

Fully Alive

Reviewing life in the Catholic School



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*The human being fully alive is the
glory of God.*

St. Irenaeus



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In Memory of Bob Bullard.

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Glossary

Many of the terms found in the literature and documentation on school evaluation are sometimes confusing. Definitions are given as well as terms used in other documents to refer to the same concepts.

- Quality assurance** The provision of means to ensure that schools achieve the standards they should in all they do by evaluating (assessing) them according to evidence obtained. This is taken from the indicators of quality measured against standards (criteria) agreed to by the school as well as authoritative judges of education beyond the school.
- Internal evaluation** The process of determining the quality of what happens in a school, carried out by the school itself for the primary purpose of improving the school. In this handbook the internal evaluation model recommended is that guided by mentor(s).
Also known as: (School) self-evaluation, (school) review, self-assessment, self-regulation
- External evaluation** The process similar to internal evaluation but carried out by external evaluators or assessors. The purpose includes improvement but also stresses accountability usually to the authority initiating the evaluation.
Also known as: (Independent) external verification, external review, inspection, independent verification
- Whole school evaluation** An evaluation, usually external, which covers all aspects of the school at the same time.
Also known as: Whole school review, WSE
- Focus area** A part of the school's activities that has to be evaluated.
Also known as: Theme, area, sector, major standard, aspect
- Key aspect** A section (sub-sector) of a focus area (as above).
- (Quality) indicator, evidence** An indicator is a statement describing in ideal terms a fact or practice which can be used to ascertain the quality of what is happening in the school. Evidence is what is looked for by evaluators.
Also known as: What to look for, good practice, criterion, standard, key area, element, checklist
- Means and methods (how to find out)** Ways – such things as documents and activities – that are used to ascertain the indicators and evidence on which evaluation is based.
Also known as: Sources, ways of finding out, tools, toolkit, process, methodology
- Governing Body, governors** The group that governs the school in terms of its constitution. Its most important duties are setting broad guidelines on policy, controlling and holding finances in trust, and appointing the principal.
Also known as: Board (of governors), Council, Trustees
- Students, learners**
Also known as: Pupils
- Teachers**
Also known as: Educators, academic staff (members)
- Principal** The most senior staff member, appointed to lead and manage the school by the Governing Body, to whom he/she is answerable.
Also known as: Head, headmaster, headmistress, rector, CEO

PART ONE

Introduction

Fully Alive has been developed to assist Catholic schools to review how well they are doing. It has not been designed to be followed slavishly, but rather to provide schools with some theory and guidelines that they can use to review what they are doing well and take actions on the areas of their work that need to be improved.

PART ONE of the handbook provides some theoretical background through literature overview. The school is guided through the philosophy underpinning the Catholic school and how this is lived out in daily practise. A set of the indicators are set out to be used to rate different areas of school life.

PART TWO provides schools with the toolboxes to carry out the review.

PART THREE provides examples of different kinds of forms and checklists that can be employed to assist schools in gathering information.

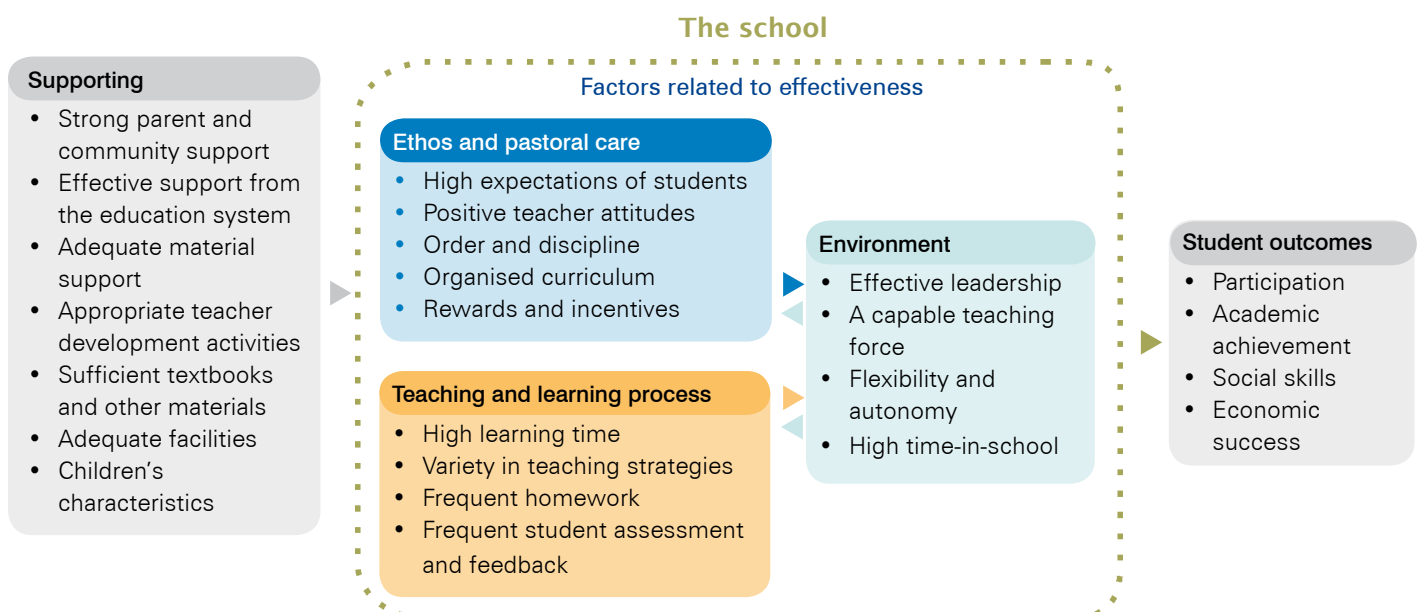
The handbook has been designed to provide the school with tools that can be used without serious modification so as to ensure that the philosophy and practice of the Catholic education translates into the reality of the school environment.

Schools are encouraged to provide feedback on the use of this handbook and how it can be improved.

How to use this handbook

Fully Alive can be used by a school to carry out its own internal evaluation or review. In this instance the school will decide on which areas it will look at more closely, and review these using the school's own personnel. The handbook can also be used by a mentor or a critical friend who can guide the school to carry out their own evaluation.

The handbook can also be used in an external evaluation by a team of people who come from an outside perspective to evaluate what happens in a school. In this instance the school is very aware of the criteria that will be used to make judgments on just how well it is doing.



The purpose and nature of the Catholic school

The purpose of the Catholic School is to provide a good all-round education in the spirit of the gospel of Jesus, aspiring in particular to live out its central message and challenge: to worship the God who loves us, to love and help our fellow human beings, and to learn to exercise responsibility for the world around us.

The CIE publication *Signs of God's Presence* offers schools a way of evaluating and strengthening their distinctive religious character. Indicators designed to focus the awareness of the school's community on how its ethos is expressed through its policies, programmes, and practices are provided.

Founded on that teaching, the school maintains a Catholic ethos – that is, a set of lived values and attitudes – which influences all aspects of the school's life. These include activities in and beyond the classroom, relationships among staff members, parents and learners, and disciplinary procedures. An indispensable aspect of Catholic ethos is a strong and vibrant Religious Education programme, drawn up in accordance with *Fostering Hope*, the policy of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference. The ethos entails therefore a development of the spiritual capacity for faith, hope and love. It also requires the upholding of the dignity of the human person, of all beings, and of all creation, with a special concern for the poor and the marginalised. Outreach to others, pastoral care for all, and celebration of the school's religious character are the essence of this ethos.

The school is committed to preparing learners to take their place in society as responsible, honest and compassionate citizens. While classroom teaching is compliant with the objectives of the National Curriculum, the search for excellence and depth in teaching and learning is shaped by a Catholic vision of life. This means that all curriculum areas are integrated in a meaningful way and infused with this particular vision. The school is staffed by qualified, competent personnel who give witness to the school's values and help to foster its special ethos.

The Catholic school strives to be relevant to and welcoming of all persons, irrespective of gender, race, culture or religion.

The school strives to be relevant to and welcoming to all persons, irrespective of gender, race, culture or religion. It welcomes teachers, parents and learners who may not be Catholic but who respect the Catholic ethos and seek its

values. Respect is accorded to the faith of all members of the school community, to their different religious identities, backgrounds and traditions. Openness and dialogue are encouraged and practised as a means of intellectual, moral and spiritual development.

The school works in cooperation with parents, the local church, the wider community and the institutions of civil society. Where the Catholic school is a public school, the Governing Body includes the principal, and parents (who constitute the majority), representatives of the school owner (a religious congregation or a bishop), of the school's staff and of learners from Grade 8 and above. Section 57 of the South African Schools Act protects the right of owners to ensure that the religious character of the school is maintained. In the case of an independent school the Act makes no reference to a religious character nor to the composition of a Board or Governing Body. The school authorities are free to make their own decisions on these matters.

Catholic schools and pastoral care

Catholic schools are founded on the person of Jesus Christ and embrace the example of Jesus and the teaching of the Gospel, especially in relation to faith, hope, love, forgiveness, justice and freedom. Catholic schools reflect the love of God within their communities. Catholic schools therefore have to critically examine:

- the practical expression of the Gospel message within their communities;
- their care for those within the school community, especially those who are vulnerable;
- the extent to which learners experience school as a place of hope for their future.

While pastoral care has always been a focus for Catholic schools, there is an urgency today to meet new challenges and responsibilities. Rapid and complex social change, the

There is an urgency today to meet new pastoral challenges.

impact of HIV/AIDS and the growing numbers of orphans demand a response from the school. There is substantial uncertainty, insecurity and stress in families, increased levels of violence in the community at large as well as among learners in our schools. The way in which each Catholic school responds to these challenges requires regular review. Many of the quality indicators contained in this handbook will assist schools to appraise this important dimension of the school.

The school needs to be aware of the many factors that impact on the well-being of the child



Pastoral care involves every member of the school community. A central feature of pastoral care is the commitment to partnership and shared responsibility among staff, learners, parents and other family members and the wider community.

There are many resources within the wider community which can support pastoral care in schools, including:

- ▣ church groups;
- ▣ health, safety, welfare services;
- ▣ hospice care.

It is important that schools identify all possible support services, and that strong links are established with all the agencies that are able to support learners who need support.

Dimensions of pastoral care

The following dimensions and features of pastoral care are already present in many Catholic schools and need to be regularly reviewed:

Environment

Catholic schools implement policies that ensure children's safety and protection. They promote healthy and safe environments which foster the children's emotional and physical well-being. The manner in which people interact with each other on a daily basis affects each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being.

Quality of relationships

Teachers set the tone and priority of pastoral care by their example. Teachers are known as caring, compassionate adults who take a real interest in the lives of their learners and who set appropriate boundaries within those teacher-learner relationships.

The fostering of high-quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, learners, parents and other staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

Learners recognise their own potential for building acceptance, trust, esteem and friendship among their peers, and to clearly understand the role of their teachers.

The CIE *Circle of Care* process and poster helps schools identify resources and people in the wider community that offer additional support for learners.

Pastoral care is expressed in practical ways in the different dimensions of a school's life.

The quality of relationships between teachers and learners is important in improving learning outcomes. Good relationships are characterised by mutual respect and trust, high expectations and aspirations, self-belief and a shared can-do attitude.

Teachers engage learners effectively in their learning by providing them with a variety of stimulating activities relevant to real life. Learners are actively involved and given personal responsibility for thinking things through. Learners are also given opportunities to make and act on personal choices.

Quality of teaching

Teachers plan their lessons with learners' needs in mind. They create challenging learning environments and pace their lessons appropriately. Questions are used to stimulate discussion and to develop the learners' ability to think critically.

Self-discipline and responsibility

Discipline policies, school rules and sanctions are intended to promote the good order of the community, and as such they are positive concepts. They should be aids to the fostering of self-discipline and responsibility.

Pastoral care in Catholic schools fosters the learners' self-discipline. It aims to develop people who are responsible and inner-directed, and capable of choosing freely in accordance with their conscience. Pastoral care should help learners to recognise that their fundamental freedoms and rights are reciprocated by responsibilities.

Pastoral programmes

Pastoral programmes represent a planned way of helping learners to value themselves and to experience well-being. They should include programmes for self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality, health and personal safety. Substance abuse awareness and programmes dealing with grief and loss should also be included.

Quality Assurance

Good schools continually seek to maintain or improve their quality. However, what we mean by quality in education changes over time in response to changes in society.

Quality should be expressed in the aims and policies of the school. The differences between schools must be respected. Quality must inform all that is done to promote students' learning. Quality is not something that simply happens because people are well intentioned; it has to be worked hard for and managed carefully.

It is useful not to limit 'quality' to any one specific meaning but rather to identify a set of 'core values' which should be typical of good quality schools. The following are some of these core values, which should be promoted in all our schools:

- schools should be well run, democratic and just;
- learners should have the opportunity to acquire, apply and practise the different kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare them for life;
- schools should be concerned about excellence and should promote high standards for the school and every learner and teacher;
- schools should expose learners to a kind, critical and considerate outlook on life and instil crucial values as an integral part of each individual's personal and social development;
- schools should develop in learners a sense of independence and self-worth;
- schools should prepare learners to have a concern for the cultural as well as the economic enrichment of the community around the school.

In addition to these core values individual schools will have their own, special values and purposes incorporated in their vision and mission.

A school develops learners' positive attitudes to learning by promoting the belief that people and education matter. A climate of ambition and high aspirations for all must be created, and achievements must be praised and celebrated.



Evaluation

Evaluation or review of a school's quality can be carried out either externally or internally, making use of evaluators either from outside or from within the school's own personnel. These two approaches can also be combined by having mentors from outside working with a team of internal evaluators. This is explained further in the Toolbox section.

A whole school evaluation (WSE) is an evaluation of all sections of a school, covering every aspect of it at the same time. In this country, evaluations are being done of selected sections and/or selected activities of the school. These evaluations should be carried out from time to time so that over a period of, say, five years, every aspect of the school will have been covered.

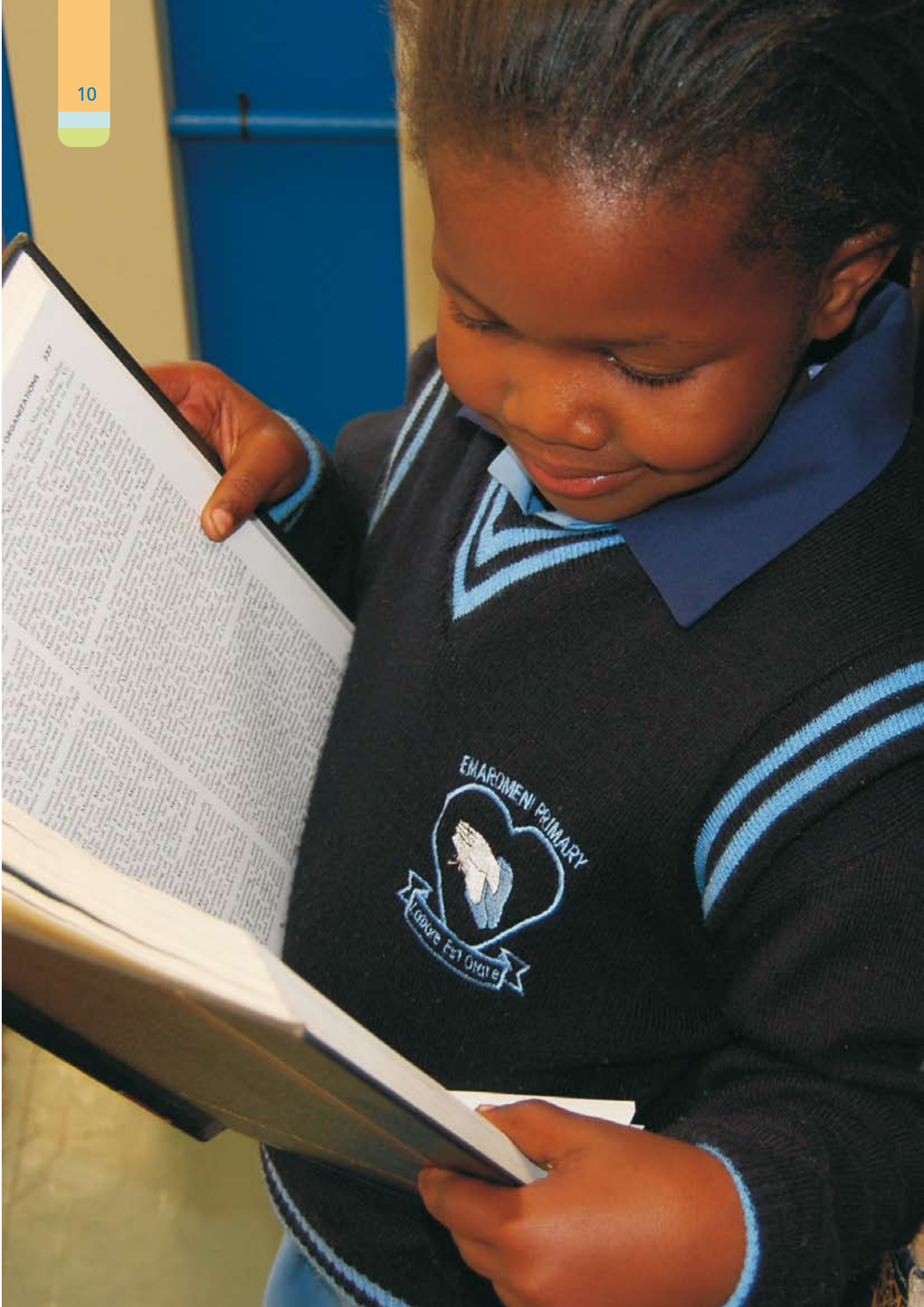
The common ground

The following principles should guide both external and internal evaluation processes:

- ▣ Evaluations should focus primarily on the quality of teaching and learning and the conditions that support it.
- ▣ Evaluations should be based on criteria which are known to schools.
- ▣ Evaluations should be based on evidence.
- ▣ Evaluations should be fair.
- ▣ Evaluations should recognise and acknowledge good practice as well as identify areas for improvement.

Some of the most important purposes for the different approaches of evaluation are:

- ▣ Knowledge – facts based on evidence from indicators.
- ▣ Understanding – assessment of evidence in relation to accepted standards.
- ▣ Accountability – information on performance in relation to aims and purposes.
- ▣ Development – strengthening capacity for improvement.



There are also a number of suggested ways and methods of finding the evidence. These should be regarded as a menu of options. The school will decide on the methods it will use to gather the evidence.

It will be rare for any evaluation to cover every aspect of the school. Selection needs to be made, of both good and less good aspects, but with a plan to cover every aspect within three to five years. The objective of improving the school must be kept in mind.

The centre of all school activities is the teaching and learning experience, and what happens in the classrooms is the most important part of that. The management structures, resources and systems in the school exist to support the learning.

A comprehensive set of indicators that focus on the religious identity of a school are contained in the document *Signs of God's Presence*. These indicators cover the following broad areas, and are to be used to appraise the school's distinctive religious character:

- ▣ Christian commitment.
- ▣ Spiritual growth.
- ▣ Religious diversity.
- ▣ Opportunities for religious practice.
- ▣ The display of Catholic signs and symbols.
- ▣ Concern for the common good.
- ▣ Commitment to the poor.
- ▣ Relationship with parish and bishop/religious congregation.
- ▣ Work of the Catholic Church and its leaders.
- ▣ Religious education programme.
- ▣ Professional formation and development of religious education teachers.

Selection of key aspects

The selection of the key aspects to be evaluated is made by the school. As many key aspects as can be effectively dealt with by the people available and in the time available should be chosen. Those aspects thought to be in need of improvement should be dealt with first, but those regarded as being in good shape should not be neglected. Celebration and criticism should go hand in hand.

Using quality indicators

The evaluation is based on a set of quality indicators. Quality indicators are used to provide evidence which helps evaluate a school by identifying:

- ▣ the strengths of the school that deserve celebration;
- ▣ the key aspects of the school that need to be improved;
- ▣ priorities for action to ensure improvement;
- ▣ areas that need further investigation;
- ▣ what to report on to your students, staff, parents and governors concerning the quality of education in your school.

There are no absolute indicators of school quality. The context and needs of any given school will always impact on the measure of quality. It would be presumptuous to specify a set of indicators that could be regarded as an exhaustive list. There are, however, common themes that can be identified in all the different quality assurance systems used around the world.

The school can develop its own indicators based on the vision and mission of the school. If the school claims to 'create a learning community' then the set of indicators would point towards the achievement of this goal. Schools should consider adding quality indicators, altering others and even omitting some. The process of using quality indicators involves asking those basic questions which are illustrated in the table on the next page.

Using quality indicators in evaluation

<i>How are we doing?</i>	<i>How do we know?</i>	<i>What are we going to do next?</i>
Agree on an aspect to focus on.	Select the appropriate quality indicators. Identify the features you will look for. Establish what evidence you will consider. Collect the evidence.	Identify priorities for action.

By using a range of indicators and sources of evidence a holistic view of quality can be developed, based on observation from different angles and checking the consistency of evaluations.

As mentioned earlier, the selection of evidence on which to base evaluations should be kept manageable by focusing on particular areas. The strength of evidence can be tested through 'triangulation'. This involves comparing one source of evidence with a second and a third source. For example, the effectiveness of a school's policy on care and needs of students could be checked against its implementation in classrooms and discussed with staff, students and parents.

Ways of collecting data

<i>Engage in direct observation</i>	<i>Analyse data</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shadow individual students • exchange classes • follow a class • observe lessons • work alongside other teachers • playground observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress from prior levels of attainment • student profiles • overall progress towards school targets • results in common examinations or matriculation examinations • data collected locally, provincially or nationally

Ways of collecting data

Ask people what they think

- individual interviews
- surveys and questionnaires
- focus group discussions
- written responses and detailed comments

Look at documentation & records

- students' work, including photographs and the like
- reports to parents
- progress reports on the development plan
- profiling of students' responses to tasks
- course materials across the ability range
- forward plans
- learning programmes and schemes of work
- records of work
- policies and guidelines
- minutes of meetings
- magazines and prospectuses

Suggestions and further ideas concerning some of these sources of evidence can be found in the Toolbox section. Evaluators should select and adapt this material to suit their specific purposes.

The key sources of evidence come from what is actually observed, from data of various sorts, and from the views of people in the school, such as children, teachers or parents. Where there are particular weaknesses in practice, then it is helpful to check out written guidance and documentation. This can include learning programmes, course materials, policies and minutes of meetings. But remember that what is written down is not necessarily the same as what actually happens.

Those carrying out the evaluation can individually or jointly rate every indicator by writing in the appropriate number in the scale according to the following guide. The picture that emerges will form the basis for the report on the evaluation and its recommendations.

Evaluation scale

4	very good	We're about as good as we can get in this area
3	good	We're good, but we can still improve in this area
2	fair	There are a number of things that still need to be put right in this area
1	unsatisfactory	There are important aspects of this area that we are not getting right yet

Six-point scale

If the four-point scale does not discriminate enough for your school then use this six-point scale:

The six-point scale builds on the four-point scale. The six-point scale allows for greater differentiation and discrimination.

Level 6: Excellent means that the students' experiences and achievements are of a very high quality. The school is exemplary and is the very best practice.

Level 5: Very good means that provision is characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and those that do exist do not diminish the student experience. The school can raise its performance to excellent.

Level 4: Good means that provision is characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement.

Level 3: Adequate applies where strengths just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of adequate will indicate that students have access to a basic level of provision.

Level 2: Weak applies where there are some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. It means that the school needs structured and planned action.

Level 1: Unsatisfactory means that there are major weaknesses in critical aspects that require immediate remedial action. The student experience is at risk.

Indicators to evaluate Catholic schools

<i>Ethos and pastoral care</i>		6	5	4	3	2	1
Equality and fairness, inclusion	1. Everyone is made to feel welcome.						
	2. Learners are admitted from the local community.						
	3. Sense of compassion and responsibility for others developed.						
	4. Dignity of each person is recognised.						
	5. There is a sense of equality, respect and fairness.						
	6. Orientation for new teachers and learners.						
	7. Assistance is available to support families in need.						
	8. Discriminatory practices eliminated.						
	9. Barriers to learning and participation reduced.						
	10. Procedures to counter bullying and harassment implemented.						
	11. Programmes in place to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS.						
Expectations	12. There are high expectations for everyone in the school.						
Care and welfare	13. Arrangements are in place to ensure care, well-being and child protection.						
<i>Teaching and learning</i>		6	5	4	3	2	1
Attendance and use of time	14. Attendance and punctuality are monitored.						
	15. Teaching time is used effectively.						
	16. Well-ordered, managed and calm school environment.						
Teaching for effective learning	17. Teachers have good subject knowledge.						
	18. Appropriate and sufficient learning materials available.						
	19. A range of learning opportunities offered that meet the learners' needs.						
	20. Teacher/learner interaction has purpose and clarity.						
	21. Teachers plan, teach and review together.						
	22. Curriculum is implemented with attention to sequence, progression and continuity.						
	23. Learners are actively involved in their learning.						
	24. Support offered to second language learners.						
	25. Involvement in extramural sporting and cultural activities encouraged.						
	26. Leadership opportunities are created for learners.						
	27. Respect for the law and citizenship promoted.						
	28. Structures are in place to involve parents with their children's learning.						
Assessment for learning	29. A range of assessment approaches are used.						
	30. Assessment information is used to improve teaching approaches.						
	31. Learner achievement is acknowledged.						
	32. Regular communication with parents and guardians about learner performance.						
	33. Systems in place to manage information.						

Governance and leadership		6	5	4	3	2	1
Shared vision	34. Vision, values and aims widely shared						
Leadership and vision	35. Governing Body contributes to smooth functioning of the school.						
	36. Staff and school Governing Body work well together.						
	37. Policies developed and implemented.						
	38. Strategic planning and communication takes place.						
Management of finance and resources	39. Resources are strategically developed and managed.						
	40. Procedures in place to manage and control finances.						
	41. Supportive relationships developed with learners, staff, parents, governors and the community.						
Partnerships for improvement	42. Commitment to continuous improvement.						
	43. Regular communication with people both inside and outside of the school.						
Staff recruitment, deployment and development	44. Staff achievement recognised and celebrated.						
	45. Staff selection procedures support the identity of the school.						
	46. Employment procedures support employment equity.						
	47. Staff professional development is promoted.						
	48. Performance of staff is monitored.						
Environment		6	5	4	3	2	1
Physical environment	49. Buildings and grounds are maintained.						
	50. Buildings are physically accessible to all learners.						
Partnerships	51. Community resources are identified and drawn upon.						
Health and safety	52. Arrangements in place to ensure health and safety.						
	53. Nutrition programmes provided whenever necessary.						
Environmental impact	54. Awareness of impact on the environment promoted.						

A set of questions is provided on pages 18 to 22 which will help the school gather the information to make judgements.

Ethos and pastoral care

Where to find the evidence?

- Observations
- Interviews
- Focus group interviews
- Surveys
- Policy review
- Accessibility surveys
- Review of record keeping
- Marketing material

Access and care

Is the first contact people have with the school friendly and welcoming?

Does the school welcome all students?

Are there positive ways for welcoming new students and new staff and for marking their leaving?

Is the school welcoming to all parents/ carers and others in the community?

Is information about the school made accessible to all?

Does the school entrance hall reflect all members of the school community?

Diversity, inclusion and local community

Is the school community well informed about the school's policies and practices?

Is the school involved in the activities of the local community?

Is the local community seen as a resource?

Is the variety of backgrounds and home languages seen as a positive contribution to the school?

Is there recognition of the existence of discrimination and the need to minimise all forms of it?

Are the cultures of the school equally supportive for boys and girls?

Are procedures in place to counter bullying?

Do students know who to turn to if they are bullied?

Are clear records kept about bullying incidents?

Are organisations of people with disability consulted about the accessibility of the school?

Does the school provide support for orphans and vulnerable students?

Care and welfare

Is every student known well by some members of staff?

Do students feel that their teachers like them?

Do staff feel valued and supported?

Do staff and students treat one another with respect?

Are the opinions of students about how the school might be improved sought?

Do students have particular forums for discussing school matters?

Do students know who they can see when they have a problem?

Are students confident that action will be taken to resolve their difficulties?

Does the school respond to student pregnancy in a way that is supportive and non-discriminatory to girls?

Teaching and learning

Where to find the evidence?

- Review attendance registers
- Review timetables
- Review curriculum plans
- Lesson preparation (differentiation)
- Lesson observation
- Surveys
- Policy reviews
- Department minutes
- Student books
- Review tests
- Mark records
- Reports to parents
- Learner achievement

Attendance

Is attendance monitored and managed?

Are records kept of attendance?

Is there a functional timetable in place?

Does the school and its teachers make the best use of teaching time?

Are students encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning?

What support is offered to students learning in a second language?

Does the homework assigned extend the knowledge and skills of students?

Teaching for effective learning

Are teachers qualified to teach the learning areas they teach?

Do teachers prepare lessons ahead of time?

Are there enough learning materials and are they appropriate?

Are all students encouraged to have high aspirations about their learning?

Are students involved in formulating classroom rules?

Are the classroom routines explicit and clear?

Are the aims of learning activities made clear?

Do lessons build on the diversity of student experience?

Do teachers have good subject knowledge?

Do lessons take the differences in student ability into account?

Are the differences in student learning styles taken into account?

Are the expectations of students for their lesson made clear?

Assessment for learning

Are students taught how to revise for tests and exams?

Does regular assessment take place?

Are the assessment records well managed?

Are parents/carers kept informed on student progress?

Do teachers provide regular feedback to students on their performance?

Does the feedback on assessment indicate what students know and what they must do next?

Are there occasions when parent/carers can discuss the progress of, and concerns about their children?

Are the achievement of students valued in relation to their own possibilities rather than the achievement of others?

Are all students encouraged to appreciate the achievements of others?

Do staff counter the derogatory use of labels of low achievement?

Is there an attempt to address the fear of failure of some students?

Governance and leadership

Where to find the evidence?

- Vision and mission documents
- Climate surveys
- Communication with community
- Minutes of leadership and governance meetings
- Interviews
- Review of school development plans
- Surveys conducted among parents
- Budget
- Audited reports
- Review policies
- Review job descriptions and employment records

Governance

Do Governing Body members understand the organisational structure of the school and the responsibilities of staff?

Does the Governing Body meet regularly?

Does the Governing Body contribute to the smooth functioning of the school?

Is the Governing Body committed to the continuous improvement of the school?

Vision, values and aims

Do leaders actively promote the vision and mission of the school? How has the vision been shaped?

Have the leaders developed and communicated a vision for the next three years?

Are the skills and knowledge of the Governing Body valued?

Leadership

Do leaders explicitly recognise the broader needs of the community?

Do leaders value different individual strengths and contributions to the school?
Are school policies developed and implemented?

What strategies are used to promote a climate of learning in the school?

How is staff development encouraged and promoted?

Is any priority given to monitoring classroom practice?

Does the school actively work to minimise any barriers to learning?

Are the leaders accessible and open to suggestions?

To what extent are leadership opportunities created for all staff?

Is there a LRC (Learners' Representative Council) in place which represents different students' needs?

Do leaders build confidence and self-esteem in others?

What evidence is there that the school is a learning organisation?

Leadership and change

Are leaders involved in 'hands on' development to move key priorities forward?

Are leaders aware of the strategic priorities in the school and what to prioritise?

Do leaders delegate effectively?

Are the opinions of students, parents and teachers about how the school might be improved sought?

Governance and leadership continued

Finance

Have the needs of the entire school community been addressed through budgetary decisions?

Are the available resources being well used?

Has the school budget been prepared in an effective manner (e.g. scheduled meetings, advanced notification)?

Is the budget being managed in an effective manner?

Are investments being managed in line with guidelines?

Are budget decisions communicated in the school?

Are leaders aware of what future budgetary goals need to be met?

Does the school allocate resources to improve the physical accessibility of the school for all or a particular student?

Staffing

Does staff selection support the distinctive ethos of the school?

Does the school make new staff feel that the experience and knowledge they bring is valued?

Do staff treat each other with respect irrespective of their roles in the school?

Do all staff treat each other with respect irrespective of age, race, class, sexual orientation, gender or impairment?

Do staff attend meetings?

Do all staff participate in meetings?

Do staff work in teams?

Do staff feel comfortable about discussing problems about their work?

Do staff know who to turn to with a problem?

Are all staff involved in drawing up priorities for school development?



Environment

Where to find the evidence?

- Observations
- Review maintenance budgets
- Review policies
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Playground supervision roster
- Accessibility surveys
- Health and safety records

Physical environment

Do the staff and students look after the physical environment of the school?

Are the buildings kept clean and neat?

Are the buildings kept in good repair?

Are the school grounds neat and attractive?

Are the buildings accessible to all students?

Are the school buildings and facilities available to community groups?

Safety

Is there a school safety officer?

What policies and procedures are in place to ensure school safety? (e.g. security, bus safety, violent incidents)

Do students and staff feel safe in the school before and after school?

Do students and staff feel safe at school?

Health

Is the school a health-promoting school?

Are all students encouraged to participate in sport and other extramural activity?

Do physical education and sporting activities encourage sport and fitness for all?

Does the school have a programme of basic health screening in place? (growth, vision, hearing, immunisation, parasites, etc.)

Does the school have a nutrition programme in place?

Does the school implement programmes to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS?

Environmental impact

Are teachers and students aware of the impact of the school and its activities on the environment?

What activities at the school promote environmental awareness?

Do teachers develop recyclable resources to support learning?

PART TWO

Toolbox

Toolbox 1: Evaluation

Internal evaluation

Internal evaluation is about schools themselves, taking the initiative to reflect on and assess the quality of the work they do. It is about learning from experience in a systematic way and taking steps to improve the school.

In internal evaluation schools themselves gather evidence to make judgements on what is happening in classrooms, as well as all the other activities of the school. These are examined with a view to improving the school. It is important that whoever carries out the internal evaluation does not just adopt someone else's quality indicators, but rather that people within the school have a chance to discuss what different indicators mean and how they might be used in their own situation.

Internal evaluation should be an ongoing part of the school's activities, and not just something added to a list. Responsibility for ensuring that it happens should be part of the portfolio of a senior staff member. Internal evaluation should always have as its purpose the improvement of the school.

Evaluation team

Once a school has decided on carrying out an internal evaluation in the school, the school decides next on an evaluation team headed by a senior staff member (not necessarily the principal) with a few others. Some expert people may be used to evaluate special aspects of the school. Governors and parents are not normally used. A mentor (or mentors) can be appointed from outside the school community, and can be involved in the selection of the evaluation team.

All members of the school community are likely to be brought in at some level to give views and information. An important

Mentors and internal evaluation

- **A mentor from outside the school provides the evaluation with a different perspective.**
- **A mentor is a 'guest' and 'a critical friend' of the school. He/she should behave accordingly. The mentor will normally liaise with the principal and possibly the chair of the Governing Body, but certainly work closely throughout the process with the leaders of the evaluation team.**
- **The mentor will naturally form evaluative opinions on aspects of the school. He/she is expected to share these views with the internal evaluation team. This needs to be done clearly and constructively.**
- **The mentor may only be available for a limited time and should be used as effectively as possible.**

aspect of internal evaluation is the ownership of the process by the participants – they take responsibility to improve the work of the school.

Step-by-step process on carrying out an internal evaluation

This is a suggested procedure for internal evaluation with mentor(s):



- The school's Governing Body and principal agree to have an internal evaluation. The idea may have been theirs or that of the Independent Quality Assurance Agency.
- A mentor to guide and monitor the process is sought from the CIE, and appointed by them in consultation with the school. As soon as possible the mentor should be briefed on the school by the principal.
- The principal and the mentor make a joint decision on the selection of an evaluation team headed in some instances by the principal or, more probably, a senior staff member. (Governors and parents should not normally be used.) The number of members will depend on the extent of the evaluation required.
- The mentor must guide the school on which key aspects of the school have to be evaluated. Additional aspects are decided upon jointly. In particular, the school should ensure that all the documents and records that will be needed are available to the mentor for checking.
- The team leader briefs his/her team and together they plan the substance and timetable of the evaluation. He/she arranges the preparation of all documents. Gaining interest and support is vital and is worth considerable time, effort and tact. Enough time should be allocated for collecting evidence by circulating and analysing questionnaires, conducting interviews and meeting focus groups.
- A three-day intensive evaluation programme is carried out, including classroom observation, focus groups and other ways of gathering evidence.

- The mentor should be consulted throughout.
- Reports – by the evaluation team on the school, and by the mentor on the process itself – should be written. Consultation and editing, which is the combined responsibility of the evaluation team, the school principal and the mentor, should take place as detailed in this handbook. (See p.38.)
- The final version of the report of the evaluation team is submitted to the school principal, the school Governing Body and the local CIE. The further distribution list of this report, preferably the full report, is the decision of the school Governing Body. The report by the mentor goes to the school principal, the school Governing Body and the members of the evaluation team. The school may distribute the report. The full reporting process must be carried out efficiently.
- Follow-up decisions and development plans for improvement should be made by the school. These should include future evaluations, internal and possibly external; modifications in the process; and most importantly measures, some immediate, to improve any aspects in which shortcomings have been noted. (See Introduction on p.1.)
- A suggested timetable for internal evaluation once the first two steps above have been taken follows. The timing within the year's calendar must be carefully considered. The mentoring times are approximate and adjustable to any suitable pattern.

Toolbox 2: External evaluation process

External evaluation provides a reality check for a school. Outsiders visit the school and use quality indicators which are in line with those widely used in this country and elsewhere but which the school should be familiar with. The outside evaluators make judgements about the quality of the school with particular emphasis on the teaching and learning.

An external evaluation team consists of at least one experienced school evaluation expert. There may be additional people including former or current principals and learning area specialists. The evaluation is normally completed in one week and involves around two to three days at the school.

Before the main evaluation week the school is asked to complete a questionnaire to gather its own views on key aspects of the school. A random sample of parents, guardians and learners across the school are asked to complete a questionnaire.

The evaluation week

On the first day the evaluators meet staff and brief them about the evaluation; they tour the campus; read documents provided by the school; interview the principal and other staff with management and curricular responsibilities; and visit some classes to observe learning and teaching.

Over the next days they visit classes to evaluate learning and teaching and aspects of achievement. They meet groups of learners and examine their work. They continue to consider information relating to attainment and achievement and other key documents, including files held on learners. They may have further discussions with staff.

Visits to classes

Visits to classes normally last around 30 minutes. The visits cover a wide range of the curriculum and involve all classes. The visits are used to evaluate aspects of achievement and the

overall quality of learning and teaching. Individual lessons are not evaluated. Whenever possible, visits take account of the school's normal timetable and routine.

Discussions with staff

Throughout the evaluation there are opportunities for staff to talk to the evaluators about matters relating to the evaluation. All staff will have the opportunity for discussion with an evaluator.

Information from interviews and discussions will be used in making evaluations and in preparing the published report. However, individual comments are not made in the report and the evaluators won't disclose comments from or about named individuals unless there are concerns about the safety and security of children.

On the final day of the evaluation, the evaluators complete any remaining activities and provide oral feedback on the main findings to the principal.

The evaluation report

After the evaluation, a report containing the considered views of the team is written. A confidential copy of the draft report is sent to the principal and also the chairperson of the School Board or Governing Body. The team leader discusses the report with the principal and, if necessary, with the chairperson of the Board, before it is finalised for publication. The purpose of the discussion of the draft report is to ensure its factual accuracy and to deal with any issues not already covered during the evaluation or at the feedback to teachers and senior managers. The discussion of the draft report may take place by telephone.

Quick review of a school

Arrive at the school

Reception

How do reception staff treat visitors to the school? Is the reception welcoming? Are the staff helpful?

The school

Take a quick tour around the school. Are the grounds well maintained? Is there litter? Are there any areas in need of repair and maintenance? Are the classrooms clean and tidy?

Speak to and listen to the teachers as if it's the first time

Spend a break in the staff room. Listen to the conversation. Is there a lot of happy talk? Are teachers negative about things? What staff development opportunities are there at the school?

Speak to students

Ask students what they think they like about the school. Find out what they like or dislike. Ask them what can be improved at the school.

Speak to the principal

Find out what the principal's greatest challenges are. Ask what the strengths and weaknesses are at the school.

Toolbox 3: Ethical issues

Before carrying out or assisting in an internal evaluation as an evaluator or as mentor, you need to be aware of the following ethical concerns:

- ▣ Treat everyone involved in the process with respect.
- ▣ Respect participants' time commitments.
- ▣ Don't create unrealistic expectations.
- ▣ Establish openness and trust.
- ▣ Establish the rules for confidentiality, communicate them, and honour them.
- ▣ Make it clear that it is the school as a whole that is being evaluated, not individual teachers.

Evaluator's code of conduct

Members of the evaluation team are required to:

- ▣ be objective and impartial in evaluating the work of the school;
- ▣ be honest and fair in making judgements and maintain integrity;
- ▣ be courteous and sensitive when dealing with all concerned;
- ▣ minimise stress, particularly by avoiding focusing on individuals and by not requiring extra preparation from those involved;
- ▣ maintain the best interests of both the staff and learners;
- ▣ respect the confidentiality of information gathered in the process of the evaluation.

Toolbox 4: Questionnaires and surveys

Questionnaires and surveys are useful for gathering information from large groups of people. They are particularly useful in the early stages of a process in order to highlight the issues at hand. The success of a questionnaire or survey relies largely on the content, structure and style of presentation. People completing a questionnaire should know why they are being asked to complete the questionnaire, what will happen with the findings and be assured of confidentiality. The sequence of questions must be logical and the tone of the questions should be unbiased.

The following are useful points to consider in drawing up a questionnaire:

- ▣ What information will you get from the question?
- ▣ Is this information useful to you?
- ▣ Is the question easy to understand? (Test the question on your colleagues and see whether they understand it.)
- ▣ Is each question clear and asking only one thing?
- ▣ How many questions will you need to use?
- ▣ There should be a space at the end of each questionnaire for additional comments. This is not shown in all these models.
- ▣ It can be useful to include some questions which are common to all or some of the questionnaires in order to compare perceptions by different groups of the same feature of the school.
- ▣ Each questionnaire used should be altered and checked to see that it applies as desired to the school. Make sure that the appropriate headings and instructions are added and that the significance of the scoring systems is explained.
- ▣ Send out questionnaires to as full a range of each group as possible – no one should feel excluded or bypassed. Some questionnaires such as those for learners can be dealt with in class time. Collect and score the completed forms as quickly as possible. Electronic scoring methods may be available in some schools.

Some interviewing tips

- **Avoid asking long questions.**
- **Avoid using questions with words that are unfamiliar to the people you are interviewing.**
- **Avoid using leading questions (e.g. why do you like the food at this school?).**

Toolbox 5: Interviews

Individual interviews

The best way to find something out from a person is to talk to the person. Interviews are really organised conversations that help to collect information. They provide opportunities for one-to-one interaction, but require a fair amount of time.

When conducting an interview remember the following:

- Work out the key questions you want to ask ahead of time.
- Place your question sheet on a clipboard. This will make for easier writing.
- Introduce yourself to the person you are going to interview. Ask him/her if he/she is willing to be interviewed.
- Explain why you are carrying out the interview and what you will do with the information.
- Conduct the interview in a suitable place, not too noisy or busy.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Be sure that you make eye contact with the person.
- Write the replies or responses down on your form.
- When you have asked all your questions, ask the person whether he or she has any questions for you.
- Thank the person for allowing you to interview him or her.
- Keep complete and accurate notes and take time after the interview to organise and expand your notes.

You can use a tape recorder or video recorder to provide a permanent record of the interview. However, many people are not comfortable with this and recorders can prove to be a barrier to communication. They should never be used without the interviewee's consent. Transcribing the results from interviews can be time consuming. If some of the people in the school community speak different languages then you may need to translate the questions and use a translator.

Suggested interview questions for the school management team

- Describe the way in which the school management team works.
- How is policy formulated at the school?
- How do you implement and monitor policy?
- How do you ensure quality education?
- How do you appraise the performance of staff at your school?
- Or (if applicable) why have you opted out of performance appraisal?
- How do you ensure that the school is run in a cost-effective manner?
- How do you manage curriculum development?
- How do you manage the curriculum?
- How do you encourage student responsibility?
- What arrangements are made for pastoral care at your school?

Between them members of the internal evaluation team and the mentor should interview key members of the school using questions covering topics suggested by the answers to the questionnaires as requiring further investigation. For example the principal, the bursar, the senior student(s), the grounds manager, the parents' association chair, the former students' secretary and other such people – especially if they are not to be included in any focus groups (see below).

A set of questions (topic-triggers) should be prepared for each interview (as also for focus groups). The evaluation team leader should allocate interviewers to meet each person selected.

Focus group interviews

A focus group is a number of people who are thought to be likely to have views on some particular topic. People chosen for a focus group usually come from the same constituencies, e.g.: administrative staff; maintenance staff; parents; teachers; or students. Such focus group interviews allow for differing views and more interaction among those present. The information gathered in focus groups is useful in gaining a sense of the ethos of the school.

Focus groups should be made up of no more than six to eight people. Broad questions that generate discussion should be: What are the best things that go on at the school? What are the worst things that go on at the school? What would you change at the school if you were the principal? The issues of concern to the particular group should emerge. Issues raised in the responses to the questionnaires and in individual interviews can be used to stimulate discussion. An hour's duration is a useful average time to have in mind.

The focus group meetings must be chaired in a way that promotes discussion. Participants need to be put at ease and allowed to speak freely. The mentor may be present and participate where appropriate. Here are some useful steps to follow:

- Thank the focus group participants for coming.

Some challenges with using focus groups

- **Confidentiality can be a problem between participants when they talk in a group situation.**
- **It is difficult to generalise the results as they can't be representative of the wider school group.**

- ▣ Check for their awareness of and consent to any recording or videoing.
- ▣ Set them at ease by telling them what you are going to do, and emphasise that their answers are confidential. If necessary explain briefly where the meeting fits into the whole evaluation process.
- ▣ Do not ask leading questions like: 'Why is the leadership at this school good?' Rather say: 'Tell us about the leadership at your school.'
- ▣ Use probing questions to gather more information such as: 'Can you explain why...'; 'Tell me more...'; 'Why is that...'; and 'Can you elaborate...', etc.
- ▣ End with a question like: 'Is there anything else you would like to add?'
- ▣ Thank the group again for participating.

Summarise the broad themes that arise in each of the focus groups and establish what the common themes are across the different focus groups.

Toolbox 6: Classroom observation

Classroom observation provides the main source of information on learning and teaching. It is, however, important that all concerned should be aware that the evaluation is of the school as a whole and not of the abilities of individual teachers, though the two are obviously not unrelated. Classroom observation strategies should take account of the following components of a lesson though not all of these may be able to be assessed in a single lesson:

- Organising skills – sorting out materials and sources of information.
- Analysis skills – breaking down complex sources of information.
- Synthesis skills – building.
- Presentation skills – explains work well using visual aids appropriately.
- Assessment skills – judging the work of students so that appropriate feedback is given.
- Management skills – coordinating the dynamics of individual students, groups and classes.

Using a structured observation sheet, such as that found on p.45, can facilitate an understanding of these components.

The following guidelines should be followed when carrying out observations:

- Put the teacher and students at ease as soon as possible. Remember that you are trying to see teaching and learning in as natural a setting as possible.
- Try to be unobtrusive and avoid interrupting teaching and learning.
- Structure your evaluation according to the quality indicators you choose to use. Not all the indicators on the form may apply to each lesson observed.
- Record the evidence carefully.
- Ensure that observations are evaluative with just enough description to provide an idea of what happened during the lesson.
- Provide some immediate feedback, preferably encouraging, to the teacher at the end of the lesson.



Toolbox 7: Observing other areas of the school environment

Playground observation

Playground observation focuses on the kinds of activities, relationships, discipline and the quality of supervision in the school playground. The following key questions should be considered in playground observation:

- ▣ Is there adequate space for the students to play in?
- ▣ Is the playground secure?
- ▣ Is there adequate supervision on the playground?
- ▣ Is there suitable playground equipment?
- ▣ Is there drinking water available?
- ▣ Are there toilet facilities available?
- ▣ Is there shelter from the sun?
- ▣ Does constructive play take place?
- ▣ Is there space for students to sit?
- ▣ Are there any areas in the playground available for quiet conversation?
- ▣ Is the school library or book room available during break time?

Toilet inspection

The importance that a school gives to its environment tells a lot about the ethos of the school. Here is an example of the kinds of things to look for when looking at the school toilets:

- ▣ Are the students' toilets clean, accessible and safe for both the younger and older students?
- ▣ Are the toilets open throughout the school day?
- ▣ Are the toilets monitored and checked by staff regularly?
- ▣ Is there a regular supply of basics: toilet paper, clean towels, soap?

Toolbox 8: Policy and document reviews

School policies should document and direct procedures at school, and ought to make the day-to-day functioning of a school easier. Review the following key policies and documents and make sure they are in place and being used.

The following policies should be reviewed:

- ▣ Constitution
- ▣ Vision and Mission statements
- ▣ Admissions policy
- ▣ Language policy
- ▣ Religious education policy
- ▣ Pastoral care policy
- ▣ HIV/AIDS policy
- ▣ Financial policy and procedures
- ▣ Codes of conduct
- ▣ Disciplinary procedures

The following documents can also be reviewed:

- ▣ Attendance registers
- ▣ Governing Body minutes, management and staff meeting minutes
- ▣ Lesson-planning documents and learning programmes
- ▣ Reports to parents
- ▣ Magazines, prospectuses, histories
- ▣ Material in any archives or school museum, even pictures displayed on walls

School policies and records

A school policy must include:

- A rationale (why the policy is needed).
- A purpose (what the school wants to achieve by implementing the policy).
- Guidelines (the broad actions that the school intends to take).
- Procedures and statements that include (where appropriate) the following:
 - Documents the school communities, position.
 - Clarifies roles and responsibilities (and rights).
 - Includes a clear statement on the schools responsibilities.
 - Outlines strategies.
 - Outlines the content and approaches of classroom programmes.

The table on the following page is a list of areas of information which should be readily available in schools. But remember that what is written down is not necessarily the same as what actually happens.

Range of documents and policies that can be found in schools

General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and Mission • Language • Religion • Inclusion and diversity • School development plan • School evaluations 	Quality management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General policy • Programme development design and delivery • Assessment policies 	Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution • Minutes of meetings • Policy on policies • Human resources
Learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full records – admissions, attendance, progress reports, etc. • Scholarships and bursaries • Health records • Achievements 	Teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination records, marks, final results • Curriculum • Homework • Extra lessons • Learner support • IT and media centre/library • Learning area/subject policy 	Orderliness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules • Disciplinary procedures • Codes of conduct • Lateness, truancy • Emergency procedures • Timetables, calendars, handbooks
Physical resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title deeds • Resource management • Buildings and fields • Maintenance • Asset register 	Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports • Colours and awards • Service to community • Cultural activities • Conferences • Leaders • Publicity 	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • Newsletters • Website • Magazines and history • Prospectus • Archives
Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance and disciplinary procedures • Selection and appointments • Appraisal • Salaries • Employment equity policy • Leave • Appeals and grievances procedures • Exit interviews • Staff development • Complete files for staff – references, job descriptions, appointments, leave, SACE, CV, etc. • Relations with unions • Relief teachers • Staff housing • Conditions of service 	Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete financial records • Budgeting • Investments and asset management • Fees and salaries • Stock lists • Fundraising • Marketing • Rates and taxes • Insurance 	Human need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol/drug abuse • Trauma, suicide, bereavement • Health and safety • Bullying and child abuse • HIV/AIDS • Pastoral care • Medical aid
Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles register • Transport policy • Accidents • Tours and excursions 	Parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Teacher Association (or such) • Parent interviews • Parents' charter (code) 	Former students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses and CVs • Record of achievements • Former pupils' association

Toolbox 9: Reporting

The process that can be followed when reporting on internal evaluation:

Writing reports

Carrying out an internal or external evaluation is the first step. The next important step is deciding how you are going to communicate your findings. Who is the audience?

Keep the three Cs in mind when providing written and verbal reports:

- ▣ Clarity
- ▣ Consistency
- ▣ Coherence.

The message of the report must not be compromised. You need to ensure that everyone you report to receives the same message. The evaluation needs to highlight the points for action. Avoid using words such as 'could', 'might' or 'could consider'. Rather use words like 'should' (tell them exactly what should be done).

Consider the following points:

- ▣ Plan carefully before you start writing. Use an outline or a mind map so that you will know exactly what you'll be writing about.
- ▣ Organise the report into sections.
- ▣ Use plain or everyday English whenever possible and avoid using jargon. Plain English is written with the reader in mind and with the right tone of voice that is clear and concise.

<i>Passive voice</i>	<i>Active voice</i>
The case will be considered by us shortly.	We shall consider the case shortly.
The fight was stopped by the police.	The police stopped the fight.
The school had to be closed by the health inspector.	The health inspector had to close the school.

Use active verbs as much as possible. Say 'We shall do it' rather than 'It will be done by us'. Passive verbs make writing more difficult to understand. Active verbs make writing livelier and more personal. The table on p.38 gives some examples of sentences containing passive verbs. The 'active' versions are next to each one.

- ▣ Keep your sentence length down to an average of 12 to 20 words.
- ▣ Try to stick to one main idea in a sentence.
- ▣ Check that your report is accurate, clear, concise and readable.
- ▣ Use devices such as sub-headings and bold type to enhance clarity.
- ▣ Avoid vague terms. Try to be as exact as possible about numbers and proportions. It is recommended that you use the following terms as signifying the proportions shown:

Almost all	more than 90%
Most	75-90%
Some	50-75%
Few	25-50%
Very few	less than 25%
or, if available, give the percentages	

Whatever usage is followed should be consistent and made clear.

Editing (internal evaluation)

The school's evaluation team writes the internal evaluation report. The mentor used to guide the process should be fully consulted for his or her views during the report's compilation. This report is submitted to the school principal, the school Governing Body, and the broader school community.

The report by the mentor also goes to the school principal, the school Governing Body and the members of the evaluation team.

The full reporting process must be carried out as soon as the evaluation is completed.

Evaluation team report

- ▣ There should be some consistent pattern in these reports. A suggested framework is given. The report should be no more than 10 to 15 pages.
- ▣ Provide the school's name, address, and the date of the evaluation. Add the names of the evaluation team and the mentor.
- ▣ List the contents of the report.
- ▣ Give a brief descriptive background of the school, its size, foundation date, and any distinctive defining features e.g. co-ed, age/grade range, underlying religious basis, educational principles or such.
- ▣ Indicate the range of the school's sections and activities evaluated. Specify the major means and methods used.
- ▣ Under each focus area in turn, summarise in factual language the team's findings, good and bad. Indicate the main sources of your evidence. Nothing that cannot be substantiated by sound evidence should be said. Show clearly any variations in views between different groups e.g. parents', learners' and staff's views on, say, bullying. The crucial importance of teaching and learning should be stressed.
- ▣ List succinctly, say, five to eight of the school's key strengths.
- ▣ List similarly any significant weaknesses that need improvement or further investigation.
- ▣ Summarise the team's recommendations for action on school improvement, including those implicit or explicit in the detailed reports. Place these recommendations in order of priority with appropriate suggested time-frames. Methods and resources needed should be suggested if information is available.

- ▣ Sum up suitably and indicate, if possible how the evaluatory attitudes and practices should continue in the life of the school.

Report by a mentor

The mentor should report on the rigour, efficiency, effectiveness and tone of the school to the evaluation process.

The report should contain:

- ▣ An analysis of the evaluation process, whether it was thorough and fair.
- ▣ An estimate of the 'success' of the evaluation, especially in its impact on the school's adopting evaluatory processes and systems in the future. Give instances to illustrate your assessments, applying, as it were, quality indicators of your own devising to the evaluation process.
- ▣ An indication of the likely progress of the school towards carrying out improvements and working out a school development plan. (See p.42.)
- ▣ Comments on the 'process' of evaluation with any suggestions for future amendments and improvements.

Toolbox 10: How to develop a plan to improve your school

School development plan

- School development plans encourage the school to reflect, and to plan ways to improve teaching and learning.
- School development plans are based upon the aims and values of the school and can help to focus attention on the children's learning and achievement.
- School development planning allows the school itself to direct its own progress.
- Long-term visions can be achieved by means of a sequence of practical, short-term action plans which are easily understood.
- Development plans already in place at your school (e.g. those relating to curriculum and assessment, management, organisation or staff development) can be successfully integrated into one cohesive programme.
- School development plans can form the basis for constructive working relationships with education departments and other service providers.

The school should, at this stage, begin to have a clearer understanding of your school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of the core values which we wish to promote in our schools. With this information, you are better placed to address the perceived areas of weakness in your school. In order to do so, your school needs to map out a school development plan. School development planning does not just happen on its own: a principal, together with a small group of teachers, must initiate, promote and keep the process going. Development planning requires the full support of the principal and Governing Body.

Before embarking on a school development process, a school needs to ask the questions on the following page:

- ▣ What are our aims?
- ▣ How much commitment is there to development planning?
- ▣ Who should be involved?
- ▣ How long will the process take?
- ▣ Is there a budget for school development?

Once these questions have been dealt with in an effective manner, a school development process can begin.

The processes involved in school development planning

There are four processes in school development planning:

Review (Discover)

The school reviews its strengths and weaknesses. The internal evaluation can constitute this phase.

Planning (Dream and Design)

The school selects priorities for development and identifies specific targets. An action plan is compiled to accomplish each objective.

Implementation (Deliver)

The school implements the action plan.

Evaluation

The school evaluates the success of the implemented plan.

This four-part process should be understood to be part of an ongoing cycle, so that development planning becomes an integral part of the school programme.





PART THREE

Appendices

Appendix 1: *Classroom observation*

Each school should draft its own version of this form

School	
Date of visit	Time of day
Number of learners in class	Grade
Learning area	
Summary of lesson content	
Pictures on walls <input type="checkbox"/> Students' work displayed on walls <input type="checkbox"/> Book corner <input type="checkbox"/> Readers available <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><i>Learning and response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent to which learners are motivated by their learning experience • progress in learning • personal responsibility for learning; independent thinking; and active involvement in learning • interaction with others <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><i>Quality of teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range and appropriateness of teaching approaches, including the use of homework • clarity and purposefulness of educator's expositions and explanations • quality of teacher-learner dialogue <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><i>Other (pastoral care)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision for the emotional, physical and social needs of individual students • provision of support for students • development in students of positive attitudes and personal social skills <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><i>Achievement (student)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choice of tasks, activities and resources • pace of learning to achieve appropriate targets for all students • relevance of the purposes and contexts of teaching to students' experiences and interests <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Key points made to the teacher and his/her responses</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Appendix 2: Parents' questionnaire (two models given)

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate column.

	<i>Agree strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree strongly</i>
My child is happy at school				
My child likes school				
My child is making good progress in school				
My child gets work to do at home				
I am well informed about how my child is getting on				
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem				
The school works closely with parents				
The school is well managed and led				
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons				

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate column.

	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>
My child's attitude to school				
My child's progress at school				
Allocation of homework to my child				
Communication by the school to me about my child/ease felt in approaching the school about questions and problems				
Closeness of school's working with the parents				
Management and leadership of school				
Quality and range of activities outside classrooms				

Appendix 3: *Learners' questionnaire*

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate column.

	<i>Agree strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree strongly</i>
I am happy at school				
I am not bullied (physically or verbally) at school				
Discipline is good				
My teachers treat me fairly				
My teachers take the time to explain new work fully				
My teachers care about me				
My teachers are on time for lessons				
Teachers praise me when my work is good				
The school has excellent facilities				
My class is too big				
The prefects/senior students are fair and effective in their duties				
I enjoy the sporting programme				
I enjoy the cultural programme				
The academic standards are excellent				
I feel motivated to take responsibility for my own learning				
I have the opportunity to go on trips and excursions				
I am aware of the aims and goals of the school				
I feel safe at school				
I feel that my possessions are secure at school				
The school knows when I am absent				

Appendix 4: School leadership team questionnaire

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate column.

<i>Leadership qualities</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
We create confidence in others through support and personal example						
We inspire and motivate others towards highest expectations						
We are approachable and available						
We are good listeners and responsive						
We provide 'hands-on' leadership which has a positive impact on practice						
We are committed and have the energy and drive to get things done						
We demonstrate good communication skills						
<i>Professional competence and commitment</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
We demonstrate strong personal commitment to key priorities						
Our day-to-day practice reflects strategic priorities in action						
We initiate and manage change in line with vision						
We help others to embrace a strategic educational vision						
We provide an effective professional example						
We are a source of information and advice on educational practice						
We demonstrate a practical ability to translate aims into reality						
We promote a climate of evaluation and enquiry						
We recognise students' learning and attainment as the school's key focus						
<i>Relationships with people and development of teamwork</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
We maintain positive relationships with the Governing Body						
We maintain positive relationships with staff, students and parents						
We use every opportunity to allow others to exercise leadership						
We recognise the various strengths of others and build effective teams						
We involve others in developing school policies and the school plan						
We encourage and support people to become involved						
We seek out and develop productive partnerships						
We delegate effectively and productively to manage change						

Appendix 5: Staff questionnaire on school leadership

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate column.

<i>Leadership qualities of the school and leadership team</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
They create confidence in others through support and personal example						
They inspire and motivate others towards highest expectations						
They are approachable and available						
They are good listeners and responsive						
They provide 'hands-on' leadership which has a positive impact on practice						
They have commitment and the energy and drive to get things done						
They demonstrate good communication skills						
<i>Professional competence and commitment</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
They demonstrate strong personal commitment to key priorities						
Their day-to-day practice reflects strategic priorities in action						
They initiate and manage change in line with vision						
They help others to embrace a strategic educational vision						
They provide an effective professional example						
They are a source of information and advice on educational practice						
They demonstrate a practical ability to translate aims into reality						
They promote a climate of evaluation and enquiry						
They recognise students' learning and attainment as the school's key focus						
<i>Relationships with people and development of teamwork</i>	6	5	4	3	2	1
They maintain positive relationships with the Governing Body						
They maintain positive relationships with staff, students and parents						
They use every opportunity to allow others to exercise leadership						
They recognise the various strengths of others and build effective teams						
They involve others in developing school policies and the school plan						
They encourage and support people to become involved						
They seek out and develop productive partnerships						
They delegate effectively and productively to manage change						

Appendix 6: Staff questionnaire – on general matters

Please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate column.

	<i>Agree strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree strongly</i>
Learners are happy at school				
Learners are well cared for at the school				
Learners are not bullied (physically or verbally) at school				
Discipline is good at school				
I treat my pupils fairly				
I am knowledgeable in my subject area				
I take the time to explain new work thoroughly				
Attendance is regular, controlled, with absence and lateness followed up				
I am on time for my lessons				
There is a range of curriculum activities regularly evaluated and changed to suit the needs of learners				
The curriculum is relevant				
I feel respect for my pupils				
There are too many pupils in my classes				
The prefects/seniors are fair and effective in their duties				
Parents are supportive				
There is regular opportunity for contact with parents				
Teachers are able to participate in self-development programmes				
There is a good staff appraisal system in place				
Teachers have a say in the decision making of the school				
Teachers know the school policies				
I have confidence in the management of the school				
There are good motivational leaders in the school management who use praise and disciplinary action appropriately				
The cultural programme is excellent				
The sporting programme is excellent				
There is good opportunity for recognition of merit and promotion within the school				

Appendix 7: Governing Body (GB) self-evaluation

	<i>Agree strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree strongly</i>
The frequency of meetings is as it should be				
The meetings are of an appropriate duration				
The agenda is satisfactorily drawn up				
Adequate notice is provided for meetings				
The documentation provided for meetings is good				
Minutes and GB records are well kept				
Adequate time is allowed for discussion				
GB sub-committees work well				
The GB gives adequate attention to all constituencies at meetings				
The range of GB expertise meets the needs of the school				
The method of appointing the GB is good				
The GB receives adequate training and orientation				
Attendance at GB meetings is good				
The GB's understanding of it's functioning and powers is good				
The division of responsibility between management and the GB is appropriate and clear				
The GB communicates the proper ethical and legal responsibilities to its members				
The GB ensures ethical behaviour and proper compliance standards throughout the school and sets the example by its own behaviour				
The GB reviews its activities and performance regularly				
The relationships between the GB and school staff are good.				
The GB deals as it should with the formulation and monitoring of broad policy				
The GB communication with school staff is good				
GB workshops provide deeper insight into issues facing the school				
GB members are aware of the issues facing the school				
GB members attend as many additional school functions as possible				

Appendix 8: Summary of Umalusi Accreditation Criteria for Independent Schools

Umalusi have developed criteria to accredit independent schools. Collectively the evaluation must answer the following questions:

- Is the school managing and supporting the quality of its provision effectively?
- Does the school meet its own and national objectives as defined in its vision and mission statements?
- Does the ethos of the school create an enabling environment for learning and reflect appropriate values?
- Is the teaching and learning offered by the school of sufficient quality?

<i>Area</i>	<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Sub-criteria</i>
Leadership and management	Criterion 1: Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with legislation and policies for schools • Constitution of governance structures • Responsibilities of governance
	Criterion 2: Planning and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional direction • Achievement of the mission and national objectives • Commitment of staff, learners and stakeholders • Involvement of parents • Quality management and improvement of provision • Resource allocation and management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – value for money – sustainability • Management information systems
School ethos	Criterion 3: Values Social and cultural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's • The learners'
Teaching and learning	Criterion 4: Curricula, learning programmes and certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of learning programmes • Compliance with legislation and policies • Learning programme design and development • Policies and procedures • Monitoring and improvement of learning programmes • Staff skills • Selection of informal and non-formal programmes

CONTINUED

Teaching and learning CONTINUED

	Criterion 5: Delivery and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of delivery • Planning and mediation of learning • Teaching strategies and approaches • Learning support strategies • Monitoring and improvement of delivery and teaching • Learning materials and physical facilities • Management of informal and non-formal programmes
	Criterion 6: Assessment of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment policy and practices • Moderation of assessment • Monitoring of learner progress and performance • Appropriate and rigorous assessments • Staff assessment skills • Assessment records
	Criterion 7: Staff expertise and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified, knowledgeable and skilled staff • Monitoring, review and improvement of staff skills
	Criterion 8: Learner support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student support programmes, services and activities • Management and improvement of support services • Access
Results	Criterion 9: School performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner success • Value for money • User satisfaction



Fully Alive has been developed to assist Catholic schools to review how well they are doing. It has not been designed to be followed slavishly, but rather to provide schools with some theory and guidelines that they can use to review what they are doing well and take actions on the areas of their work that need to be improved.

PART ONE of the handbook provides some theoretical background through literature overview. The school is guided through the philosophy underpinning the Catholic school and how this is lived out in daily practise. A set of the indicators are set out to be used to rate different areas of school life.

PART TWO provides schools with the toolkit to carry out the evaluation.

PART THREE provides examples of different kinds of forms and checklists that can be employed to assist schools in gathering information.

The handbook has been designed to provide the school with tools that can be used without serious modification so as to ensure that the philosophy and practice of the Catholic education translates into the reality of the school environment.

Schools are encouraged to provide feedback on the use of this handbook and how it can be improved.

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