evaluators with a statistical profile of the school, including performance data from national assessments and national examinations, statistics on grade repetition, and data on the demographic and social characteristics of the student population. External school evaluators also review documents such as the educational project, the curricular project, the plan of activities, the internal regulations, and the self-evaluation report. Another major instrument is panel interviews with the representatives of the educational community: school leadership, teaching and other staff, students, parents/guardians, and the local authority, selected according to pre-specified criteria. Triangulation across different sources of evidence is used to promote reliability. A new instrument is the administering of questionnaires to students, parents/guardians, teachers and non-teaching staff on their satisfaction and analysis of the school results. External evaluators also observe the school facilities, including the areas for instruction, but do not directly observe teaching and learning.

## Capacity

### *Capacity for external school evaluation*

A crucial concern in external school evaluation is to ensure the legitimacy of the external school evaluators (typically known as "reviewers" or "inspectors"). The typical recruitment of external evaluators is from the education sector. External evaluators are most likely to have experience in education or teaching, to be recognised as having in-depth expertise, to be former successful practitioners and to be able to guide and support others in the process of school development. However, there is a tension here of attracting well-experienced educators out of the education sector and thereby lessening the quality within the school system.

It is not always straightforward to recruit external evaluators. For example, in the Slovak Republic it is proving difficult to attract people into the State Schools Inspectorate in particular regions, often due to the lack of additional financial incentive to leave the education sector (Shewbridge et al., forthcoming).

In Korea, a practical challenge has been to secure credible and independent external school evaluators (Kim et al., 2009). Evaluators are typically school principals, school deputy principals, educational supervisors and researchers from within a particular district, so they are credible as evaluators, but have ties with the district and so impartiality may be a concern. Researchers point to the need for higher quality training programmes to address these concerns.

In Sweden, all external school evaluators are full-time civil servants (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2010). The majority of evaluators have a professional background in education and some have experience from working as senior administrators in a municipality or have been researchers in pedagogy and involved in teacher professional development. The external evaluation body (the Swedish Schools Inspectorate) has also recruited individuals trained in law or social sciences and researchers and analysts from various disciplines. This is a strategy to broaden the knowledge base and experience within the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. All external evaluators must have a university education

or equivalent and broad knowledge and experience in their professional field. All new recruits begin a six month probationary period upon employment.

In some systems, reviewers from outside the education sector are used in combination with full-time external evaluators (see Box 6.9). Combinations of this kind can provide reassurance to those being evaluated about the competence and objectivity of teams by bringing different expertise and perspectives to bear during the evaluation process. Full-time external school evaluators develop techniques of evaluation which are specific to this type of work while the "outsider" members of a team can be selected for their own particular expertise and credibility.

In Portugal, external school evaluation comprises a team of three members, comprising two full-time members of the General Inspectorate of Education Science (IGEC) and an external member chosen by higher education or education research institutes (Santiago et al., 2012a). The external team member is usually drawn from a higher education institution.

### Box 6.9 Recruiting senior educators to join external school evaluation teams, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

In Northern Ireland, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) recruits "associate assessors" from among senior staff in schools (e.g. school principals, deputy principals or senior teachers) to participate the external evaluation of individual schools. ETI recruits associate assessors via public advertisement and an interview process. Selected individuals join a pool of associate assessors and can be invited to join an external school evaluation team on an individual school inspection. Normally an individual will not be involved in more than two external school evaluations each year. Associate assessors receive training from the ETI and are introduced to the procedures and performance indicators used in external school evaluation.

This strategy has two objectives: first, it is hoped that the experience of involvement in assessing quality in another educational establishment will help to develop the individual's capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve the provision in his/her own school; second, the presence in the team of someone coming directly from the school context adds a dimension which can help to develop the ETI's awareness of the current perspective of schools.

*Source*: Department of Education, Northern Ireland (forthcoming).

Upon recruitment, external school evaluators typically follow a specialised training programme on the techniques of external school evaluation (Faubert, 2009).

### *Aligning external evaluation capacity with the chosen approach to external school evaluation*

Governance decisions to define the overall approach to external school evaluation impact the capacity requirements in external evaluation bodies. The OECD Review noted that New Zealand's decision to shift to a system of differentiated external reviews has been accompanied by an investment by the Education Review Office in training its staff in how to handle and interpret evidence from school self-review. This has also been used to stimulate capacity building at the school level (see Box 6.3). Similarly, the Flemish Inspectorate of Education has recently introduced a "differentiated approach" to external school evaluation and is on a "learning path of continuous reflection, refinement and improvement" (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010). The Flemish

Inspectorate of Education offers generic training to all external school evaluators on the "differentiated approach" and seeks regular feedback from stakeholders via questionnaires and conferences to feed into consideration on how to adjust and refine the new approach to external school evaluation. Hong Kong-China has also invested heavily in retraining external reviewers to shift from an inspection mindset to a review approach, in which external reviewers are conceived as mediators who encourage and support schools to speak for themselves (MacBeath, 2008, p. 395).

In Sweden, external school evaluation is carried out in two major forms: regular supervision and thematic quality reviews (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2010). During regular supervision the main focus is on legality; the purpose is to ensure the right of each individual in relation to the Education Act and regulations that apply. Similarly, ad hoc complaints received by parents are always investigated on a legal basis. In this context, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has recruited individuals trained in law.

In Korea, there has been a clear shift in policy to introduce a system of whole-school external evaluation, in which school quality is evaluated against a national quality indicator framework (Kim et al., 2010). While this has the advantage of giving a more rounded evaluation than simply relying on school performance measures, it requires much expertise from external evaluators. Training programmes are offered at the national level by the Korean Educational Development Institute and comprise a mixture of lectures and workshops on the legal basis, role and rights of related organisations, basic evaluation plan, interpretation and practical application of indicators, evaluator ethics, and guide to writing evaluation reports. There has also been increased support at the local level to help evaluators practice indicator application. However, research has pointed to the need to increase the offer of training (Jung et al., 2008).

In France, a broad cross-section of stakeholders shares the opinion that external whole-school evaluation would be difficult to introduce due to inadequate external school evaluation capacity and a lack of specialisation in the necessary skills and competencies to undertake this (Dos Santos and Rakocevic, 2012). During the 1990s, certain school organising bodies (*académies* in Paris, Lille, Rouen and Toulouse) implemented whole-school evaluations. These were conducted over a series of years, but proved to be time consuming and demanding in terms of human resources and were not always appreciated by school principals, so they were abandoned. A similar attempt was made in the 1990s by the national inspection (IGAENR) to introduce whole-school evaluations resulting in reports on main school features, strengths and weaknesses sent to the school and its organising body (*académie*), but such reports were not followed up and were therefore abandoned.

### *Refining and improving external school evaluations*

As noted above, adopting a principle of transparency in the methodology and evaluation standards used in external school evaluation can increase the legitimacy of the external evaluation process in the minds of those being evaluated. Also, the transparency of publishing external evaluation reports for individual schools has been found to bring more coherence to the form and content of these (see below).

Another way to heighten the legitimacy of external school evaluators is to ensure that the evaluators are themselves evaluated (Faubert, 2009). This can provide valuable information for improving the capacity of the external evaluation body to conduct objective and impactful evaluations. Most countries with external school evaluation ensure regular discussion of approaches and instruments used in external school evaluation, often under

the supervision of a senior member of the external evaluation body (Faubert, 2009). In order to judge the effectiveness of external school evaluation procedures, many external evaluation providers collect feedback from schools and other stakeholders on their experience with the external evaluation process. The external evaluation procedures may also be evaluated during national audits. Such processes can help validate the external evaluation procedures in place and improve their effectiveness and impact and may be particularly useful when introducing new external evaluation procedures.

In New Zealand, feedback from school principals on their experience with the external review process is systematically collected (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010). There are also other channels for stakeholders to feedback concerns or possible directions for future external school reviews: the Education Review Office has a Public Affairs section to answer individual concerns and holds a variety of public meetings and speaking engagements; there is an official complaints procedure; and individuals or groups can lobby their Member of Parliament.

In Ireland, the Department of Education and Science may commission an independent customer survey to seek views on the external school evaluation process. The Department of Education and Skills may also be subject to national auditing processes, for example a recent review praised the work of the external school evaluation body and in particular its evaluation work in schools (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2012). Similarly, in Sweden an audit of the external school evaluation process was conducted by administering a questionnaire to local politicians, civil servants, school principals and teachers in 38 local authorities and by conducting a few case studies and found positive feedback on school external evaluation (Ekonomistyrningsverket, 2006).

In the Netherlands, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education conducted evaluation studies in 2010 to judge its work in general, but also to seek feedback on the new approach of "risk based inspection". On a number of criteria schools reported positive experience with the risk based approach (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2010a, 2010b).

### *Capacity for school self-evaluation*

The OECD Review has revealed a common concern among countries on the variation among schools in their capacity to undertake self-evaluation.

A recent evaluation of secondary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium identified the policy-making capacities of schools as an important improvement challenge (Commissie Monard, 2009).

In Austria, teachers report that additional time is required to work on self-evaluation and the lack of additional resources is a major barrier to its implementation (Specht and Sobanski, 2012). School principal reports in PISA indicate that students and parents show positive attitudes to self-evaluation, but that teacher unions are perceived as a hindrance to school self-evaluation activities (Haider, 2006).

In the Czech Republic, research on school self-evaluation activities has revealed that these lack a systematic, coherent and purpose-specific approach (Vašťatková and Prášilová, 2010), but that as schools gain experience in self-evaluation, they see this as a more meaningful activity (also Chvál et al., 2010). There are significant differences among schools in self-evaluation capacity, with a large proportion of schools needing support and the majority of schools demanding validated self-evaluation instruments (Chvál et al., 2010).

In Norway, the tradition of school self-evaluation directly related to the school's own development has been developing since the 1970s. By 2000, almost half of all Norwegian schools and municipalities had developed systematic forms of school evaluation, but it has proved challenging to engage the remaining schools and local authorities in this type of quality assessment (Roald 2010). Oterkiil and Ertesvag (2012) highlight research that shows the failure for evidence-based and nationally supported programmes to be successfully implemented in some Norwegian schools and argue that the key is schools' readiness and capacity to improve.

In the Netherlands, researchers conducted a survey on school self-evaluation activities in 939 Dutch primary schools and classified schools into clusters according to the intensity of self-evaluation activities and accent on accountability and improvement: 8% of schools take hardly any self-evaluation activities for accountability or improvement; 33% of schools have average self-evaluation activities paying some attention to accountability and improvement; 30% of schools undertake advanced school self-evaluation with highly implemented accountability and improvement measures; 29% of schools undertakes above average accountability measures, but low levels of school improvement (Hofman, Dukstra and Hofman, 2009).

A European project in 2001-03 identified a cocktail of elements that contributed to effective self-evaluation, including national and local support for self-evaluation, strong leadership, engagement of key stakeholders in the process and strong staff commitment to school self-evaluation (see Box 6.10).

### Box 6.10 Effective self-evaluation

The Standing International Conference of Central and General Inspectorates of Education (SICI) ran a project on "Effective School Self-evaluation" from 2001 to 2003, including 39 schools across 14 different European inspectorates. Clearly, part of the aim of this project was to identify how to best marry the external element of inspection with school self-evaluation practices. However, the final report (SICI, 2003) also presents case studies showing examples of schools in the project with good school self-evaluation practices. The project identified the following common elements among schools with "very effective self-evaluation":

- strong leadership
- school aims which were shared and clearly understood by all key stakeholders
- engagement of key stakeholders in self-evaluation and improvement activities
- well set out and clearly communicated policies and guidelines
- self-evaluation activities that focused on learning, teaching and improving outcomes
- strong staff commitment to self-evaluation
- monitoring and evaluation processes that were systematic, rigorous and robust
- well planned action to develop and improve provision
- a beneficial balance between external support and challenge from local authorities and/or national Inspectorates and internal quality assurance
- a generally strong infrastructure of national or local support for self-evaluation as a process.

*Source*: SICI (2003).

### *Offering national or local support for school self-evaluation*

Strong national or local support for school self-evaluation has been identified as an important element in ensuring effective school self-evaluation processes (see Box 6.10). Table 6.10 presents an overview of the major national supports for self-evaluation offered in OECD countries. Specific training can be offered to school principals and teachers in areas such as the use of evaluation results, classroom and peer observation, the analysis of data and the development of improvement plans. Training and conferences on self-evaluation activities are offered in a number of countries. Examples of other types of national supports for self-evaluation include guidelines for self-evaluation and the development of school improvement plans, tools for evaluation and data analysis, including the feedback of performance information from national assessments. Box 6.11 shows an example of a comprehensive centrally developed support package for schools in Scotland in the United Kingdom.

**Table 6.10 National initiatives to support school self-evaluation**

| | National support for school self-evaluation |
|---|---|
| **Australia** | School level results from national assessments are available to schools via *MySchool* public website. Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales have developed online information systems to support schools and in particular to feed back results from national assessments in a way that allows schools to analyse these more efficiently. A national school improvement tool was developed in 2012 for schools to self-evaluate on nine major characteristics research has identified in effective schools. |
| **Austria** | Quality in Schools (QIS) project Internet platform supplies schools with information and tools for both evaluation and data analysis, and provides a forum for the presentation of results |
| **Belgium (Fl.)** | New possibility for schools to conduct student tests as administered in the national sample assessment and to receive benchmarked feedback; feedback reports given to all schools participating in national and international assessments. |
| **Czech Republic** | Schools are free to choose self-evaluation criteria, but the Ministry and the Inspectorate provide guidelines, selected models and examples of good practice ("On the road to quality" project). |
| **Denmark** | The Quality and Supervision Agency runs an Evaluation Portal with online tools and resources for school evaluation and in collaboration with the Danish Evaluation Institute offers voluntary training sessions for school principals and teachers. |
| **Finland** | In 2010 the Ministry of Education and culture devised national quality criteria for basic education with a view to facilitating school self-evaluation and quality enhancement. The Education Evaluation Council produced evaluation guides and methodological publications and disseminates good evaluation practices. |
| **France** | Secondary schools have been equipped with dashboards of performance indicators. Data come mostly from the centrally developed application Support for School Piloting and Self-Evaluation (APAE, *aide au pilotage et à l'auto-évaluation des établissements*). The indicators are mostly related to school population, financial and student achievement data. In the special education sector (*éducation prioritaire*), a Support Tool for School Piloting (OAPE, *outil d'aide au pilotage de l'établissement*) is currently being developed to help school teams self-evaluate their activities in order to collectively increase the "school effect". |
| **Hungary** | National Centre for Assessment and Examination in Public Education issues guidelines on organisation and methods for self-evaluation and organises training in quality development. |
| **Iceland** | Ministry publishes guidelines and offers training to teachers. New curriculum guidelines will include special evaluation guidelines for schools. |
| **Ireland** | Strengthened support in 2012 includes: Guidelines for School Self-Evaluation in primary and secondary schools; a dedicated school self-evaluation website; Inspectorate support for all schools and teachers; and seminars for school principals which are organised by the professional development service for teachers. In 2003 the Inspectorate developed two frameworks for self-evaluation in primary and secondary schools (Looking at our schools). Since 1998, professional development for teachers offered in context of School Development Planning. |
| **Korea** | MPOEs provide guidelines for schools to complete self-evaluation reports by providing evidence of their educational activities and outcomes for common evaluation indicators in the national evaluation framework. MPOEs provide training to senior school staff on how to prepare for school self-evaluation activities. |
| **Luxembourg** | Ministry accompanies schools in their school development planning by offering data, assessment tools, advice, training and analytical expertise and analysing data. Methodological support is offered to schools throughout the process of drawing up and implementing their School Development Plan by the central Agency for the Development of Quality in Schools (ADQS). |

**Table 6.10 National initiatives to support school self-evaluation (*continued*)**

| | National support for school self-evaluation |
|---|---|
| **Mexico** | Self-evaluation guidance developed since the early 2000s, including an adaptation of the Scottish evaluation and quality indicator framework (2003) and a publication on key features of the top performing schools (2007). Further a collection of guides, support materials and instruments for self-evaluation was distributed to all primary and secondary schools in 2007 (System for School Self-evaluation for Quality Management). The National Testing Institute (INEE) also develops a series of applications for use in self-evaluation, e.g. tools for evaluating the overall school, the school environment, school staff, etc. |
| **Netherlands** | Ministry subsidised two national projects to develop quality management systems in secondary schools (1999-2005) and in primary schools (2001-06). Secondary School Council (2010) in co-operation with the Ministry has developed an online information system with quantitative and qualitative information on individual schools with benchmarking data that can be used for self-evaluation and horizontal accountability. |
| **New Zealand** | Education Review Office provides support tools and training for school self-review and improvement, suggesting a cyclical approach and providing a framework for success indicators (same as those used in external reviews). |
| **Norway** | A national "School Portal" presents benchmarked outcome data for school owners and schools, plus basic demographic and resource data. National template for school reporting includes mandatory and suggested indicators. These are part of the National Quality Assessment System (NKVS) introduced in 2004. |
| **Portugal** | General Inspectorate of Education and Science provides school self-evaluation support materials on its website and organises seminars on good practices in self-evaluation. The Inspectorate's "School Presentation" instrument guides schools in how to present their own evaluation at the start of the inspection process. |
| **Slovak Republic** | The Ministry published methodological guidelines in 2006 to help schools produce their self-evaluation reports. There are no defined criteria. There are three ongoing national projects on school self-evaluation (cofounded by European Social Funds). |
| **Slovenia** | Various projects to support self-evaluation via National School for Leadership and National Education Institute. Ongoing project (co-funded by European Social Funds, 2008-14) to develop a system of quality assessment and assurance focused primarily on self-evaluation, combined with external school evaluation and quality indicators. |
| **Sweden** | The National Agency for Education provides a school self-assessment tool (Assessment, Reflection, Evaluation and Quality, BRUK) with indicators on the national curriculum and syllabi, plus a tool to plan and assess internal quality improvement. Many privately developed tools also available to schools. |
| **United Kingdom (England)** | A national self-evaluation form is provided for schools – this is used by schools prior to school inspections. An analysis tool Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation (RAISEonline) is provided for use by schools, local authorities, inspectors and school improvement partners. |
| **United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)** | The Education and Training Inspectorate has developed in collaboration with schools and practitioners a set of quality indicators (Together Towards Improvement) which is promoted for use in school self-evaluation. Other tools and guidelines have been developed to support both whole-school evaluation and evaluation in specific subjects, e.g. "Evaluating English". |
| **United Kingdom (Scotland)** | Framework for school self-evaluation (How good is our school?) includes quality indicators in five key areas. Education Scotland website also provides a range of self-evaluation materials and good practice examples. Education Scotland runs good practice conferences on different themes. |

*Source*: OECD Review.

It is worthy of note that efforts to build school capacity for self-evaluation have been undertaken by many countries already for a number of years. In 2001, nearly all European Union members had some form of support for self-evaluation in place, the most common support being training for self-evaluation (e.g. in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom) (Eurydice, 2004). Self-evaluation frameworks and models were available in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom. With the exception of Finland and Sweden all these systems had established external school evaluation procedures in place. In France and the Slovak Republic schools had access to the criteria, indicators and procedures used in external school evaluation. However, there is continued concern to strengthen school self-evaluation capacity. For example, in New Zealand, heightened priority has been given to building school capacity for self review (New Zealand Ministry of Education,

2010). The Education Review Office assessed in 2007 that around half of schools were considered to be conducting their self review well, that is, they were using assessment information well to inform teaching and school decision making (ERO, 2007). Within the United Kingdom, external school evaluation in Scotland has sought to build capacity by providing more extended engagement and support to schools most in need of this and by creating more scope for inspectors to work directly with school staff during external school evaluation (van Bruggen, 2009).

### Box 6.11 Centrally developed tools for self-evaluation in Scotland, the United Kingdom

The external evaluation body in Scotland (Education Scotland) has developed a central web-based resource which provides schools and school managers with a comprehensive set of tools which they can use to structure effective school-level evaluation. This resource, known as Journey to Excellence has grown and developed over two decades and can be traced back to the publication of *How Good is our School?* in the late 1980s.

The complete Journey to Excellence package now includes the following parts:

- Part 1: *Aiming for Excellence*; explores the concept of excellence, what is meant by "learning" and "barriers to learning" and introduces ten dimensions of excellence.
- Part 2: *Exploring Excellence*; explores the ten dimensions in detail, giving practical examples from real schools which show the journey from "good" to "great".
- Part 3: *How Good is our School?* and *The Child at the Centre* present sets of quality indicators for use in the self-evaluation of schools and pre-school centres respectively, along with guidance on their use.
- Part 4: *Planning for Excellence* provides a guide for improvement planning in schools and pre-school centres.
- Part 5: *Exploring Excellence in Scottish Schools* consists of an online digital resource for professional development containing multi-media clips exemplifying aspects of excellence across a wide range of educational sectors and partner agencies. It also contains short videos from international education experts and researchers.

Plans are underway to enhance the resource further with new resources to support schools in the process of developing long-term strategic thinking and managing major change in a school context.

The package is very widely used by schools and by all Scotland's 32 local authorities and most independent schools. The school quality indicators at the heart of the package are also used by external school evaluators for external review of schools. They were built on the criteria developed for external school evaluation and they are regularly refreshed and updated on the basis of developing understanding of the characteristics of effective practice.

*Source:* HMIE website (*www.hmie.gov.uk/generic/journeytoexcellence*).

## *Ensuring leadership of school self-evaluation activities*

The key role that strong leadership plays in ensuring effective school self-evaluation has also been highlighted (see Box 6.10). Research internationally has shown that school leadership focused on goal-setting, assessment, appraisal and evaluation can positively influence teacher performance and learning environments (Pont et al., 2008). Evidence

from TALIS indicates that if school principals adopt a more pronounced instructional leadership style, teachers are more likely to engage in collaborative activities with their colleagues (this is the case in more than a quarter of the TALIS countries) (OECD, 2009). In Ontario, Canada, professionals have developed a set of competencies for school principals related to school self-evaluation (Box 6.12).

### Box 6.12 School self-evaluation related competencies for school leadership: Ontario, Canada

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Ontario is a virtual organisation made up of a partnership of representatives from Ontario's principals' and district officers' associations, councils of school district directors, and the Ministry of Education. Its purpose is "to further develop education leadership so as to improve the level of student achievement in Ontario's four publicly funded education systems. One of IEL's five practices and competencies within its research-based leadership framework for school principals and deputy principals is "leading the instructional program", described as: "The principal sets high expectations for learning outcomes and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction. The principal manages the school organisation effectively so that everyone can focus on teaching and learning." Among a number of practices outlined to achieve this are: ensuring a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement; using data to monitor progress; and developing professional learning communities in collaborative cultures. Associated skills include that the school principal is able to access, analyse, and interpret data, and initiate and support an enquiry-based approach to improvement in teaching and learning. Related knowledge includes knowledge of tools for data collection and analysis, school self-evaluation, strategies for developing effective teachers and project management for planning and implementing change.

*Source*: Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership website, *www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/content/framework*.

In the Czech Republic, a study of external support offered to school principals on the self-evaluation process in 12 primary schools in Prague showed that this had a positive impact on school principals' attitudes and readiness to implement self-evaluation (Chvál and Starý, 2008). An analysis of the content of self-evaluation activities developed by school principals revealed a clear need for external support; also in the absence of external specialist support there were serious drawbacks in learning exchanges among school principals in their peer review of each other's school development plans.

In the French Community of Belgium, school principal representatives report that developing a school plan can be a useful process if it valued and invested in by the whole school team (Blondin and Giot, 2011). If not, it is rather an imposed requirement that demands much work. Stakeholders also cite the need to lessen the high administrative burden on school principals in order to free up time for pedagogical leadership – this is particularly challenging in primary schools.

In Denmark, school principals have expressed concern about how to reconcile the increased external demands to document school quality with a strong climate of trust at their schools (EVA, 2007). This was echoed in school principal demands for training on how to meet documentation requirements (EVA, 2010). Another study concluded that 70% of school principals request professional development in evaluation, strategic development and quality assurance (Chairmanship of the School Council, 2009). National training sessions on working with evaluation are offered to school principals and teachers on a voluntary basis and in parallel online evaluation tools and examples are offered.

In France, there has been little if any emphasis on school self-evaluation in leadership training (Dos Santos and Rakocevic, 2012). As such, both the School of National Education, Higher Education and Research (ESEN) and the national education authorities at regional level (*autorités académiques*) have developed targeted training programmes, with a particular emphasis on how to use indicators. The Directorate of Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance (DEPP) provides packages to help schools build their own indicator sets. A broad cross-section of stakeholders report that school principals and teachers need training in how to conduct self-evaluations, including setting objectives and using the indicators and tools available to them.

An evaluation of the new approach to external school evaluation with a focus on school self-evaluation in Hong Kong-China identified self-confident and calm leadership as an important factor in helping embed a culture of reflection and inquiry (MacBeath, 2008).

In the Atlantic Provinces of Canada, the emphasis on school self-evaluation as a part of school improvement planning places high demands on school principals and other members of the school leadership (Fournier and Mildon, forthcoming). There are similarly high demands on school principals in New Zealand where the approach to school evaluation emphasises the importance of school self-evaluation (see Box 6.13).

### Box 6.13 Targeted training on school self-evaluation for school principals in New Zealand

As school self-evaluation (self-review) is at the heart of the New Zealand approach, school capacity to conduct self-evaluation is of key importance. There are high expectations on school principals and their organising bodies (Boards of Trustees) and this can be especially challenging for schools in isolated areas or in communities with low socio-economic status. The external school evaluation body (the Education Review Office, ERO) in collaboration with school principal associations delivers workshops on self-evaluation to school principals, their teams and organising bodies and has developed support materials and case studies in good practice in self-evaluation. Such initiatives capitalised on ongoing professional development for external evaluations and so costs were minimal. In 2009, 35 workshops were delivered by a national facilitator and supporting local senior evaluators to over 1 200 participants across New Zealand, including relatively isolated areas. Workshop feedback was positive and external evaluators are reporting improved self-evaluation processes from schools that attended the workshops.

*Source:* New Zealand Ministry of Education (2010).

## *Creating evaluation roles and responsibilities within the school*

Research from different countries has pointed to how the creation of teams holding particular responsibilities for self-evaluation within a school can positively impact the effectiveness of self-evaluation. In the Netherlands, the use of "data teams" comprising teachers and school principals or deputy principals has proved effective in encouraging greater use of data in school self-evaluation for improvement. This is a mechanism to engage school leadership support and to foster collaboration by focusing on specific problems in the school (Schildkamp, Rekers-Mombarg and Harms, 2012). In Estonia, although the school leader is responsible for implementing self-evaluation, many schools have developed "assessment teams" and there has been positive feedback on this (European Commission, 2011). In England in the United Kingdom, there is a "data

hierarchy" in schools with well-developed data and evaluation roles among school leadership and senior staff (Kelly and Downey, 2011). In Hong Kong-China a new focus on the role of self-evaluation within the external evaluation process has seen the creation of School Improvement Teams in schools. An evaluation identified that schools with effective and credible School Improvement Teams were able to cope better with the new external evaluation approach. The most effective teams comprised a cross-section of staff with high credibility among their colleagues, showing vision of how self-evaluation could feed into learning and school improvement, working as a team with distributed leadership, exercising initiative and creativity, and able to instil an ethos of accountability (MacBeath, 2008).

### *Engaging the full school community in school self-evaluation activities*

School self-evaluation is seen as a way to engage all school staff in collective learning (Hopkins, 1995) and to aid the constant search for improvement (Barber, 1996). It is also important to engage key stakeholders in self-evaluation and improvement activities (see Box 6.10). Leithwood and Aitken (1995, p. 40) define a "learning organisation" as: "A group of people pursuing common purposes (and individual purposes as well) with a collective commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes".

Importantly, research has underlined the important role that students can play in school self-evaluation. Evidence from several systems has highlighted that involving students in decisions about their schooling is an important factor in school improvement. Students have a critical role to play in determining how schools and classrooms can be improved (Rudduck, 2007; Smyth, 2007; MacBeath et al., 2000), even though they need support to learn how to provide powerful feedback (Pekrul and Levin, 2007).

Seashore Louis et al. (2010) conducted a six-year study in nine states, 43 school districts and 180 schools in the United States and found that higher-performing schools generally asked for more input and engagement from a wider variety of stakeholders. In all schools studied, school principals and district leaders had the most influence, but a greater degree of influence from teacher teams, parents and students did not lessen school principal influence.

Emerging evidence from a research project on the impact of external school evaluation indicates that schools reporting greater capacity for improvement and change, also report greater stakeholder involvement and greater efforts to improve teacher co-operation and school leadership (Ehren et al., 2012).

In the Netherlands, analysis of the use of self-evaluation in primary schools revealed that schools undertaking this as part of a "learning organisation" perform significantly better in mathematics (Hofman, Dukstra and Hofman, 2009).

The benefits of establishing a "professional learning community" are widely recognised. However, there are common challenges in many systems to instil this cultural change in many schools and also among staff within a school (see Box 6.14).

In Japan, there are official requirements for schools to seek the views and demands of students, mainly by means of questionnaires, in particular seeking their evaluation of teaching. The increased use of student evaluation of teaching and lessons in secondary schools had sometimes caused defensiveness and hostility among teachers (Katsuno and Takei, 2008). Although, there are no official requirements for student participation in

school self-evaluation forums (including parents, local residents, school counsellors), this had been encouraged by the Saitama Prefecture. During a study of self-evaluation in six schools during 2004-06, Katsuno and Takei (2008) comment that the Saitama Prefecture takes a less managerial approach with a greater emphasis on discussion and communication (p. 176). The study found some positive results: although it was not always an easy process to involve students (some teachers were not willing to listen to student demands), many teachers saw this self-evaluation process as a way to promote students' personal and social development.

In Slovenia, there is a legal requirement for the teacher assembly, the parent council and the school board to discuss the school's annual report, to evaluate the results and to include their evaluation, comments and proposals in the final report (Brejc, Sardoč and Zupanc, 2011). In turn, this evaluation process feeds into the school's development plan and annual work plan.

### Box 6.14 Building professional learning communities: A challenge shared

Research has identified the school self-evaluation process as a matter for school leadership in many schools, with limited engagement from teachers in the process. Schools with highly developed self-evaluation processes promote a "professional learning community" in which each member of the school is constantly learning and improving.

Evidence from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of lower secondary school teachers in 2007-08 indicates that it is a common challenge to build professional learning communities in schools. TALIS provides measures on five different aspects which together would make a professional learning community: "co-operation" (Exchange teaching materials with colleagues; and Teach jointly as a team in the same class); "shared vision" (Attend staff meetings to discuss the vision and mission of the school); "a focus on learning" (Ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing student progress); "reflective inquiry" (Take part in professional learning activities, e.g. team supervision); and "de-privatisation of practice" (Observe other teachers' classes and provide feedback).

In all countries, there is great variation among teachers in the extent to which they indicate their participation in the five types of activity associated with a professional learning community. In each country there are three or four main teacher profiles according to the type of activities they participate in and how often they do so. A study in the Flemish Community of Belgium in 96 schools with 2 716 respondents also revealed significant variation in reported attitudes toward self-evaluation activities within schools, more so than between schools – and more positive attitudes were associated with a more pronounced professional learning community culture (Vanhoof, Van Petegem and De Maeyer, 2009).

The TALIS results show that in many countries basic forms of co-operation among staff are common, but it is much less common for teachers to work together on core professional activities (participation in reflective inquiry and observing other teachers' classes and providing feedback). Teachers in larger schools more frequently reported that they observe other teachers' classes and provide feedback.

Important factors associated with increased levels of participation in professional learning community activities include receiving feedback and appraisal on teacher instruction and being involved in external professional development activities. Both factors indicate the important role that the observation of the teaching and learning process plays, including potentially via critical friendship peer observation activities among schools.

However, results also show that being more actively involved in a professional learning community can be time consuming. Vanhoof, VanPetegem and De Maeyer (2009) found that teachers reported self-evaluation activities to be time consuming and difficult to carry out. Indeed, evidence from the Atlantic provinces in Canada indicates that this is a common concern raised among teacher unions (Fournier and Mildon, forthcoming).

*Sources*: OECD (2012); Vanhoof et al. (2009); Fournier and Mildon (forthcoming).

In the French Community of Belgium, each school has a participation council (legal requirement since 2007) to ensure the rights for parents and students to give feedback to the school, however, teacher representatives report that the participation of parents varies from school to school and is particularly weak in schools in less advantaged socio-economic communities (Blondin and Giot, 2011). They argue that this can reinforce inequities among schools.

### *Stimulating and supporting peer review among schools*

The OECD Review revealed incipient practices of schools undertaking peer evaluation activities in several countries. Box 6.15 presents an overview of emerging peer reviews in the Flemish Community of Belgium. Seeking external ideas and support, including from other schools, is a feature of effective professional learning communities (Bolam et al., 2005). There is considerable evidence, for example from Finland, Sweden and England in the United Kingdom, that school-school partnerships, clusters and networks can provide mechanisms for sharing effective leadership as well as effective practice in a way that contributes to raising the performance of the member schools (Pont et al., 2008). Within the United Kingdom, executive leadership across partner schools in England has proven to be a very effective mechanism for raising the performance of underachieving schools (Hill and Matthews, 2010). A particular power of learning networks between schools is the sense of moral purpose around making a difference for all children – learning on behalf of others as well as with and from others – as was the case in the Networked Learning Communities programme, a large-scale enquiry and development initiative involving 137 networks (1 500 schools) in England between 2002 and 2006 (Jackson and Temperley, 2007). However, official evaluation of secondary school participation in school networks indicates that it is a challenge to engage the participation of the academically stronger schools (National Audit Office, 2009).

Critical friends are trusted outsiders. Frequently, they are external advisors, but the benefit of colleagues in other schools playing this role is that they are fellow professionals who are equal. They have the potential to hone pedagogic peer evaluation skills and to create the impression that schools are no longer alone. A study to promote school self-evaluation in 27 primary schools in the Netherlands also involved visitation by critical friends (Blok, Sleegers and Karsten, 2008). Schools principals reported that the use of critical friends was cost effective, although time consuming, and there was almost unanimous agreement that it had contributed to the school's capacity to improve (p. 391).

However, paying attention to the challenges and facilitating conditions for professional learning networks is critical to their potential to enhance educational change and support improvement (Chapman and Hadfield, 2010). Trusting relationships are necessary for deep networking and can be fostered by the prior agreement among participating schools on a code of ethics to guide the peer evaluation process (Stoll et al., 2011). The context in which schools conduct self-evaluation determines to a considerable extent the nature of the support that a critical friend can offer (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2005). If school self-evaluation is voluntary for the purpose of school improvement, a critical friend's role can be varied and potentially highly creative. However, if a school self-evaluation is mandated and subject to external evaluation, a critical friend's role is more politicised and there are higher stakes (p. 249).

### Box 6.15 Emerging peer reviews among schools in the Flemish Community of Belgium

The Ministry of Education and Training has stimulated collaboration among schools by its promotion of "school communities" (*scholengemeenschappen*). Schools in a similar geographical area join a school community on a voluntary basis. However, the Ministry of Education and Training provides incentives for schools to join a school community by offering extra resources (i.e. extra teaching time for primary and secondary schools). In the case of secondary schools, there are also some organisational advantages to joining a school community. These efforts have successfully stimulated further collaboration among schools and virtually all schools offering mainstream primary and secondary education belong to a school community. There are clearly defined responsibilities for schools and belonging to a school community "implies continuous evaluation and adjustment of school policies" and therefore effectively promotes school improvement (Ministry of Education and Training and the University of Antwerp, 2010).

Although these emerging collegial relationships are at relatively early stages of development, their emergence is a strength in that they are focusing on helping schools develop both their self-evaluation capacity and the potential for critical friendship. The OECD Review visit revealed an example of primary school principals collaborating with colleagues observing teachers in each other's schools and an inter-schools quality network between secondary school principals focusing on how to stimulate and improve the use of outcomes. Research points out that schools find peer visitation a useful learning experience (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010).

Further, examples of peer visitation include: a project by the umbrella organisation for Provincial education, in which participating schools commit to a code of ethics, visiting teams write a report on findings, strengths, weaknesses and recommendations, and the visited school decides how to address these recommendations; and visits and peer reviews among schools involved in similar innovation projects in the City of Antwerp.

*Source*: Shewbridge et al. (2011a).

## Reporting and use of results

Results from the three major approaches to school evaluation can have both formative and summative uses. For example:

- **School development**: external school evaluation can lead to recommendations or instructions on particular aspects for individual schools to improve and can be used to identify and share best practice and innovative practice throughout the school system; self-evaluation results can feed into the development of a school improvement plan and professional development activities; both types of school evaluation can use comparative school performance measures to identify relative strengths to build on and weaknesses to be improved.
- **School accountability**: external school evaluation results for individual schools or groups of schools (e.g. local authority overview reports) may be published, results may lead to possible rewards (e.g. national or regional competition recognition; additional funding) or sanctions (e.g. being publicly named as an underperforming school with quality concerns; loss of national recognition or funding; school closure) or strengthened external supervision and/or support; school self-evaluation results may be reported to the school community to give account of the school's status and progress toward specific school goals; school self-evaluation results may form the basis of external school evaluation; comparative school measures may be reported to the public for general accountability as well as to aid families in choosing schools (as individual school performance reports or in national or regional performance tables).

### *An overview of accountability uses*

Table 6.11 provides an overview of the use of school evaluation results and school performance measures for accountability. This also gives a sense of the relative influence that the results of external school evaluation, school self-evaluation and comparative measures of school performance can have in school accountability. Countries are arranged in descending order of the possible influence that external school evaluation has on the evaluation of school performance. In general, across countries external school evaluation carries more influence than school self-evaluation and comparative school performance measures in terms of evaluating school performance and school administration and also for informing decisions on possible school closures and financial rewards or sanctions.

It is clear that in the majority of systems where comparative measures of school performance are available (via either national examinations, national assessments or both), these exert a high to moderate degree of influence over the evaluation of school performance. In fact, Korea and Spain are the only countries where these do not influence evaluations of school performance. In Chile and Mexico, comparative measures of school performance are the only means to evaluate school performance. While comparative measures of school performance have a high or moderate influence in the evaluation of school administration in a few countries (the French Community of Belgium, Chile, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and England in the United Kingdom), they very rarely feed into decisions on financial rewards or sanctions or possible school closure.

However, in the Netherlands and England in the United Kingdom, school performance measures do have some influence in decisions on possible school closures as these are used within the external school evaluation process – this is also the case for Ireland where these have a low degree of influence. In the Netherlands, comparative measures of school performance are a key part of the external school evaluation process. Although schools are not readily closed down (there is a procedure involving a number of escalating steps), their results in principle have high impact on their potential closure. As detailed in Box 6.6, school performance is a crucial indicator in the Netherlands for the Inspectorate of Education's decision making process to judge whether a school is "weak" or "very weak".

In Hungary there is strong reliance on the use of student assessment results in school evaluation. A survey of school organising bodies (maintainers) revealed that 84% reported relying on national assessment results and nearly half of local governments reported only using one source of information and this tends to be national assessment results. The publication of national assessment results "undoubtedly" qualifies as the initiative with the greatest impact on school evaluation activities and has been largely accepted (results of the Institute of Education Research and Development's 2009 school survey revealed that around 10% of school principals reported disagreement with public access to national assessment results). Schools failing to achieve a minimum level of performance in national assessments are required to take measures. Such legislation has been strongly criticised by the Education and Opportunities for Children Roundtable as a political idea that is not based on adequate evaluation (Kertesi, 2008, p.185, in Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010).

## Table 6.11 Use of school evaluation results and school performance measures for accountability (2009)

| | Degree of influence the results of external school evaluation have over: | | | | Degree of influence the results of school self-evaluation have over: | | | | Degree of influence the results of national assessments or examinations have over: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Evaluation of school performance | Evaluation of school administration | Possible financial reward/ sanction | Possible school closure | Evaluation of school performance | Evaluation of school administration | Possible financial reward/ sanction | Possible school closure | Evaluation of school performance | Evaluation of school administration | Possible financial reward/ sanction | Possible school closure |
| **Belgium (Fl.)[1]** | High | Med. | High | High | a | a | a | a | High | Low | None | None |
| **Belgium (Fr.)** | High | High | None | Low | a | a | a | a | High | High | None | None |
| **UK (England)** | High | High | Low | High | Low | Low | None | Low | High | High | Low | Med. |
| **Iceland[1]** | High | High | None | a | High | High | None | a | High | None | None | a |
| **Ireland** | High | High | None | Med. | a | a | a | a | High | None | None | Low |
| **Netherlands** | High | Med. | None | High | a | a | a | a | High | Med. | None | High |
| **Poland** | High | Med. | m | None | Med. | Med. | m | None | High | Med. | Med. | None |
| **Portugal** | High | Low | None | None | Med. | Low | None | None | Med. | None | None | None |
| **UK (Scotland)[2]** | High | High | a | High | High | High | a | High | High | None | None | None |
| **Slovak Republic** | High | Med. | Med. | High | High | High | Low | Med. | Med. | Low | None | None |
| **Turkey** | High | High | Low | High | Med. | Med. | None | None | High | Low | None | None |
| **Czech Republic** | Med. | High | High | High | Med. | Med. | Med. | Low | a | a | a | a |
| **France** | Med. | Med. | Low | None | Low | Low | None | None | High | None | None | None |
| **Austria** | Med. | Med. | Med. | Med. | Low | Low | Low | Low | a | a | a | a |
| **Germany** | Med. | Med. | None | None | Med. | Med. | Low | None | High | Low | Low | None |
| **Israel** | Med. | None | None | None | Med. | None | None | None | Med. | Low | None | None |
| **Korea[1]** | Low | High | Low | None | High | High | Low | a | None | Low | None | None |
| **Luxembourg** | Low | Low | a | a | Med. | Low | a | a | High | Low | None | None |
| **Spain[1]** | Low | Low | None | None | a | a | a | a | None | None | None | None |
| **Chile[1]** | None | None | High | High | a | a | a | a | Med. | Med. | None | None |
| **Estonia** | None | None | None | None | Med. | High | Low | None | Med. | None | Low | None |
| **Hungary** | a | a | a | a | m | High | None | None | Med. | High | None | Low |
| **Mexico[1]** | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | a | Med. | None | None | None |
| **United States[2]** | m | m | m | m | m | m | m | m | High | m | m | m |

Notes: The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable and the symbol "m" denotes that information is missing.
(1) Comparative measures of school performance refer to national assessments only.
(2) Comparative measures of school performance refer to national examinations only.

*Source:* OECD (2011).

The results in school performance accountability systems may be used to identify underperforming schools and to target support to these schools. Evidence from the United States highlights the importance of providing adequate support to schools in need of improvement. The United States Department of Education commissioned an evaluation of school improvement support offered to schools identified in the No Child Left Behind accountability system (Padilla et al., 2006). The evaluation was conducted over three school years from 2001-04 with annual surveys to a nationally representative sample of 1 300 district administrators and 739 schools, plus case studies in 20 schools, in 15 districts across five states. By 2003/04 almost all districts provided identified schools

with basic school improvement support, e.g. writing an improvement plan and analysing data. However, all but two of the 15 districts in the case study reported serious capacity concerns to offer school improvement support, including reduced funding available for teacher professional development and a lack of knowledge and skills to provide school-based instructional support. The study also highlighted the dominance of contextual school characteristics influencing whether or not schools improved enough to exit "improvement status". The authors conclude that identified schools require much more intensive support.

Regarding the nature of support, a study of 21 low-performing high schools across six states in the United States revealed that school stakeholders appreciated the experience, dedication, interpersonal skills and accessibility of their support providers (Boyle et al., 2009). This shows appreciation for flexible and adapted support according to the school context and that such an approach is perceived by schools as high-quality support. Schools also noted the importance of the intensity, stability and timeliness of the support offered. This highlights the importance of the quality and capacity of the external support providers.

### *School self-evaluation*

The results of self-evaluation are primarily aimed at making plans for school development and further professional development needs. For example, in Slovenia, the annual school report must be discussed with and evaluated by the Teachers' Assembly, the Parents' Council and the School Board. Each group can comment of the effects of the school's programmes and policies and make proposals on how to develop these. This internal evaluation subsequently feeds into the school's development plan and its specific annual work plan (Brejc, Sardoč and Zupanc, 2011). In New Zealand, schools are expected to integrate the results of both their own self-review and national external school reviews into their long-term planning (Nusche et al., 2012).

In many countries, school self-evaluation is integrated in a classic management approach to strategic improvement planning. For example, following Deming's Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (based on Hofman, Dukstra and Hofman, 2005):

- At the plan stage schools may: conduct an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT); develop a vision/mission; set goals; develop specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) performance indicators; establish functional structural communication; create broad support for the plan; and plan funding and staff allocation.
- At the do stage schools implement the plan and may: ensure educational leadership; apply policy and strategy; work out an activity plan; stimulate a professional culture; ensure internal and external communication.
- At the check stage schools evaluate the plan and may: ensure internal and external involvement in evaluation; use monitoring; analyse data; construct performance indicators and norm references for evaluation; analyse staff and student satisfaction with the improvement plan; report results to the school community.
- At the act/adapt stage schools act on the evaluation results and adapt the plan accordingly: integrate findings in the monitoring system; broaden the application area; deploy necessary staff and material; check failures; seek accreditation; restart the cycle.

## Box 6.16 Using school self-evaluation results in school improvement planning

### Quality management in schools in Sweden

In Sweden, internal quality management in schools (stimulated by long established quality reporting practices) fosters the intelligent collaborative use of feedback. Also, the relatively intensive school self-evaluation activities contribute to the openness of professionals for feedback coming from external school evaluation. In Sweden, feedback seems to be integrated in schools into a communication-rich organisational environment which is capable to understand and interpret it.

The concept of quality management or quality development, as it is reflected in the quality model developed by the National Agency for Education, is embedded in a classic strategic management model focusing on four key questions: (1) who are we?, (2) where do we want to go?, (3) how can we get there?, (4) how did we succeed?. This is the complete strategic planning cycle which starts with a self-analysis and the analysis of the environment, it continues with vision-making and strategic goal setting, then implementation planning and, later on, the evaluation of the results. Quality reporting is, in fact, only the last element of this process, its most important aim being to feed back into the four-stage strategic cycle.

### The typical approach to self-review within a school planning cycle in Australia

In Australia, school planning is a continuous process best understood as cyclical, developmental and adaptive. All state and territory schools are committed to self-reflection, strategic planning and transparency of reporting when evaluation and assessing their individual schools performance. School self review is the first step in the process of school development and improvement, providing the foundation for reporting and accountability. School self-assessment practices are performed in all public state and territory schools. This is through a process of monitoring and assessing yearly operation plans, strategic plans and measuring against key performance measurement indicators, as established by individual state and territory guidelines. Self review enables an analysis of current performance and the effectiveness of strategies implemented to support performance improvement. It provides the basis for performance reporting and future improvement planning. School self-assessment appears to be most effective when assisted by significant levels of support from the state and territory departments or school regulatory bodies, especially in the form of external reviews and the provision of templates and standard frameworks.

### School self-review steps and procedures in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

For a number of reasons, Newfoundland and Labrador has been particularly successful implementing a School Improvement Program. Historically, they had schools working on models of improvement as early as 1986 and they did a pilot project and study in 1995 (Sheppard, 1995), adopting a model revised from that experimentation in 2004. However, senior department officials attribute the effective implementation to the support system and capacity-building put in place.

While there are many methods to gather, record, analyse, and make informed decisions, the steps below have been field-tested in schools and have been found to be effective. A timeline is also suggested for each of the steps. It is recommended that the Internal Review component be completed within a 5-month period, though this is sometimes contingent upon the nature and culture of the school.

- Step one: Establish a school development (leadership) team
- Step two: Gather and organise relevant data according to criteria statements
- Step three: Establish data recording and analysis teams
- Step four: Record and analyse the data
- Step five: Report on data and critical issues
- Step six: Goal identification

*Sources:* Nusche et al. (2011b); DEEWR (2010); Fournier and Mildon (forthcoming).

By design, this implies that the results of school self-evaluation feed into school development policies. Box 6.16 presents typical examples of the approach to self-review as part of school improvement planning cycles in Australia, Canada and Sweden. These approaches clearly illustrate that school self-evaluation is fundamentally integrated in a broader strategic planning cycle. For example, in the Atlantic Provinces of Canada the final step in the school improvement planning cycle is the external validation of the school's results. A school completing the strategic improvement planning cycle by definition has improved (Fournier and Mildon, forthcoming). The examples also illustrate that schools with effective school improvement planning establish clear procedures and can benefit from well-developed external support systems.

Schools may also choose to publish annual reports on their websites. However, some systems may set requirements for schools to publish annual reports. For example, in the Czech Republic schools have been obliged to publish their results and this is checked as part of the criteria in the inspection framework (Santiago et al., 2012b). As of 2012/13, there is a clear expectation that schools use the results of their self-evaluation activities as well as the educational results in publishing their annual school report and that this is all checked via external school evaluation by the Czech School Inspectorate.

### *Using comparative school performance measures in self-evaluation activities*

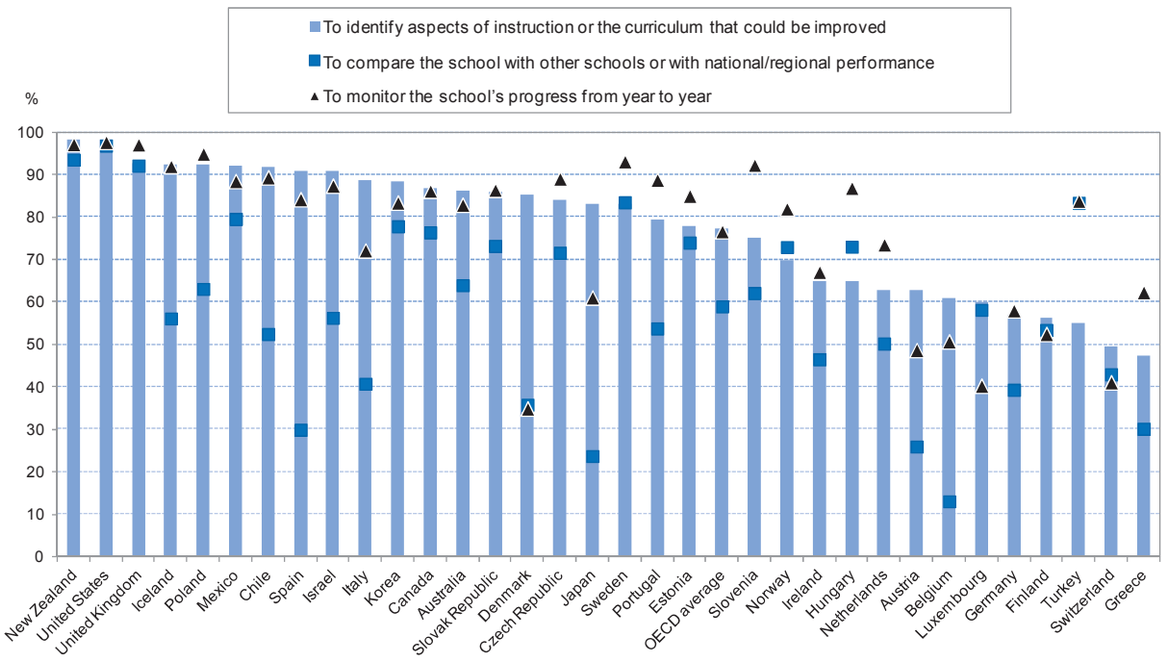
The OECD Review revealed in several countries that there is often a need to optimise feedback of results from both school-based tests and also national student assessments and surveys. When there is a lack of timely feedback or reaction to the results of internal school evaluations (quantitative or qualitative surveys) this lessens the support of educators for evidence-based self-evaluation. In a similar vein, typically, schools and teachers do not receive feedback reports from national assessments in time to diagnose the learning needs of the students tested. Such delays in feedback may lessen their use in school self-evaluation (and risk to lessen the support of educators for such national assessments who may perceive them as distant and of little value or use to them and their students). Finally, when schools receive feedback from central systems the results may well remain in the realm of school leadership and not be widely used or discussed among staff.

School performance feedback systems can be powerful tools providing timely, high-quality information on performance that the school can use for improvement actions (Visscher and Coe, 2003). This may help schools identify problems sooner and examine which types of interventions work better in different contexts. The availability of computerised systems for information processing has made a significant contribution to the logistics of school performance feedback (Visscher, Wild and Fund, 2001). Timely feedback of performance data in an accessible format are important characteristics of data systems that can promote the use of results in schools. However, of equal importance are characteristics related to the users and the school organisation (see Box 6.17). Research on stakeholder perceptions of the use of data in the United States revealed that untimely feedback of performance data coupled with a lack of resources to support data use, e.g. extra time, staff or training, may mean that data are irrelevant for teachers (Englert et al., 2007). Further, the research revealed much more positive attitudes toward data use in improving schools.

According to school principal reports during the PISA 2009 survey, the use of assessment data for school self-evaluation is pretty well established in secondary schools across the OECD. On average in the OECD, 77% of students are in schools whose principal reports the use of student assessment data to monitor the school's progress from

year to year and to identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved (Figure 6.6). In particular, these results indicate that the use of assessment data is well established in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. In all but two countries, at least 50% of students are in schools whose principal reports that assessment data are used to improve the curriculum – and this is at least 80% of students in 18 countries. This indicates a strong use of results for development purposes. The results also indicate that in many countries assessment data are less often used for benchmarking purposes, that is, to compare the school's performance with other schools or with national or regional performance. Indeed, there appears to be a missed opportunity to feed student performance data from standardised tests into self-evaluation activities in some systems. Notably in Luxembourg, Finland and Denmark, although the majority of students are in schools reporting the use of standardised tests, there is little reported use of assessment data for school monitoring (Figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.6 Use of student assessment results in school self-evaluation (PISA 2009)**




StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932791457

Note: Percentage of students in schools where the principal reported assessments of students in the national modal grade for 15-year-olds are used for these purposes. Data are shown for OECD countries.

*Source*: OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful?: Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV)* , OECD Publishing, Paris.

Of course, such self-reports do not shed light on the actual quality of use of student performance data. In Ireland, one of the findings in primary schools from the 2009 national assessments was that while the aggregated results of students' standardised test results were widely discussed at staff meetings, the use of such data to establish school-level learning targets was less common (Eivers et al., 2010). This is backed up by external school evaluations revealing limited capacity for schools to monitor progress (Irish Department for Education and Skills, 2012). In New Zealand, the Education Review Office identified via

external school evaluation in 2007 that only 17% of schools used student achievement data to aid decisions on meeting learning needs of nationally identified priority student groups (ERO, 2007). A review three years later identified that although two-thirds of schools used assessment information to identify "at risk" student groups, only some schools used this to identify talented students who may require extra challenge (ERO, 2010). Some schools took actions based on the data to better meet the needs of identified students, however, few schools reviewed the effectiveness of these actions.

In the United Kingdom, research in 178 secondary schools in England sheds light on how the external school evaluation body's online self-evaluation software is used (RAISE online) (Kelly and Downey, 2011). School principals receive access codes and an administrator account and can control access to the software. 95% of teachers in the survey responded that they did not have access to RAISE online. This reflects the typical approach of data management responsibilities lying with senior managers and the feedback to teachers of pre-analysed data – presumably to increase efficiency and provide teachers with "information" rather than raw data. The research revealed that teachers would prefer to analyse data in teams or within departments.

In New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, both the publication of achievement data and the use of external benchmarking in self-evaluation activities are reported widely (see Figures 6.6 and 6.7). School principal reports indicate that the tracking of achievement over time by administrative authorities has an influence over their use by schools (see Chapter 8).

### Box 6.17 Factors promoting use of assessment data for self-evaluation

The literature identifies three major factors promoting data use in schools:

- Data system characteristics – timeliness of data availability, accuracy, validity, relevance and reliability of data; access to data; tools available to use the data.
- Data user characteristics – whether they believe in the data, have the necessary knowledge, skills and motivation to use them, whether they feel power to make changes (or whether they feel improvement is contingent upon things beyond their control).
- School organisational characteristics – time is allocated for data use, colleague(s) with special role/expertise in data use, training, teacher collaboration, data use is linked to school vision, norms and goals, school principal supports data use.

*Source*: Schildkamp, Rekers-Mombarg and Harms (2012).

In Austria new annual assessments against national standards have been introduced in 2011/12 and include feedback reports to schools showing school and class level aggregate results with the aim of promoting their use for school development activities (Specht and Sobanski, 2012). This reporting system is also accompanied by moderators trained by the Federal Institute for Education Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (BIFIE) who are made available to schools to aid their interpretation of the results. During the piloting of these new assessments in 2009 in 204 secondary schools, this feedback process was evaluated via surveys to teachers and school principals. Results indicate that such feedback is useful for schools with school principals reporting that this had stimulated professional communication at their school, including 40% reporting that results had already led to decisions to make changes at the school and 30% of teachers reporting that results might have an impact on their instruction (Grillitsch, 2010). There are

also plans to introduce experts to support schools with their quality development. Of note also, 40% of teachers reported being encouraged by the feedback and only 3% discouraged.

In Norway, the leaders of regional education authorities see untapped potential in examination results, although some school principals do use these for self-evaluation activities (Roald, 2010). Schools with established self-evaluation cultures, the ability to interpret results and to design and implement measures according to the results benefit most from national assessment and examination results (Roald, 2010; Langfeldt et al., 2008). An evaluation of the national assessment system in 2009 revealed that around 50% of school organising bodies, school principals and teachers reported that they followed up on the results from the national pupil survey and that normally the results are discussed with teacher teams within the school (Allerup et al., 2009). Further, there is a strong relationship between a school's constructive use of national assessment results and the school organising body's capacity to support schools in their self-evaluation. The information provided by the national assessment system can seem to create bureaucratic work and take too much time if the information is not viewed as relevant and analysed for school development. Finally, there is a legal requirement for school organising bodies to follow up on the results of parent surveys in an attempt to engage parents in school development discussions. However, the OECD Review identified that data in the national School Portal was not extensively used by schools – when schools did use this, it was not at a whole-school level, but rather at a teacher level (Nusche et al., 2011a). This may be due to a lack of sophistication in the data presentation for analysis, for example, no inclusion of school contextual information to make more meaningful comparison, but also to do with a lack of data-handling skills among school principals and their staff.

In Luxembourg, national assessments have been recently introduced. While stakeholders agree on the importance of using evidence and data for school improvement, the results of national assessments are not yet perceived to add value for improving teaching and learning in the class and so are regarded as taking time and limited resources for little value (ADQS, 2011). This is linked to an initial lack of national capacity to sufficiently exploit much nationally collected data and to respond to the demands of schools. There were concerns on the timeliness of feedback and the level of feedback. For example, school principals initially only received aggregate performance distribution for the whole school per subject, which limits the analytical value of the results for school improvement. In addition, the introduction of national assessments has met with social resistance from teachers for fear of causal inferences being drawn from student assessment data.

In the French Community of Belgium the overriding impression from stakeholders is that there is too much information, but that it could be useful if there were clear guidance on how it could be used (Blondin and Giot, 2011). Teacher unions report that this equates to additional and meaningless administrative burden; school principals would like clear indicators for a quick overview of the major points and to answer key questions; parents underline the necessity of having clear explanations accompanying the results. School organising bodies see strong potential in the results, as long as these are discussed with a view to supporting and not controlling schools, which underlines the value of pedagogical advisors (a support service set up in 2007 for schools identified by external school evaluation or the school organising body as needing assistance).

In Canada, teacher federation position papers show that generally teachers in the Atlantic Provinces are still not convinced of the value of large-scale assessments (Fournier and Mildon, forthcoming). However, the results of large-scale assessments are included in school improvement plans and annual reports, which indicates that teachers

are using the results to monitor student performance and to evaluate the success of their long-term objectives. There are other indications from teacher federation position papers that accountability-related tasks weigh heavily on teachers' time and detract their core work with students.

## *External school evaluation*

Table 6.12 presents more detailed information on the possible use of the results of external school evaluation for accountability. The columns to the left show where the influence of external school evaluation is greatest and the columns to the right show where it is weakest. In general, external school evaluation results are not strongly linked to financial rewards or sanctions. External school evaluation results do not impact the size of the school budget or teacher pay and bonuses (only a moderate influence in Austria, the Czech Republic and England in the United Kingdom), but do have a high degree of influence on other financial rewards or sanctions in the Flemish Community of Belgium and the Czech Republic. There are very different policies across countries on the degree of influence that external school evaluation can have on the possible closure of a school. In Estonia, France, Germany, Israel, Korea, Poland, Portugal and Spain the results of external school evaluation have no influence on possible school closures. However, external school evaluations have a high or moderate influence on possible school closures in nine OECD countries.

**Table 6.12 Use of the results of external school evaluation for accountability (2009)**

| | The degree of influence the results of external school evaluation may have over: | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total number of systems by level of influence: | Evaluation of school performance | Evaluation of school administration | Evaluation of individual teachers | Support to improve teaching skills | The likelihood of a school closure | Another financial reward or sanction | The size of the school budget | Teacher pay and bonuses |
| High | 11 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Moderate | 5 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Low | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 0 |
| None | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| **UK (England)** | High | High | High | High | High | Low | Low | Moderate |
| **Ireland** | High | High | High | High | Moderate | None | None | None |
| **Belgium (Fr.)** | High | High | High | High | Low | None | None | None |
| **Turkey** | High | High | High | Moderate | High | Low | Low | None |
| **Iceland** | High | High | Low | Low | a | None | None | a |
| **UK (Scotland)** | High | High | a | High | High | a | a | a |
| **Poland** | High | Moderate | High | High | None | m | None | m |
| **Slovak Republic** | High | Moderate | High | Low | High | Moderate | Low | None |
| **Netherlands** | High | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | High | None | None | None |
| **Belgium (Fl.)** | High | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | High | High | Low | a |
| **Portugal** | High | Low | Moderate | Moderate | None | None | None | None |
| **Austria** | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| **Germany** | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | None | None | None | None |
| **France** | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Low | None | Low | Low | None |
| **Israel** | Moderate | None | Low | Moderate | None | None | Low | None |
| **Czech Republic** | Moderate | High | Moderate | Low | High | High | Moderate | Moderate |
| **Korea** | Low | High | None | Moderate | None | Low | None | None |
| **Spain** | Low | Low | Low | Moderate | None | None | None | None |
| **Luxembourg** | Low | Low | Moderate | Low | a | a | Low | a |
| **Estonia** | None | None | None | None | None | None | None | None |

Note: The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable and the symbol "m" denotes that information is missing.

*Source*: OECD (2011).

### *Mechanisms to ensure that schools follow up on the results of external school evaluation*

There is a clear assumption that schools will use the feedback from school external evaluation and implement policies to address any weaknesses identified (e.g. Faubert, 2009; Ehren et al., 2012). However, evidence indicates that not all schools do this and that accepting feedback does not necessarily lead to school improvement actions. A degree of external follow-up can ensure that schools use external evaluation results to undertake school improvement actions (see section on Impact above). However, providing adequate follow-up can place significant demand on the external school evaluation body's capacity. Several countries take a policy to more closely supervise underperforming schools by the school inspectorate or review body and less frequent and/or less extensive review of well-performing schools (e.g. the Flemish Community of Belgium, Korea, the Netherlands and New Zealand). Box 6.18 presents an example of a strengthened follow-up of the results of external school evaluation in Ireland.

As of 2011/12, Portugal has also implemented a requirement for each externally evaluated school to prepare an improvement plan to respond to the challenges identified in the external school evaluation (Santiago et al., 2012a). The expectation is that each externally evaluated school will be followed up by educational authorities to assess the extent to which its improvement plan is effectively overcoming the shortcomings identified in external school evaluation. In the previous external school evaluation cycle, there was a lack of clear follow-up by the external school evaluation body, except in the most critical cases. A more systematic follow-up of schools may help to increase the impact of external school evaluations, as the OECD Review had identified that findings were not widely known among school staff. In Korea, as well as the closer follow-up of underperforming schools, schools receiving excellent evaluations are provided with level-differentiated support (although this has been evaluated as having limited impact, Jung et al., 2008).

There may also be specific expectations for the school to follow up on the results of external evaluation as an internal matter. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium there is an obligation for school leadership to discuss with school staff the results in an external school evaluation report on its school within 30 days (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010).

In Denmark the quality reports compiled by local authorities on their schools are not connected with any prescribed set of rewards or sanctions, but each local authority can set a specific action plan for schools with poor performance (Danish Ministry of Education and Rambøll, 2011). In their third year of implementation, the Danish Evaluation Institute judged that the form of the quality reports was adhered to, but that local authorities were struggling with how to follow up underperforming schools and to provide the required support (EVA, 2009). While around 73% of local authorities initiated follow-up activities in the 2006/07 school year, these were typically at the school system level and not for individual schools.

### Box 6.18 Follow up on implementation of external school evaluation recommendations: Ireland

A follow-up mechanism is now in place in relation to schools that are identified during inspections as experiencing significant difficulty and where it is evident that intervention is required to assist the school improvement agenda. The School Improvement Group (SIG), was established by the Department in 2008 to ensure that improvement happens following inspection. The SIG, which comprises members of the Inspectorate and officials from the Department's Schools Division and other relevant divisions, co-ordinates the Department's actions in following up on the recommendations from inspections. The actions co-ordinated by this group are tailored to the specific needs of the school, and are intended to ensure that the school's patron, management and staff work to improve the quality of provision for students. Follow up on the implementation of recommendations in inspection reports comprises a number of differentiated approaches depending on the challenges facing particular schools. The range of interventions used to promote action and improvement include:

- meetings with the school patrons/trustees, chairpersons of boards and/or school principals
- progress reports from the board of management
- support for the school from school support services or services provided by patron or management bodies
- further inspections
- sanctioning school management, where warranted.

The School Improvement Group has been successful in helping an increasing number of schools to improve. Between 2008 and 2011 it has dealt with more than 50 poorly performing primary and secondary schools. In the majority of cases, the SIG has requested the boards of management of the schools to provide detailed progress reports on improvement. Meetings have been held with boards of management and school patrons and have resulted in a number of significant actions to put improved school governance arrangements in place. In some instances, school principals or other members of staff have resigned. School support services have also provided additional guidance and professional support to some schools. Progress is monitored through seeking update reports from the schools' management and by means of further inspection activity. The outcomes are reviewed carefully by the School Improvement Group. In common with initiatives to improve seriously under-performing schools in other countries, the experience of the School Improvement Group has shown that it can take some time to achieve significant improvement. However, approximately one-third of schools that came to the attention of the School Improvement Group are no longer in the process and there is evidence of significant improvement in a further third. The remainder have either entered the process recently or continue to be a cause for concern.

In 2012 "follow-through inspections" were trialled in a sample of schools that had been inspected over the previous three years. Such inspections aim to determine the extent to which the school has made efforts to improve practice and the progress that the school has made on implementing recommendations made during the previous inspection. The intention is to mainstream follow-through inspections and to publish associated reports.

*Source:* Irish Department for Education and Skills (2012).

### *Publishing results of external evaluation for individual schools*

It is common practice in OECD countries to publish the results of external school evaluation in the form of a summary report on major findings within the school system (see Chapter 8). However, there has been increased demand to also publish external evaluation findings for individual schools, so that parents can use evaluation results in making decisions on which school their child should attend and also to more regularly follow quality developments at their school. The routine publication of external evaluation findings on individual schools has become increasingly widespread in Europe

and now happens in 16 countries or regions of Europe (Eurydice, 2012). However, the format that results publication takes varies significantly among countries, ranging from full evaluation reports with specific summaries, to just a few headline points on the major findings. The publication of individual school evaluation results has led to the need to communicate in a way that is more accessible to parents and the wider public in general (see Box 6.19).

In Korea, 2011 saw the inclusion of school evaluation results in the School Information Disclosure System, so that comprehensive school evaluation results on the school's strengths and recommendations were made publicly available for the first time. This is expected to give more weight to the impact of school evaluation (Kim et al., 2010). However, before this date, the highest and lowest performing schools were indirectly revealed via sanction and reward arrangements.

The decision to publish external school evaluation reports in the Flemish Community of Belgium aimed to meet parents' rights to clear and accurate information to inform school choice. In doing so, the Flemish Inspectorate of Education performed a balancing act: to provide relevant and useful descriptive information on school performance, but not performance measures that could be used to rank schools; to ensure that schools would not doctor or limit their self-evaluations for concern that key findings would be made available to the public via external school evaluation reports (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2010). The decision to publish external school evaluation reports has led to external school evaluators using a more coherent format of reporting. Research also shows that different stakeholders believe that publication will lead to better self-evaluations by schools, better parental involvement in the school, including following school development (Vanhoof and Van Petegem, 2005).

Similarly, in Ireland the publication of external school evaluation reports (since 2006) does not include numerical data that could be used to compile league tables, although such data are extensively used during school external evaluation (Irish Department for Education and Skills, 2012). There is legal provision that the Department for Education and Skills can refuse access to information that can be used to compare the academic performance of schools (Education Act, 1998).

### Box 6.19 Reporting results of external school evaluation

In the Netherlands, much effort has been invested in producing quality information that can be used by parents and schools together. Much of the Inspectorate's information on secondary schools is provided in a special website (Windows for Accountability). The information does not refer to inspection criteria or norms (so for example, for the broader public, no school is judged as being "very weak" on indicators such as student achievement results or student satisfaction). Schools also can access additional information via a private login and can see their relative performance (e.g. with percentile scores) on different indicators. The information base is partly the same as used by the Inspectorate. Schools also can put information on this website that has a benchmarking goal. The visual presentation is very attractive for the broader public.

In England within the United Kingdom, the inspectorate (Ofsted) presents inspection reports on line for each school. Each report includes: a brief summary of the key findings and major recommendations for school improvement; a glossary of key terminology used in the report to make this more accessible to the school community; and a letter to students thanking them for their co-operation and explaining in a clear and simple manner the main findings and recommendations.

In New Zealand, the Education Review Office publishes individual school review reports on its website. Although these reports are not intended for comparing or ranking schools, the media may attempt to rate or rank schools on the findings – in particular, review reports for secondary schools include examination results and value-added indicators. Due to the publication of review reports, schools perceive these as high-stakes evaluations (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010).

### *Reporting comparative school performance measures*

The OECD Review has revealed varied policies regarding the reporting of comparative school performance measures. Some systems may report national examination results at the school level, but decide not to publish the results of national assessments at the school level, preferring these to be used exclusively by schools for school development. There are also wide differences in the sophistication of how results are reported, from the publication of static performance tables to the provision of interactive websites where parents and other stakeholders can select and compare information on different schools. Importantly, there are also differences in what is reported: whether this is simply the raw results of student assessments or examinations aggregated to the school level; or whether this is accompanied by contextual information on the school and general information to help parents and other stakeholders interpret the results. Box 6.20 provides an overview of some approaches to reporting comparative performance measures.

In Mexico, there is a new database of information (RNAME) providing useful information on each school, including quantitative data on student outcomes in the national assessments (ENLACE). These arrangements represent a good step forward in providing parents, local communities, educationists and the general public with some key information about schools both globally and individually (Santiago et al., 2012). The inclusion of school-level data on students' results in ENLACE assessments over a three-year period is a good feature. However, there is no information available on the qualitative aspects of school work, which lessens the use of the information for parents. As yet, no data are provided on the context of the school and it is not possible to compare similar schools.

In the Slovak Republic, static comparative data tables showing school average results in the national assessments are published on the national testing institute (NÚCEM) website (Shewbridge et al., forthcoming). Efforts have been made to improve the presentation of performance data to allow comparison of results in different regions of the Slovak Republic. A non-governmental organisation has recently developed a school performance website. This aims to present information from the national assessments and also information gathered from external school evaluations, but procedures to validate the information presented are not clear.

Schools may report comparative school performance information to parents directly. School principal reports in PISA 2009 indicate varied policies in this respect for schools attended by 15-year-old students both within and among countries (see Figure 6.7). For example, 50% of 15-year-old students or less in all but two countries (the United States and Turkey) are in schools where parents receive information to compare their child's school group performance with that of students in other schools. This could imply the availability of comparable school-level performance measures to only some schools within the country or large variation in how these are reported to parents among schools within each country. It is more common practice among countries for schools attended by

15-year-old students to report student performance relative to national or regional benchmarks to parents, but again this varies considerably among countries (above 70% of students in 11 countries and below 30% in 10 countries).

On average in the OECD, less than 40% of 15-year-old students are in schools whose principal reports that achievement data are posted publicly (Figure 6.7). This is rare practice in Austria, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Spain and Switzerland; but much more typical in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. In the French Community of Belgium, schools cannot communicate student achievement data for promotional or competitive purposes.

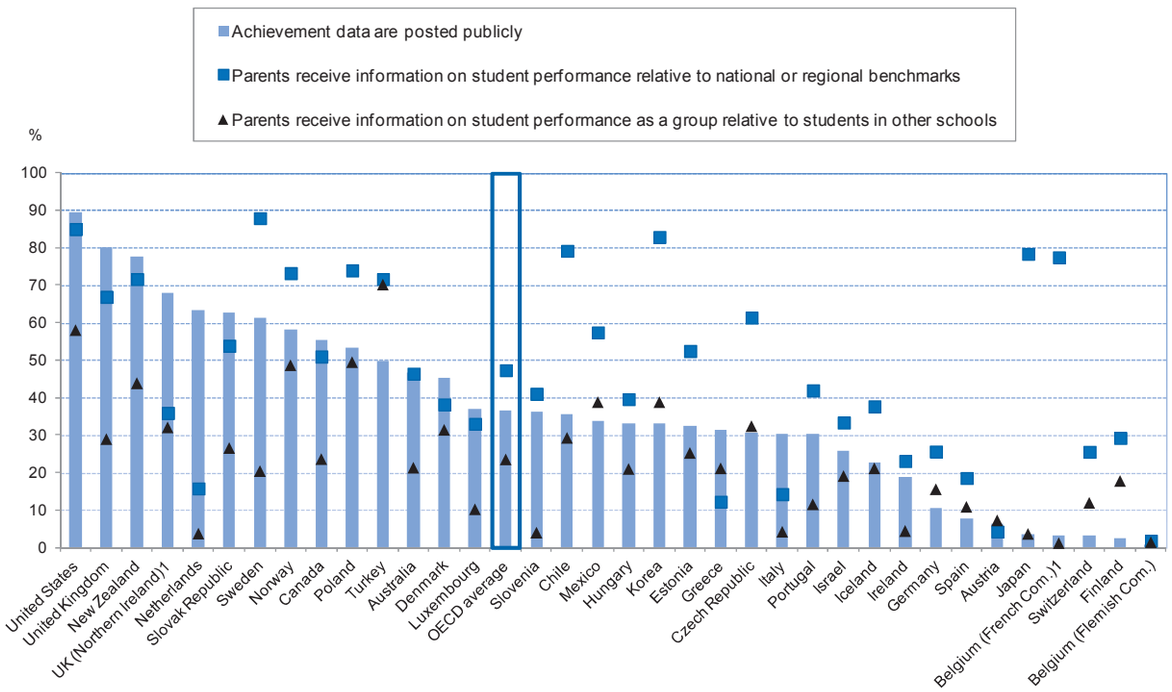
The publication of school performance measures aims to stimulate teacher and student efforts to improve performance, provide information to parents for school choice and stimulate improvement through competition, and reduce asymmetry of information providing a basis for more effective allocation of resources (Faubert, 2009). In an overview of literature mainly from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway, Rosenkvist (2010) finds that the available evidence regarding the effect of publishing student test results in school performance tables is mixed. There is wide consensus in the literature that reporting student test results in performance tables is coupled with several methodological problems and challenges. Notably, school performance tables are only really able to meaningfully distinguish schools performing at the top and bottom ends of the performance distribution, but performance differences between the majority of schools are rarely significant. There is little evidence of a positive relationship between performance tables and increased student performance. There is, however, evidence of performance tables influencing the behaviour of schools, teachers and parents – although not always as originally intended by the authorities. Research in England in the United Kingdom identifies a high degree of stress on English and mathematics departments due to the importance of these subjects in school performance tables, but that these departments had a sense of more power within the school, with easy access to school leadership and strong cases for negotiating extra resources and curriculum time (Perryman et al., 2011).

Studies have shown that school agents may view the publication of student achievement data as carrying high stakes even when the results are used only to identify areas for school development and are not linked to rewards or sanctions. Consequently, school agents such as teachers will work to avoid the public stigma of poor results, and this may have unintended consequences on classroom teaching and assessment (Corbett and Wilson, 1991; Madaus, 1988; McDonnell and Choisser, 1997). Such unintended consequences may include curriculum narrowing, teaching to the test and emphasising basic knowledge and skills that are easily measurable. Teachers may be tempted to design their own assessment in similar ways to the national assessments (i.e. typically in multiple-choice and short answer formats) to the detriment of richer, more performance-based approaches to assessment (see Chapter 4).

However, the fact that school leaders and teachers respond strategically to national assessments or national examinations implies that these can be a powerful tool to steer what is taught in classrooms. Advocates for the use of assessments in school performance accountability systems argue that teaching to the test content is appropriate if tests are properly constructed to measure achievement (Sims, 2008). Rosenkvist (2010) presents an overview of studies showing that the publication of school performance measures is associated with teachers emphasising the content that is prioritised in explicit policy goals, e.g. raising basic skills. This of course heightens the

importance of appropriately designed assessments. Other significant concerns raised in the literature regard a gaming and outright cheating culture in schools that can arise in response to incentives in school performance accountability systems. All of these concerns underline the importance of well-designed assessments that reduce the predictability of the assessment and the susceptibility of the tasks to inappropriate test preparation (Koretz, 2010).

**Figure 6.7 Public reporting of student performance and reporting to parents (PISA 2009)**




StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932791476

Notes: Percentage of 15 year-old students in schools where the principal reported that student performance information was reported in this way. Data are shown for OECD countries.

(1) Caution is needed when comparing results, as these were not internationally adjudicated.

*Source:* OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful?: Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV)* , OECD Publishing, Paris.

The publication of performance tables based solely on "raw" student test results essentially measure the quality of the school intake rather than the teaching in the school (Willms, 1997; Hoyle and Robinson, 2003 in Rosenkvist, 2010). One factor here is that results in national assessments and examinations and socio-economic status are highly correlated, such an approach risks to measure in part the socioeconomic characteristics of the students in the school rather than the contribution of the school to student learning (Faubert, 2009). This may lead to misinterpretation of school performance rankings that are damaging to equity and create incentives for schools not to accept students from disadvantaged socio-economic background (idem.). Another factor is that performance tables do not take into account students' prior achievement levels. In turn, this may create incentives for schools not to accept students with a less academic profile or special

educational needs. For these reasons, the OECD (2008) argues that although the publication of actual student assessment or examination results provides some important information, these are "poor measures of school performance".

There are different ways to address the concern about differences in school contextual characteristics. In the simplest form, school performance measures may present actual student assessment or examination results, plus provide descriptive information on the school context, for example school-level information on the students that participated in the assessment or examination, e.g. their gender, socio-economic background, etc. Statistical adjustments may also be used to account for the school context's impact upon a specific set of student assessment or examination results (these are referred to a contextual attainment models) (OECD, 2008). However, these do not take into consideration a student's prior attainment.

A substantial improvement in the presentation of school performance information is the use of statistical models that aim to measure the "value added" of a school. These are defined as "a class of statistical models that estimate the contributions of schools to student progress in stated or prescribed education objectives (e.g. cognitive achievement) measured at least at two points in time" (OECD, 2008). Therefore, a measure of value added would show the progress in student learning at a given school by taking into consideration a student's prior attainment. Further, these could also adjust for the school's context (contextual value added models).

However, research has also identified some concerns over the use of statistical models to adjust school performance measures (Rosenkvist, 2010). In a review of different statistical approaches for school performance measures, Masters (2012) concludes that these will inevitably provide an imperfect picture of a school's effectiveness. One concern in more complicated statistical adjustment models is a level of obscurity that makes it difficult for users to meaningfully interpret results. Such complex models may be open to accusation of massaging the results to make these appear better (e.g., van de Grift, 2009) or even to excuse low average performance (Figlio and Loeb, 2011) or to institutionalise low expectations (Hamilton and Koretz, 2002).

There is evidence that educators support the use of school performance measures that are adjusted for the school context. Recent research on data use in 178 secondary schools in England in the United Kingdom shows overwhelmingly that teachers regularly use data (813 teachers completed surveys) (Kelly and Downey, 2011). An interesting finding was that schools with significantly high contextual value added scores reported both greater use of data and satisfaction with using data. The researchers suggest that this may indicate a developed culture of data use at both the student and school levels, given that contextual value added data show the degree of progress by every student – thus generating a need for more teachers to use data in order to make the task manageable. Similarly, the OECD Review in the Flemish Community of Belgium revealed appreciation by schools for the contextual value-added performance feedback from the national sample assessments. (It should be noted that these results are not published).

### Box 6.20 The public reporting of school performance

**Taking account of factors that impact student learning and are beyond the control of schools**

In Sweden, the National Agency for Education has developed two public databases presenting comparable information on different schools (and local authorities). One includes basic statistical information as well as student test scores (SIRIS), the other presents statistical measures on how each school performs given its "expected value" as calculated in a regression model (SALSA). This notion of expected value is essentially an adjustment in a statistical regression model of the school's performance according to its particular student composition. The regression model takes into account: a weighted indicator on the parents' education; the proportion of boys; the number of students born abroad and the proportion of students born in Sweden with both parents born abroad. In this way, a given school with a large proportion of students with parents at lower educational level is assumed to perform less well compared to a school with a small proportion of such students. A comparison of the school's average student performance with the school's "expected value" calculated in the regression model (which corresponds to the average score for schools with the same student composition) represents a proxy of the value that school brings.

In Australia, the school reporting website (My School) uses a measure of socio-educational advantage to present "fair and meaningful" comparisons of school performance on the national assessments (NAPLAN). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) developed an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage via a statistical model that identified the combination of variables that were most closely associated with student achievement in the national assessments (NAPLAN). Background information for individual students (parental education and occupation) is aggregated to the school level and then combined with school community factors (proportion of indigenous students, remoteness of the school and a measure of educational disadvantage for students with a language background other than English). Using this statistical adjustment allows for a school's performance to be compared with statistically similar schools.

**Showing the school's contribution to student learning progress**

In Australia, students sit national assessments (NAPLAN) at four different year levels. The school reporting website (My School) uses a measure of "student gain" to present school performance on NAPLAN. This presents average results for students who sat the national assessments on two occasions at the same school and have results at two year levels. The percentage of students in the school that are included in this measure is also displayed. The student gain in a given school can be compared to: the Australian average student gain; average student gain in similar schools as measured in the contextual adjustment measure (see above); and student gain for all students across Australia who had a similar starting point.

In England in the United Kingdom, a performance table is reported on line for each school and includes information on the learning progress of students between different key stages of the national curriculum. The proportion of students in each school that makes "expected progress" is based on national minimal expected learning progress between two different key stages. In secondary schools, the national examinations at age 16 (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are used to measure performance at the end of Key Stage 4 and the best eight examination results are taken for each student to measure the "added value" since the end of Key Stage 2. The percentage of students in the school that are included in this measure is displayed and value added results are only shown for schools where this comprises at least 50% of students.

For further information, see: *http://salsa.artisan.se*; *www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/*; *www.myschool.edu.au*.

## Pointers for future policy development

This chapter has reviewed the approaches countries are taking to school evaluation in light of available research and evidence. The policy suggestions that follow are drawn from the experiences reported in the Country Background Reports, the analyses of external review teams in Country Reviews and the available research literature. It should be stressed that there is no single model or global best practice of school evaluation. The development of practices always needs to take into account country-specific traditions and features of the respective education systems. Not all policy implications are equally relevant for different countries. In a number of cases many or most of the policy suggestions are already in place, while for others they might not apply owing to different social, economic and educational structures and traditions. Different contexts will give rise to different priorities in further developing policies for school evaluation for different countries.

In general, there is a need for further research into the impact of different policy approaches to school evaluation. The existing evidence base is dominated by research in a few systems with long-established policies in school evaluation. As more systems adopt and implement different school evaluation policies, there will be a need to collect evidence on how these impact student learning and educational experiences.

### *Governance*

#### *Clarify the role and purpose of school evaluation within the wider evaluation and assessment framework*

School evaluation in any system must be seen in the context of its particular cultural traditions as well as the wider policy arena if its precise nature and purpose is to be understood. The OECD Review considers school evaluation as one of several key components in the overall evaluation and assessment framework for a school system. As such, its particular role and contribution should be aligned to the wider goals for the school system and considered in the overall balance of accountability and development functions within the evaluation system. The development of school evaluation will depend on a range of established practices in the school system such as the extent of school autonomy, the extent of market mechanisms and the culture of evaluation. As part of a general agenda, the fundamental purpose of school evaluation needs to be clearly and consistently understood across the school system. For instance, external school evaluation can be part of the strategy to bring about general improvement across all schools or, more narrowly, it can focus on "underperforming schools". The approach adopted depends on the underlying policy agenda and the evidence about the performance of the school system as a whole.

Meaningful school evaluation involves: an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of schools; an assessment of strengths and areas for development, followed by feedback, coaching, support and opportunities for development; an opportunity to celebrate, recognise and reward the work of schools and to identify best practice; and an opportunity to identify underperforming schools.

The purpose of different types of school evaluation should underlie all key decisions in designing a school evaluation framework. From the outset, the purpose of school evaluation is of critical importance in deciding: who should be responsible for undertaking the evaluation, which procedures should be used and how the results of the evaluation will

be used. Within a school evaluation framework, consideration should be paid to which elements of school evaluation best serve accountability purposes and which best serve development purposes. For example, there would be strong expectations for transparency in reporting the results of school evaluation which mainly serves accountability purposes and for such evaluations to be based on explicit evaluation criteria.

Further, given that school systems are dynamic and that student learning objectives may evolve, the school evaluation framework would need to adapt to meet demands for meaningful feedback against these changing objectives. This necessitates a firm research approach to regularly evaluate the impact of different evaluation approaches and their fitness for purpose.

### *Ensure the focus for school evaluation is the improvement of teaching, learning and student outcomes*

School evaluation demands significant capacity at many levels of the school system. It is crucial to ensure that school evaluation contributes towards school improvement and is not perceived as an exercise in compliancy. The approach to school evaluation (both external school evaluation and school self-evaluation), the criteria and questions governing judgements and the methods employed should focus directly on the quality of teaching and learning and their relationship to student learning experiences and outcomes. This requires a culture of openness and reflection around what happens during the teaching and learning process, including classroom observation.

It is important that school evaluations do not focus simply on the relationship between policy, planning and outcomes. The most important contribution which school evaluation can and should make to understanding the performance of a school is its focus on teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is central to the quality of student's learning and the key variable which a school can influence. The central task of school evaluation, therefore, is to determine the quality of teaching across the staff as a whole. This can be a sensitive issue but sends the signal to students, teachers and parents that school evaluation is not a bureaucratic exercise which is largely the concern of school leadership but relates to the work of each and every member of staff.

### *Evaluate and adapt external school evaluation to reflect the maturity of the school evaluation culture*

There is generally a need to have better research on the impact of different approaches to external school evaluation. A strong evidence base on the performance of the school system is essential in guiding decisions on how to allocate most effectively resources for external school evaluation. There may be demands to reduce the frequency of external school evaluations or the intensity of the evaluation visit in terms of length of time spent at the school. However, such decisions need to be based on a careful evaluation of the evidence of school performance and self-evaluation culture throughout the school system and need to ensure the continued legitimacy and respect by educators for the external school evaluation process.

External school evaluation approaches are changing in a number of systems with a move to a differentiated approach based on the assessment of risks to school quality in different schools. The idea behind this is to focus external school evaluation on the schools that need this most and sometimes in the specific pedagogical areas that need most attention. Systems adopting such a differentiated approach typically adopt a policy

ensuring the evaluation of all schools within an agreed time period (e.g. anything from five to ten years), but focus external school evaluations on schools where particular concerns have been identified against a desk-based assessment of risks (e.g. among others, parental complaints, high staff turnover, weak or weakening student outcomes). There could also be differentiation in terms of the focus of the school evaluation, i.e. emphasis on particular factors of concern in that school and not on the full set of factors identified in the national external school evaluation framework.

Moving to differentiated external school evaluation models requires a high level of intelligence about school characteristics and performance. Hence, it is recommended that systems move to this approach once the evaluation culture is consolidated, evaluation capacity in schools is satisfactory and data gathering and analysis within the school evaluation framework is established. Of particular importance in moving to a differentiated approach is to ensure that schools that are not identified for external school evaluation (schools judged to be of low risk and good quality) do not become complacent. Policies, therefore, need to establish requirements for low risk schools to provide evidence about progress on a broad front.

### *Raise the profile of school self-evaluation*

School self-evaluation is of key importance to school improvement and quality assurance and needs to be consolidated in school systems. An option to strengthen self-evaluation is to establish requirements for schools that promote strategic planning, for example, the drawing up of a 4-to-5 year strategic plan and regular updates of school progress on this plan, or the development of annual school reports about their achievements, challenges and strategies for improvement. The process of meeting specified strategic planning requirements would be a stimulus for many schools to further their self-evaluation practices and would hold strong potential for school improvement, if: the reporting and planning pays sufficient attention to key processes of teaching and learning and a broad range of outcomes; the process of reporting and planning adequately engages the school community; and the school community takes keen interest in school progress towards its strategic goals. For example, when establishing an annual strategic plan, schools would determine priorities for action over the year, set their own targets in line with local needs and priorities and decide on the assessment methods to monitor progress. This approach allows schools to take responsibility for their own improvement strategies. There is a note of caution on setting specific requirements for schools to publish self-evaluation results, as this may hinder their use for school development. The essential aim is that the school community is engaged in the process, owns the process and makes use of the results to continually strive for improvement in teaching and learning in the school.

There is also a role for external school evaluation to promote the reinforcement of school self-evaluation practices. External school evaluations have the potential to build capacity in schools for school-based self-evaluation and will increase evaluation literacy in schools. Schools may be motivated to engage in self-evaluations if faced with an external school evaluation requirement, even when school self-evaluation is not suggested as an alternative to external school evaluation but only as a prior condition and counterpart. Further, external school evaluations may promote a more formalised and extended process of self-evaluation in schools. Schools may become more willing to use methods of evaluation that had not necessarily been used previously. External school evaluations can bring greater depth and breadth to self-evaluations in schools when they for example provide the school with relevant benchmark information, comparative data

from other schools or new and challenging ideas that might help the school to expand its evaluation, interpret its own data and assess its quality.

### *Align external school evaluation with school self-evaluation*

A combination of school self-evaluation and external school evaluation can maximise the benefits of both while counteracting the limitations arising from an over reliance on the use of only one. A reliance on external school evaluation alone can promote a culture of compliance or "gaming" within which schools seek to satisfy the demands of external school evaluation but fail to take ownership of or accept responsibility for improvement. Self-evaluation is integral to continuous improvement which is not solely reliant on the impact of external school evaluation. However, self-evaluation can also be subject to self delusion where assumptions are not challenged and power relationships in the school community have an undue influence on what is evaluated and the nature of the judgements themselves.

As a result, good alignment is needed between policy and practice in both external school evaluation and school self-evaluation. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the criteria used in both spheres are sufficiently similar as to create a common language about priorities and about the key factors which influence high-quality teaching and learning. Lack of clarity about what matters is likely to relegate self-evaluation to something which serves external school evaluation rather than creating a platform for an exchange based on reliable and comparable evidence. Other strategies to ensure the alignment between external school evaluation and school self-evaluation include giving a strong focus on how the school is going about its own self-evaluation and using the results to improve learning; and collaborating with schools to validate their self-evaluations and the steps they are taking to bring about improvement.

The priority is to ensure that school self-evaluation and external school evaluation are complementary and mutually reinforcing processes. The basic premise is that schools are best placed to analyse their own contexts and that external school evaluation can provide an external perspective to validate or challenge the schools' own findings.

## ***Procedures***

### *Develop nationally agreed criteria for school quality to guide school evaluation*

The coherence of school evaluation is considerably enhanced when based on a nationally agreed model of school effectiveness. This national model should draw on both international and national research that has identified the factors generally associated with the quality of teaching and learning. This would provide clear criteria for effective schools and provide a robust, research-based foundation for both school self-evaluation and external school evaluation. Such criteria would form the basis of any external school evaluation framework, e.g. a national inspection framework. Further, schools would use these criteria and benchmarks to consider the evidence needed to rate their own effectiveness. "How good is our school?" is a central question not only for students and parents but for those who lead and work in schools. Similarly, "How good are our schools?" is the question for educational authorities.

An agreed framework of school quality indicators should be established, which could then be made widely available to schools and school organisers to use in their own evaluative processes. This will increase the alignment between school self-evaluation and external school evaluation, which has the advantage of keeping schools focused on core

quality criteria in a more systematic fashion and not just in relation to cycles of external school evaluation. School quality indicators will address contextual, input and process factors, but should put focus on a broad range of student outcomes. For example, quality indicators for student outcomes and their rate of progress could include the extent to which every student in a school: is making better than expected progress given their earlier attainment; is pleased with the education at the school; feels safe and happy at school; gains the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes necessary for lifelong fulfilment, etc.

Finally, there should be a periodic evaluation of the school quality indicator framework and criteria to ensure it reflects updated evidence from research and stakeholders on the factors associated with the quality of teaching and learning.

### *Develop appropriate resources for school self-evaluation*

There is a role for systems to offer schools self-evaluation resources and tools. Access to consistent, comparable, reliable and broad-based self-evaluation tools and examples of effective use of these in school policy making would give school principals a better picture of what school self-evaluation looks like when it is working well. This is also a way to promote the collection of more qualitative evidence by schools in their self-evaluation. Stakeholder surveys are already an established feature of school evaluation in a number of systems and are increasingly a requirement of school reporting. While particular instruments are not always mandatory, the principle of gathering evidence about perceptions and levels of satisfaction is now an expectation in some systems. Further, there is room to centrally promote examples of where schools are working effectively with self-evaluation tools. The efficient feedback of key centrally collected information to the school level also plays an important role (see below).

### *Ensure a strong evidence base for external school evaluation and appropriate analysis tools*

Credible external school evaluation should be based on reliable and relevant evidence rather than opinion. Acceptance of external school evaluation results can be secured through systematic gathering, analysis of and reference to relevant evidence. An effective way to pull together key information is to compile a school profile, comprising key school quality indicators. Providing this to an external school evaluation team prior to the evaluation aids efficiency by allowing the team to focus its attention on key issues. Further, the school profile can help to benchmark and contextualise the evaluators' judgements. Such a profile is particularly helpful when based on robust and comparable evidence on school outcomes. This is a critical element in a system of external school evaluation that relies on a form of risk assessment to determine the cycle and focus of external school evaluations.

Similarly, evidence should be collected during the course of external school evaluation, including the identification and analysis of documentation, the collection of feedback on school quality via stakeholder surveys, and interviews with a representative sample of stakeholders.

A key part of external school evaluation is the observation of classroom teaching and learning. This necessitates high levels of skill in the techniques of observation and appropriate training. But the objectivity of observations can also be enhanced by the development of observation indicators and specific training on the use of these indicators. Similar instruments can be developed to support the decision-making process of external

school evaluators during school visits. These can identify key criteria and clarify the rules on forming judgements, by providing examples of how different observed phenomena would be rated.

### *Ensure transparency in external school evaluation procedures*

The principle of transparency is increasingly perceived as an integral part of effective external school evaluation. Such transparency in the methodology, process and results of external school evaluation is perceived as being fairer to those evaluated and a way to promote the integrity, rigour and impact of external school evaluation. The approach, procedures and instruments used in external school evaluation are now routinely available on the Internet for public consultation and external school evaluation reports themselves are published either in paper form or digitally. Typically, the criteria for evaluation and the evaluation instruments are publicly available and the evaluation team actively encourages the school to examine this documentation in advance.

Another important aspect of transparency is to include processes allowing schools to comment on their experience with external school evaluation. External evaluators can systematically seek feedback from schools on their experience with the external school evaluation process. Importantly, schools should also be given the possibility to comment on the evaluator's report. For example, schools should be able to correct factual errors and to challenge findings in the evaluator's report. This could even include allowing schools the possibility to include an official statement on the evaluation findings in the published report.

To ensure that external school evaluation results are taken seriously by schools, there should be clearly defined procedures on how evaluation results will be followed up by schools and the external school evaluation bodies, including where necessary timelines for improvement and consequences for inadequate improvement (see below).

## *Developing school evaluation capacity – a priority for school improvement*

### *Ensure the credibility of external evaluators and enhance their objectivity and coherence*

The selection and recruitment of external evaluators is of key importance in building capacity within the external school evaluation body. The criteria used to select evaluators should be demanding to ensure that those recruited have the skills and attributes necessary for a credible approach to external school evaluation. Externality implies sufficient distance from responsibility for the school's performance to avoid conflicts of interest and perceived bias. The range of individuals who are part of external school evaluation teams should also be broad. The use of highly credible school principals and leading practitioners in external school evaluation would both heighten the credibility of the evaluation teams and build capacity in the school system as a whole.

In addition to offering specific training for external evaluators, external school evaluation can also be organised in ways that enhance the coherence of evaluators' judgements. Examples include the use of the same evaluation teams in a common group of schools or the organisation of regular meetings of external evaluators within the external school evaluation body.

External school evaluation bodies should implement internal mechanisms to regularly evaluate the coherence and quality of external school evaluation procedures. Importantly,

there should be mechanisms to seek feedback from key stakeholders on their experience with the external school evaluation. Such information can form the basis of identification and analysis of ways to improve the external school evaluations. Further, this information is particularly useful when implementing a new approach to external school evaluation.

### *Ensure sufficient capacity and retraining as necessary to fit the approach to external school evaluation*

Governance decisions on the approach to external school evaluation will directly impact the required capacity for external school evaluation. This may involve the introduction or reintroduction of a system of external school evaluation, which would require establishing an external school evaluation body. Such decisions have significant resource implications. The adequate resourcing and provision of training to a new external school evaluation body will play a crucial role in building its reputation among schools. In another scenario, there may be a need to reduce the capacity of the external evaluation body and this would have implication for the frequency and/or intensity of external school evaluations. With the strengthened role for school self-evaluation within the school evaluation framework, external school evaluators need to update their skills to be able to validate school self-evaluation and even to work collaboratively with schools on their school self-evaluations.

### *Strengthen school principals' capacity to stimulate an effective school self-evaluation culture*

There needs to be an explicit recognition that the process of self-evaluation is hugely dependent on school leadership's capacity to stimulate engagement, to mobilise resources and to ensure appropriate training and support. The drawing up of national and/or professional school principal and deputy principal competency profiles should clarify the importance of the school self-evaluation process, including classroom observation in the school principal's role. Attention should also be paid to ensuring adequate training opportunities are available to school principals in these key areas. School self-evaluation can be promoted by training school principals in school effectiveness and its evaluation, including the techniques of observing and assessing teaching and learning and giving developmental feedback. It is essential to ensure that school principals and other members of the school with evaluation responsibilities have the necessary skills in class observation, interviewing, data gathering, analysis and interpretation of results which both ensure validity and reliability in the evaluation process and which allow the results of evaluation to be understood. Consideration can also be given to the resourcing of structures to strengthen school principals' capacity to implement effective self-evaluation processes, for example, by creating new evaluation roles within the school for different staff.

### *Promote the engagement of all school staff and students in school self-evaluation*

School self-evaluation activities should not remain an exercise for the school leadership team, but should engage the school staff and students. There is considerable recognition of the importance of fully engaging all members of the school community in the self-evaluation process. However, there is also evidence that this requires high levels of trust and strong commitment from the school community.

Students have important feedback to give to their schools. Evidence from several systems has highlighted that involving students in decisions about their schooling is an important factor in school improvement. There are several approaches to engaging

students' feedback, from establishing student councils, through the use of student surveys in schools, to involving students in the feedback to teachers on their teaching.

There is also a need to focus on helping school staff interpret and translate evaluative information into action. School evaluation will not lead to improvements unless the information gathered is interpreted and translated into strategies for school development. Substantial investment needs to be directed at strategies to ensure that professionals are able use the feedback they receive effectively (see also above).

### *Promote peer learning among schools*

In all systems, there is much potential for schools to collaborate and learn from each other in the process of evaluating and improving processes and outcomes. This is a particularly useful strategy in systems where there is a high degree of school autonomy, as it can prevent schools from forming an introspective and defensive culture. Leadership standards in a number of systems highlight the importance of networking and partnerships between schools. Providing funding for groups of schools to work collaboratively would provide an incentive and stimulate collegial networking, peer exchange, sharing and critiquing of practice, fostering a sense of common direction. Critical friendship does not just happen by chance. It needs development, including the development of observation and evaluation skills, and skills of professional dialogue. It also requires the development of trust. A starting point could be with school leadership teams working together to identify common challenges, devising common strategies and approaches to peer school evaluation. The process would benefit from the appointment of an external facilitator or critical friend chosen and agreed by the school principals themselves. Within systems, there are schools with more developed self-evaluation processes and there could be great benefits in finding ways to involve their staff in supporting and training colleagues in other schools.

## *Reporting and use of results*

### *Optimise the feedback of nationally collected data to schools for self-evaluation and development planning*

The administration and collection of results from national student assessment programmes represents an important investment. It is, therefore, critical that systems are in place to optimise the reporting and feedback of results to schools. There are different levels of decisions here. First, any concerns on confidentiality of data. Second, ways to feedback results to different levels to optimise their use for improvement. For example, school principals will benefit from an overview of results for the school and also from comparative performance information against other schools, regions or national averages. Teachers will benefit from the feedback of information at the class level and individual student level, as useful diagnostic evidence. Third, the timeliness of the feedback of results is a key consideration. The faster the feedback of student results to teachers, the more relevant they are for adapting instructional practices in particular classes or with particular students.

Technology offers opportunities to enhance both the nature and timeliness of feedback. The speed of feedback has major implications in the choice of assessment medium: results from computer-based tests can be more readily compiled, scored and reported back to teachers and schools. Reporting back results via electronic portals can capitalise on the ability to set confidential access for different users to different reports

and to provide users with analytical software to select and compare performance of different tailor-made groupings.

School self-evaluation efforts will also benefit from the ready access to centrally held information, for example as reported against external school evaluation frameworks.

### *Promote the wider use of the results of external school evaluation*

The publication of all external school evaluation reports is associated with many benefits. The school community can use this information to feed into school development planning and there is emerging evidence that a keen interest from the school community in the results of external school evaluation is associated with school improvement actions. The publication of reports has also promoted a more coherent format of external school evaluation reports. This makes the information more helpful for schools to compare their external evaluation with other schools and can provide useful input to school self-evaluation activities.

External school evaluation reports should not be too technical and should be readable to a non-specialist audience. Improving the communication of external school evaluation results to a wider audience offers the opportunity to examine the terminology used within the external school evaluation framework. There may be room to make the framework more readily accessible to teachers and students at the same time as aiding the communication of results to the public. This could also enhance the alignment of external school evaluation and school self-evaluation.

It is important to develop a communication strategy that capitalises on the wider dissemination of school evaluation results. This could include different elements ranging from specific summaries for parents within the external school evaluation reports, through the publication of results for a group of schools within a particular area or educational group, to tailor-made websites enabling parents to consult reports for a given school and to compare particular aspects of that school with other schools in the local area or nationally. There is also a role for schools to be proactive in promoting external school evaluation results to staff and parents.

### *Ensure the systematic follow-up of external school evaluations*

To heighten the impact of school external school evaluation on school improvement there needs to be systematic follow-up by the external evaluators and/or appropriate authorities or support agencies. Such follow-up should include both a monitoring and support function. Of course the starting point is to ensure that external school evaluation results in a good amount of feedback to schools, including a useful and practical level of detail on required improvements. In turn, this needs to be accompanied by the appropriate investment in strategies to ensure that schools effectively use the feedback they receive. The extent of follow-through activities by external evaluators and/or appropriate authorities could be made dependent on the extent of improvement needed by a school and its capacity to improve. In such a case, schools would benefit from a clear set of follow-up procedures, including for example the amount of time schools have to demonstrate their implementation of improvement plans and possibly requirements for schools to use external support in this process and clear criteria for when external support would be judged necessary. Further, there should be clear procedures in place for the further follow-up of schools that are judged not to have made adequate improvement upon a second external school evaluation.

*Report a broad set of school performance measures with adequate contextual information*

In systems where comparative national assessment data are published for individual schools, there is a strong case to provide complementary evaluative information such as external school evaluation reports which broaden the base of evidence and provide more explanation of the factors which have influenced school performance. Also, policy makers might lessen the potential undesired effects of the publication of test data by ensuring that quantitative data are always accompanied by a description of the context in which different schools operate; providing interpretation of data gathered in student assessments, school self-evaluations, and external school evaluations; describing how schools are meeting local goals for education, noting progress made in meeting challenges, describing new programmes under development, and so on.

The development of measures that adjust for students' prior attainment is widely supported (value added performance measures). However, these are not without considerable methodological challenges. There needs to be a balance between an attempt to present a fair comparison and ensuring that measures are not obscure and can be easily understood and interpreted by users. Such challenges hold true for measures to adjust for the school context, also. But these appear to be highly appreciated by schools with more challenging intake and can be very helpful in school self-evaluation as they allow schools to benchmark their results with other similar schools.

## Notes

1. Although in this case the working group drew heavily on the "proportionate" inspection approach already used by the Scottish Inspectorate. In turn, recommendations from the Reducing Burdens Action Group impacted the Scottish Inspectorate's approach to its supervision of education providers to ensure it is: "focused on outcomes; proportionate to need; owned by those carrying out the self-evaluation; flexible, with the scope to recognise differences in service levels and types; built on existing good practice and relevant existing standards; rigorous and transparent; designed to secure continuous improvement".

2. The path analysis model has a good fit to the theoretical relations. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.965 (this can range from 0 to 1 with a larger value indicating a better model fit and an acceptable fit being a value of 0.90 or greater [Hu and Bentler, 1999]); the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.027 (this is related to residual in the model and can range from 0 to 1, with a lower value being a better fit and an acceptable fit being a value of 0.06 or less [idem]).

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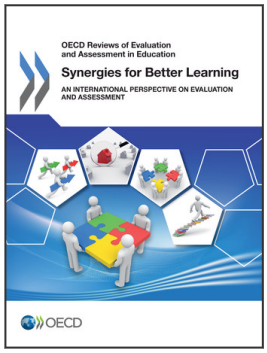


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