Education Inspectorate
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

INSPECTION FRAMEWORK PRIMARY EDUCATION

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1 INTRODUCTION

This 2017 Inspection Framework, issued by the Netherlands Inspectorate of Education, describes the inspection regime for Dutch preschool and primary education, including the Inspectorate's assessment framework and working methods. This introduction first outlines the legislative framework for that regime, then its scope and finally provides a brief reader's guide to the rest of this document.

1.1 Legislative framework for the inspection of primary education

The basic foundation for the schools inspection regime is provided by the 2002 Education Regulation Act (Wet op het onderwijstoezicht, WOT). It entrusts that regime to the Inspectorate of Education (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, hereafter "the Inspectorate"), charging it with the task of assessing and promoting quality of educational provision, including that of teaching personnel, at institutions governed by the following statutes.
- The Primary Education Act (Wet op het primair onderwijs, WPO).
- The education laws of Bonaire, Sint-Eustatius and Saba (the Dutch "special municipalities" in the Caribbean).
- The 1969 School Attendance Act (Leerplichtwet).
- The School Councils Act (Wet medezeggenschap op scholen, WMS).
- The Miscellaneous Education, Culture and Science Subsidies Act (Wet overige OCW-subsidies).
- The Educational Experimentation Act (Experimentenwet Onderwijs).

The Inspectorate regulates all institutions and other forms of educational provision covered by the above legislation. That is: primary schools, primary special schools, nurseries and preschools, educational facilities for recent immigrants, local authorities insofar as they provide nursery and preschool education, education providers in the Caribbean "special municipalities", non-maintained schools and providers of Dutch education abroad, as well as tailored education partnerships. Separate inspection frameworks have been compiled for the non-maintained sector and providers of Dutch education abroad.

1.2 Statutory requirements and self-defined quality factors

The WOT is due to be amended substantially with effect from 1 July 2017[1]. For the Inspectorate, one of the main changes is that a distinction will now be drawn between statutory requirements and quality factors defined by schools themselves or their governing bodies. Covering quality of educational provision and financial management, statutory requirements are general, objectifiable quality standards, are defined in law as far as possible and are sufficiently clear-cut that they guarantee freedom of direction and structure. We also use the term "basic quality" to encapsulate them.

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[1] This Inspection Framework has been compiled based on the legislation expected to be in force on 1 August 2017. Proposed amendments to sectoral education acts and other statutes which have yet to complete their passage through Parliament are cited in square brackets: [---]. As and where necessary, these references will be updated in the definitive version of this document. Because the amendments to the WOT itself have already been adopted, they are not shown in square brackets.

A school which fails to meet the statutory requirements is providing education of inadequate quality, or has inadequate financial management. This can result in sanctions being imposed on it – and, as a last resort, intervention by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. As part of its remit to guarantee the basic quality of educational provision in the Netherlands, the Inspectorate is responsible for ensuring that schools comply with the statutory requirements set out in the respective sectoral education acts.

Self-defined quality factors pertain to the objectives and ambitions a school or a governing body sets itself, above and beyond the basic quality level. Under its quality-promotion remit, the Inspectorate considers how these factors contribute to better quality of educational provision in a continuous and sustainable manner, and it discusses their effect with schools and governing bodies. In its reports, the Inspectorate draws a clear distinction between judgements related to statutory requirements and assessments of self-defined quality factors.

1.3 Subjects of regulation and inspection

In the primary education sector, both schools and the governing bodies are subject to legal regulation by the Inspectorate. Any interventions of a statutory nature pertain to these levels. A subject of inspection is anything examined by the Inspectorate with a view to forming an assessment or judgement of a school or its governance.

1.4 Effectiveness and evaluation

The 2017 Inspection Framework takes effect on 1 August 2017. Up until that date, ongoing interventions and agreements made under the pre-existing regulatory frameworks remain in force. [For details of transitional arrangements in the run-up to the introduction of the new regime, see the Inspectorate's website.]

In accordance with the provisions of the WOT, the Inspectorate has consulted with all relevant parties concerning the new Inspection Framework. In refining the statutory requirements for inclusion in the assessment framework it will be applying in practice, the Inspectorate believes it has adopted a reasonable interpretation of the wording of the law. That interpretation has been arrived at with the consent of the education sector.

A full evaluation of the workings and effects of the new Inspection Framework will be conducted by 1 January 2022 at the latest, by which time the first quadrennial cycle of inspections will have been completed.

The new framework remains subject to change at any time, either in whole or part, as a result of experiences with its use or wider political, societal or educational developments.

1.5 Document structure and guide for readers

This document provides a full description of the new Inspection Framework, including the work of the Inspectorate and its assessment framework. The Inspectorate's basic approach and the fundamental principles behind it are set out in

chapter 2. The assessment framework can be found in chapter 3 and the benchmarking and judgement protocols in chapter 4. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 describe the Inspectorate's working methods when inspecting schools and their governing bodies. Chapter 8 explains how the results of the quadrennial inspections are reported and otherwise communicated by the Inspectorate, whilst chapter 9 covers follow-up activities, in particular possible remedial and restorative interventions and sanctions. In chapter 10 we explain how we organize systemic inspections. Finally, chapter 11 looks at special cases: educational facilities subject to specific legislation and hence a modified assessment framework (see also 1.1). To ensure that the picture is complete, the full assessment frameworks can be found in the appendices.

2 BETTER EDUCATION, GOOD GOVERNANCE, APPROPRIATE REGULATION

The Dutch education sector is performing better all the time. The number of schools judged "Inadequate" is falling and more and more "Weak" or "Very weak" schools are managing to bring the quality of their provision up to an acceptable level and to keep it there. This is good news. But schools which are already performing well also need to seize every opportunity they can to improve. That is good for their pupils and good for our society[2].

This is where the principle challenge of the next few years lies, for every sector of education. A challenge which demands of governing bodies that they strive to build a culture of quality, where it goes without saying that everyone pursues continual improvement. Even if the basics are sound.

Our activities as an Inspectorate reflect this quest for improvement, in part by helping to ensure that the basic quality of schools and their financial management is in order and remains so, and in part by inspiring governing bodies to make the most of all the potential they have to improve even further. In other words, we have a dual remit: to function as both a guarantor and a promotor of quality.

In this chapter we describe our basic approach to the regulation of education: what we want it to achieve and the fundamental principles behind it.

2.1 Basic principles and the role of the inspectorate

"Ownership" of the quality of educational provision rests with schools and their governing bodies, with the latter ultimately responsible for the standard and continuity of the education their pupils receive. For this reason, we as an inspectorate apply a governance-led approach. Given our dual remit as both a guarantor and a promotor of quality, in our assessment framework we draw a clear distinction between basic quality (what the governing body and the school have to do) and self-defined ambitions (what they want to do). With these, the starting point is the school plan. We operate transparently, with all quality information in the public domain. At the systemic level, meanwhile, we want to find solutions to problems common to multiple schools and so are quite prepared to set agendas in this respect. One objective of this Inspection Framework is to encourage more self-evaluation and peer evaluation of schools, and so we have tailored our approach accordingly.

More specifically, the framework is intended to support us in the following tasks.
- *Ensuring* that, at the very least, schools meet the basic quality standard.
- *Intervening*, at either school or governance level, to bring failing schools up to that standard as quickly as possible.
- *Encouraging* both schools and governing bodies to formulate their own ambitions and to pursue them actively.
- *Reporting* on the state of education at both institutional and systemic levels.
- *Highlighting* problems in the education system which need to be resolved.

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[2] Toezicht in transitie [Regulation in transition]. Submission to the Second Chamber of the States-General, 33905, no. 1, 2013-2014.

- *Communicating* with stakeholders about inspections and about performance, at both the institutional and the systemic level.

2.2 The inspection regime in brief

This Inspection Framework is constructed around the following fundamental principles.

2.2.1 Basic quality is guaranteed

Society expects its schoolchildren to receive an adequate education. We call this basic quality of educational provision. Its core criterion is that schools and their governing bodies comply with the statutory requirements for that quality and its assurance, as well as their financial management, as set out in the assessment framework.

In upholding this standard under our remit as the guarantor of educational quality, it is important that we properly understand both risks to it at the school level and the financial continuity of governing bodies. We therefore monitor both on a constant basis, conducting a performance analysis at least once a year.

In addition, we undertake quadrennial inspections of all governing bodies and at least some of their schools. This exercise tells us whether the governors are paying sufficient attention to the quality of educational provision and to financial management. If an analysis or inspection reveals that a school is failing to meet the basic quality criteria, we initiate interventions designed to ensure that the governing body corrects the situation within an acceptable period. The same applies to shortcomings at the governance level.

Our annual working plan states which specific statutory requirements we intend to examine, in one or more sectors, as part of our regime of systemic inspections (see chapter 10).

2.2.2 Improvement is encouraged: self-defined quality factors

We are strict where necessary, but encouraging where possible. When schools and their governing bodies are not meeting the basic quality standard, we keep our finger on the pulse. In particular, we check whether there is a culture of improvement: a collective effort not only to bring the quality of educational provision up to an adequate level, but also to keep improving in the long term. If such a culture is present, there is scope for remediation and we do all we can to promote it. This is reflected in our way of working. First, as well as judging a school as "Adequate" – meaning that it fulfils the statutory requirements – we can also rate it "Good". This assessment takes into account quality factors defined by the institution itself, above and beyond those enshrined in law. On the other side of the coin, failure to achieve self-defined goals results not in the judgement "Inadequate" but in the assessment "Could do better". In this way we hold up a mirror, in which the school and its governing body see a reflection of its progress towards its own objectives. This encourages them to pursue improvements effectively, but in their own way and by their own means.

Our role as a promotor of quality is also noticeable in the style of our interactions with schools and their governors. We allow them to present their own visions and ambitions, and to explain how they are translating these into practice in the classroom. The dialogue thus centres on their self-defined quality factors (a number of possible topics in this respect can be found in the assessment framework). Once our inspection is over, we organize so-called feedback meetings. These help schools and governors understand how we arrived at our conclusions in their particular case, and provide them with specific pointers for improvement. If the statutory requirements are not being met in any way, we of course state that in our reports. But the same also goes for any good practices we come across. This ensures that we present a balanced picture of a school's quality, as found in our inspection.

Excellent schools

A school can also be rated as "Excellent". Such schools stand out from those classified as "Good" because they shine in some specific area, such as a particularly interesting and motivational curriculum or a distinctive approach to a particular group of pupils. Excellent schools deserve as much scope as possible to achieve their own vision and ambitions. When a school is being considered for this rating, the final decision on it is taken by an independent assessment panel [3].

2.2.3 *Regulation is straightforward and bespoke*

Schools and their governing bodies organize their educational provision in the way they think best serves their pupil population by ensuring its continuing intellectual development. As an inspectorate, we are observing increasing diversity in didactic and organizational approaches to schooling, including more and more experimental forms, as well as a rise in the number of combined governing bodies (responsible for schools of more than one type). For this reason, we have compiled common and largely identical assessment frameworks for the primary (PO), secondary (SO), special education (SO/VSO) and vocational further education (MBO) sectors, applicable to the very wide range of institutions we find ourselves dealing with in practice. This enables us to keep their regulation straightforward, even when the governing body is subject to multiple sectoral statutes. Our inspections are organized in such a way that they produce meaningful outcomes, and we structure our activities accordingly.

The bespoke approach we aspire to is not only about tailoring our work to the organization of educational provision, but also about the governing body's accountability for its quality. In this respect, our primary source is the school plan.

2.2.4 *Responsibility rests with the governing body*

A school's governing body is responsible for the quality and continuity of the education it provides. Every such body has its own process for maintaining and improving that provision, which we take as our starting point in regulating it.

In addition to our annual performance analysis, once every four years we conduct an inspection of the governing body to examine its quality assurance and financial management. First and foremost, we look at whether it has a good overview of the quality of the education it is providing, is implementing any necessary improvements

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[3] For more information about the Excellent Schools Procedure, see the Inspectorate's website.

and has its finances in order. This quadrennial inspection process includes so-called verification inspections of selected schools, to check educational quality and financial management at that level. We also inspect schools identified as "risk-affected" and, at the request of the governing body, those it believes rate as "good" (see 5.2.4).

The school plans of the establishments to be inspected should provide us with a description of their educational policy, their staffing policy and their quality assurance system. We conduct our inspections with this information in mind. As well as judging whether the school plan fulfils the statutory requirements, we may also report our findings concerning its implementation, particularly in respect of objectives the school has set itself.

The better the guidance and guarantee processes put in place by schools and their governing bodies, the more reliable the information they provide about the quality of their education is likely to be. And the better the education itself will be. When a school is governed well, society can be assured that it is upholding quality. But in cases where the basic quality standard is not being met and the governing body appears incapable of rectifying the situation, we adjust our regulatory regime accordingly. We describe this approach as "appropriate regulation": a lighter touch where possible, a heavier one where necessary.

3   THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

In this chapter we describe the assessment framework. After a summary of the statutory tasks of primary education (3.1), we explain the structure of the framework (3.2). We then present the complete assessment framework for the primary education sector (3.3), before ending with details of additional statutory requirements (3.4).

3.1   Statutory tasks of primary education

Section 2 of the Primary Education Act (Wet op het primair onderwijs, WPO) defines the sector's task as twofold.
•   Providing education to pupils from the age of four years.
•   Preparing pupils for their subsequent education.

The governing body sets out its approach to these tasks in the school plan (Section 12, WPO).

The WPO also imposes a number of obligations on a school's governing body. In particular, it must ensure pupils' social, psychological and physical safety (Section 4c) and must organize its educational provision in such a way that they can undergo an unimpeded process of intellectual development. Moreover, this provision must be adapted to suit their progress (Section 8-1), that progress must be tested (Sections 8-4, 8-6, 8-7 and 9b), the provision must comply with defined core objectives and reference standards (Section 9b) and the pupils must achieve minimum learning outcomes in the core teaching subjects (Sections 10 and 10a).

In addition, the school's governing body is required to maintain the quality of its educational provision by operating a system of quality assurance (Sections 10 and 12-4) and to be accountable to its stakeholders (Sections 13, 17a-c and 171, as well as the School Councils Act). Finally, the governing body must spend its state maintenance funding effectively and lawfully (Section 148, and also Section 34a, WPO Maintenance Funding Order).

Collectively, these statutory requirements form the primary basis of the assessment framework.

3.2   Structure of the assessment framework

The assessment framework covers five quality areas: (i) educational process; (ii) school climate; (iii) learning outcomes; (iv) quality assurance and ambition; and (v) financial management. This breakdown allows us to answer three fundamental questions about the schooling pupils are receiving: (a) are they learning enough (learning outcomes)?; (b) are they being taught well (educational process)?; and (c) are they safe (school climate)? Together, our findings in these three areas reveal the overall standard of education the school is providing in the classroom. The other two areas, quality assurance (coupled with ambition) and financial management, reflect quality of educational provision – by which we mean the school's aggregate

performance in these domains – and its continuity. We define the overall quality of a school's educational provision as the aggregate of its performance in all these areas.

Each standard within the quality domain is operationalized, based on the relevant statutory requirements. But there is also room for dialogue about those quality factors displayed or aspired to by the governing body, which we classify using a non-exhaustive list of topics. Moreover, we consider these self-defined factors in judging whether a school is rated as "Good" (see chapter 4). In addition, we check whether the school is achieving its own ambitions and, by empirical standards, delivering good education.

Specific versions of the assessment framework

Specific legislation and regulations pertaining to other forms of educational provision listed in 1.1, aside from primary education, are translated into separate assessment frameworks. A list of these, together with the relevant statutory provisions, is provided in chapter 11. To ensure that the picture is complete, the full frameworks can be found in the appendices.

The structure of the assessment framework for primary education is as follows [4].

QUALITY AREAS AND STANDARDS

OP	EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
OP1	Provision
OP2	Development perspectives
OP3	Didactics
OP4	Additional support
OP6	Cooperation
OP8	Testing and progression
SK	**SCHOOL CLIMATE**
SK1	Safety
SK2	Teaching climate
OR	**LEARNING OUTCOMES**
OR1	Results
OR2	Social abilities
OR3	Subsequent achievement
KA	**QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION**
KA1	Quality assurance
KA2	Quality culture
KA3	Accountability and dialogue
FB	**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**
FB1	Continuity
FB2	Efficiency
FB3	Legitimacy

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[4] As far as possible, the assessment frameworks for all sectors are identical. The same two-letter codes for the quality areas are used in all of them. The numbering schemes for the standards do not always match, however, since the sectors differ in their manner of compliance in each quality area and so the number of applicable standards in an area may also differ between them.

3.3 Quality areas and standards

Each quality area in the assessment framework for primary education comprises a number of standards, with seventeen in total. In the descriptions of these below, the red fields indicate what we mean by basic quality: what the school and its governing body must achieve. In the green fields we mention a number of possible topics for the school's own ambitions and objectives: what it and its governing body might want to achieve. Finally, in order to substantiate our interpretation of the basic quality criterion, we summarize the statutory requirements applicable to the standard in question.

Educational process

EDUCATIONAL PROCESS (OP)
OP1. Provision The education provided prepares pupils for their subsequent education and for society.
Basic quality The school provides a broad education based on the core objectives, in line with the reference standards for literacy and numeracy and tailored to all pupils' current and target abilities. This provision further acknowledges that pupils are growing up in a pluriform society. It therefore encourages active citizenship and social integration, as well as knowledge of and interaction with peers from a variety of cultural and social backgrounds. In particular, it fosters the basic values of a democratic society. Moreover, the provision is tailored to pupils' abilities when they first enter school, is adapted to the learning needs of the pupil population and prepares them for the education they will receive subsequently. Throughout pupils' primary school years, the unfolding curriculum is taught in a balanced and coherent manner. The school describes its educational provision and objectives in the school plan.
Self-defined quality factors What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding? Possible factors: • future-oriented provision; • provision with a focus on acquiring learning strategies; • an attractive, challenging learning environment.
Summary of statutory requirements The school formulates the objectives of its educational activities in the school plan (Section 12-2, WPO). The law states that the educational curriculum should focus on emotional, intellectual and creative development and on the acquisition of essential knowledge and necessary social, cultural and physical skills (Sections 8-2, 9-1 and 9-2, WPO). The subjects to be taught and their curricula are set out in the form of core objectives and reference standards (Sections 9-1, 9-2, 9-9 and 9-11, WPO), which also encompass the broad personal and intellectual development relevant to growing up in a pluriform society, to fostering active citizenship and social integration and to knowing about and interacting with peers from a

variety of cultural and social backgrounds (Section 8-3, WPO).

The curriculum should be tailored to pupils' different learning needs and be taught in a balanced and coherent manner over their school years (Section 8-1, WPO). This also means that the school's educational provision should address deficiencies of all kinds, and in particular insufficient command of the Dutch language, in an evident and structured manner (Section 8-11, WPO). The school prepares its pupils to progress into the next phase of their education (Section 2, WPO). From the requirement that pupils' progress be unimpeded, it follows automatically that the school should structure and phase its curricula in a logical fashion, progressively pursuing standards appropriate to the pupil's age at all times.

The school plan should detail how it intends to fulfil its statutory tasks in respect of starting positions, objectives and the curriculum (Section 12-2a, WPO), including its educational targets and those concerning the structure of its provision.

OP2. Development perspectives
The school monitors its pupils' development effectively enough that they are able to progress unimpeded.

Basic quality
From the moment they enter the school, it systematically collects information about pupils' knowledge and skills using a suitable monitoring system. In the case of literacy and numeracy, this is done through reliable, valid tests which also provide an indication of the reference standards achieved. Teachers compare this information with developmental expectations, thus enabling them to tailor their teaching to the learning needs of groups and individuals alike. If pupils do not appear to make sufficient progress, the school analyses where their development is stagnating and why that might be. It then decides how to tackle any deficiencies found.

Self-defined quality factors
What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?
Possible factors:
- systematic monitoring of pupils in various developmental and other areas;
- systematic monitoring of the development of young children.

Summary of statutory requirements
The school has described how it tailors its educational provision to pupil development, including the use of a monitoring system, in the school plan (Section 12-4a, WPO).

The law requires that such a system be used in tracking pupils' knowledge and skills, and that in the case of literacy and numeracy this be done by using standardized tests (Sections 8-1, 8-6 and 8-8, WPO). This ensures that the school really is able to foster unimpeded progress and that its educational provision suits different pupils' learning needs, not least if monitoring reveals that their development is stagnating. In such cases, the school looks for possible reasons so that it can adjust its teaching accordingly (Sections 8-1, 8-4 and 8-11, WPO).

OP3. Didactics
The teachers' didactic activities enable pupils to learn and develop.

Basic quality
The teachers plan and structure their activities using the information available to them about their pupils. They ensure that the didactic level of their lessons is suited to pupils' intended learning outcomes. The syllabus is structured logically, both within individual lessons and over series of lessons.

The teachers create a learning climate in which pupils are active and engaged. With the help of appropriate assignments and clear explanations, they are able to transfer

knowledge effectively to each pupil. They tailor instructions, assignments, classroom time and play supervision to the needs of groups and individual pupils alike, in such a way that – depending on those needs – these activities are both supportive and challenging.

Self-defined quality factors
What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?
Possible factors:
- high pupil expectations;
- feedback to pupils;
- efficient use of classroom time.

Summary of statutory requirements
The school has set out its teaching and didactic policy in the school plan (Sections 12-2 and 12-3, WPO) and implementation of that policy is evident in teachers' day-to-day work.
The law requires that pupils receive an education tailored to their personal development process (Section 8-1, WPO). To achieve this so-called "unimpeded development", it is essential that the school's didactic approach corresponds with the pupil's current developmental level. From this requirement, it follows that a number of conditions must be met:
- the learning climate enables the acquisition of knowledge (that is, it is supportive and challenging);
- explanations are clear; and,
- lessons are properly structured.

As necessary, lessons should also incorporate real opportunities to tailor the material being taught to pupils' abilities. This is essential to keep them engaged with that material, so that their development really is unimpeded. At the same time, the material should be appropriate for the intended learning outcomes of both the group and the school (Section 2, WPO).

OP4. Additional support
Pupils who need it receive additional teaching, support and supervision.

Basic quality
The school offers those pupils at a different stage of development from the majority of their peers an adapted curriculum, support and/or supervision appropriate to their particular educational needs and designed to ensure their unimpeded development. The school regularly evaluates the effectiveness of this provision, and if necessary adjusts its interventions.
The school has, in the form of a support profile, set out its vision of these activities and described the facilities it is able to offer over and above the level of basic support provided by the regional alliance for tailored education. For those pupils requiring additional support, the school has compiled a development plan defining how its provision is tailored to their needs.

Self-defined quality factors
What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?
Possible answer:
- involving pupils in setting their own development goals.

Summary of statutory requirements
The law requires that, for pupils unable to achieve the intended learning outcomes due to any specific hindering factor(s), the school must adapt its provision accordingly, evaluate the results thereof on a regular basis and make adjustments as necessary (Sections 8-1

and 8-11, WPO, with regard to pupils without additional support; Sections 8-4, 8-8 and 40a, WPO, for those with that support).

The school's support profile describes the facilities in place for pupils in need of additional support (Section 1, WPO). This profile is established at least once every four years, by the competent authority (Section 8-5, WPO). The school plan sets out how the support profile is incorporated into the school's overall educational policy. Once this has been established, the competent authority consults parents with a view to reaching agreement on whether their child needs additional support (Section 40-3, WPO). It is a statutory requirement that development plans be compiled for the pupils concerned and that these be evaluated together with their parents at least once a year (Section 40a, WPO). Such a plan includes information about the additional support the pupil is to receive, the form of secondary education they are expected to progress into and both the hindering factors and any favourable ones affecting their education (Section 40a, WPO, and Section 34.7, WPO Maintenance Funding Order).

OP6. Cooperation
The school works with relevant partners in providing its pupils with their education.

Basic quality
The school works with nurseries, preschools and other institutions previously attended by its pupils, in particular to acquire information from them about those with learning deficiencies in order to ensure continuity in the education they receive. When pupils leave the school, either to progress into the next phase of their education or when changing primary school, it informs both their parents and their new school about their development thus far.

In the case of pupils in need of additional support, the school works with the regional alliance for tailored education and, if necessary, with partners in the care sector. The school also implements agreements made under the local education agenda and in respect of early-years education.

Self-defined quality factors
What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?
Possible factors:
- parental involvement;
- cooperation with chain partners.

Summary of statutory requirements
For children with learning deficiencies, the school works with preschool education providers, in line with agreements reached with them, to facilitate the transfer of the information needed to guarantee continuity of education (Section 167, WPO). In addition, it implements agreements made with the local authority about the learning outcomes of early-years education (Section 167, WPO) and those arising out of the local education agenda (Section 167a, WPO). In the case of pupils in need of additional support, the school works with the regional alliance for tailored education and with partners in the care sector (Section 8-4, WPO).

To ensure unimpeded development, the law requires the school to supply the subsequent education provider with information when a pupil changes school or progresses into the next phase of their education (Sections 42-1 and 43, WPO). Such a need also arises out of the statutory requirement that a pupil's education be tailored to their development (Section 8-1, WPO).

OP8. Testing and progression
Testing and then guiding pupils into the next phase of their education are conducted with care.

Basic quality

Except where exempt by law, all pupils sit a final test during Year 8 (the final year of primary school).

Throughout their primary school career, pupils are tested regularly and their results recorded in the pupil monitoring system. At the very least, the subjects tested include literacy and numeracy. The teachers conduct the tests in accordance with the prescribed regulations.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress.

All pupils are issued with a recommendation for the next phase of their education, compiled by the school using a sound procedure.

Self-defined quality factors

What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?

Possible factors:

- testing all subjects and developmental areas;
- ensuring a sound recommendation procedure.

Summary of statutory requirements

The school keeps parents informed of their child's progress (Section 11, WPO). The law requires that, except where exempt by law, all pupils sit a final test at the end of their primary school career and that this be conducted in accordance with the prescribed regulations (Section 9b, WPO). It also requires that pupils be tested regularly and their results recorded in a pupil monitoring system compliant with certain quality standards (Sections 8-6 and 8-7, WPO). And that a sound procedure be followed in compiling recommendations for the next phase of a pupil's education (Section 42-2, WPO).

School climate

SCHOOL CLIMATE (SK)

SK1. Safety

The school's leadership and teachers provide pupils with a safe learning environment.

Basic quality

The school assures its pupils' social, psychological and physical safety on and around its premises throughout the school day. Amongst other things, this is evident from the pupils' own feeling of safety and well-being, which is measured by the school at least once a year.

The school operates a safety policy, described in either the school plan or a separate document, designed to prevent, manage, record and evaluate any incidents. Should the findings of its monitoring procedures so dictate, the school takes adequate measures to improve the situation. The school has a contact person for cases of bullying and to coordinate its anti-bullying policy. The school's leadership and teachers make every effort to prevent bullying, aggression and violence in any form, and act quickly and decisively against these phenomena. Verbal and other expressions by both pupils and staff are in line with the basic values of a democratic society.

Self-defined quality factors

What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?

Possible factors:

- social media policy;
- preventive measures;

- coordination with relevant outside actors.

Summary of statutory requirements

The law requires that, at the very least, the school compile and actually implement a safety policy covering social, psychological and physical factors, and that this include a cohesive set of measures to prevent and deal with incidents (Sections 4c and 12-2, WPO).

To achieve this, it is essential that teachers create a safe space in which clear rules apply and it is possible to learn appropriate social conduct (Sections 4c and 8-2, WPO).

The law states that the school must measure the safety of its pupils on an annual basis, using a standardized tool able to provide a representative and current picture of the situation (Section 4c-1b, WPO). A school can only operate an effective policy in this area (Section 4c-1a, WPO) if it properly understands both the actual and the perceived safety and well-being of its pupils.

For parents and pupils alike, it is important that there be an accessible point of contact in the event of bullying incidents. For this reason, the law (Section 4c-1c, WPO) requires that every school entrust the following tasks to a nominated person:

- coordinating its anti-bullying policy; and,
- serving as point of contact for bullying-related matters.

The school's educational provision must foster active citizenship and social integration (Sections 8-3b and 9-9, WPO, in combination with core objective 37). To this end, verbal and other expressions by teachers should reflect the basic values of a democratic society and they should intervene in the event that pupils make statements at odds with those values.

SK2. Teaching climate

The school has a supportive teaching climate.

Basic quality

No statutory requirements.

Self-defined quality factors

What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?

Possible factors:

- codes of conduct for pupils and teachers;
- pupil involvement in creating a positive school climate.
- teachers act as role models;
- practical exercises to help pupils develop social abilities;
- layout of the school premises.

Learning outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOMES (OR)

OR1. Results

At the very least, the school achieves learning outcomes in line with the prerequisite standards.

Basic quality

The school's cognitive learning outcomes correspond with those expected of it, given the characteristics of the pupil population. In particular, this means that its outcomes in the core subjects literacy and numeracy comply with the prerequisite standard.

Self-defined quality factors

What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?

Possible factors:

- expectations concerning learning outcomes are based on the characteristics of the pupil population;
- intellectual development achieved by pupils;
- goals in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.

Summary of statutory requirements

The law states that schools must achieve adequate learning outcomes (Section 10a, WPO), meaning that these outcomes equal or exceed the set standard as established in the Regulations for Primary Education Learning Outcomes (Regeling leerresultaten PO) and adjusted to take into account the composition of the pupil population.

OR2. Social abilities

The school's pupils acquire social abilities at least in line with the defined goals.

Basic quality

No statutory requirements.

Self-defined quality factors

What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?

Possible factors:

- the goals the school aspires to in terms of its pupils' social abilities;
- achieving the goals set.

OR3. Subsequent achievement

Pupils' next destination after leaving the school is known and matches or exceeds expectations.

Basic quality

No statutory requirements.

Self-defined quality factors

What task has the school set itself in its school plan, how is it going about achieving this and is it succeeding?

Possible factors:

- pupils' achievements after leaving the school;
- how much subsequent achievement is a product of the school's recommendations.

Quality assurance and ambition

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (KA)

KA1. Quality assurance

The school and its governing body have put in place a system to assure quality and actually use this to improve the quality of their educational provision.

Basic quality

The governing body has provided its schools with a quality assurance system. Described in detail in each establishment's school plan, this allows the governors to monitor and improve the quality of the didactic process and its outcomes.

Both the governing body and the school have a true insight into the quality of their educational provision. Measurable goals have been formulated, and their fulfilment is monitored on a regular basis. The causes of any shortcomings in quality are analysed and

improvements, if necessary, are implemented effectively. Proper division of accountability between governors and schools makes it possible to operate a functional quality assurance system.

Self-defined quality factors
Is any additional policy to maintain and improve quality in place, how is it being implemented and is it effective?
Possible factors:
- ambitious goals appropriate to the school's public duty;
- stakeholder and independent expert involvement in evaluations;
- strategic financial planning.

Summary of statutory requirements
Central to efforts to improve the quality of educational provision and accountability for it are the school plan and the school's duty of care in this respect. The competent authority is expected to ensure the quality of the education provided by a school, by which is meant that the school at least complies with the statutory requirements and operates the quality assurance system (Section 10, WPO).
The law requires that that system provide for pupils' unimpeded development and enable the school to tailor their progress in this respect (Sections 12-4 and 10, WPO). It must also establish when improvements are required. The competent authority should describe how it fulfils these statutory requirements in the school plan, with the proper functioning of the quality cycle crucial to this task. It is the school's statutory duty to comply with legal requirements pertaining to the content, basic principles and objectives of educational provision, which encompass the curriculum, the didactic process and testing methods. These requirements assume that quality is assured in a cyclical, systematic and planned manner, with the intention of maintaining standards achieved.
In addition, they imply that the competent authority and the school need to organize their quality assurance activities in a manner which provides them with a true insight into their own level of quality and into any improvements needed.

KA2. Quality culture
The governing body and its schools have a professional quality culture and operate transparently and conscientiously.

Basic quality
The governing body observes the code of good governance and answers for any deviations from it. This approach results in a transparent and conscientious institutional culture. From their own professional perspective, everyone contributes towards improving the quality of education.
The governing body ensures that all its schools are staffed by competent, qualified personnel and enables employees to maintain their professional status. The school leadership and staff work together to improve their professional standards on an ongoing basis, with teachers taking into account the qualifications and abilities required for their positions as well as the results achieved by their pupils. They are provided will all necessary means to do this, the arrangements in this respect being described clearly in the school plan.

Self-defined quality factors
Is any additional policy concerning professionalization and the culture of quality in place, how is it being implemented and is it effective?
Possible factors:
- educational leadership;
- support for the school's vision and ambitions;
- teacher "ownership" of the educational and didactic concept.

Summary of statutory requirements

Compliance with the statutory requirements concerning quality assurance demands a collective effort on the part of the school community, based on a culture of improvement and professionalism. This in turn necessitates good educational leadership, effective division of responsibilities, a focus on results and accountability on the part of the school's personnel. Integrity, care and awareness of the effects of one's actions are all generally accepted basic quality principles associated with professional conduct in education and are therefore reflected in the code of good governance the competent authority is expected to enforce, with any deviations from it being accounted for in the annual report (Section 171-1, WPO). The establishment of a management statute describing the division of responsibilities in the school's governance is mandatory (Section 31, WPO).

Organizing the school's educational provision in such a way that pupils' development is unimpeded, tailoring that provision to their progress (Section 8-1, WPO) and implementing improvements arising out of the quality assurance system (Sections 10 and 12-4, WPO) are only possible with a consistently professional workforce. The school plan must therefore describe its personnel policy (Section 12-3, WPO), including the manner in which staff are enabled to maintain and extend their professional abilities and how this joint responsibility of the leadership and the team is incorporated into general school policy. Naturally, the competent authority must actually allow staff to do this, too – a requirement arising out of the obligation to maintain records of their professional abilities (Section 32b, WPO). After all, that would not be possible if those abilities were not maintained.

KA3. Accountability and dialogue

The governing body and the school are accountable internally and externally, in an accessible and reliable manner, for their objectives and their results. And they engage in an active dialogue in this matter.

Basic quality

The governing body and the schools are subject to checks and balances, at the very least by involving the internal regulator and the staff or parent-staff council in policymaking and decision-making. At least once a year, the governors and schools report, in an accessible manner, on their objectives and the results they have achieved. The governing body is accountable to the internal regulator, and both it and the schools are accountable to their stakeholders and the government.

Self-defined quality factors

Is any additional policy concerning the manner of accountability in place, how is it being implemented and is it effective?

Possible factors:

• An active external dialogue about ambitions and results.

Summary of statutory requirements

The law requires the governing body to provide internal as well as external accountability in the form of its annual report (Section 171, WPO). The school's prospectus should clearly state its educational objectives and what results it has achieved through its didactic process (Section 13, WPO), as well as reporting findings in respect of the quality assurance system and measures taken as a result of them. [Section 13-1l, WPO]. In addition, the governing body is accountable to the staff or parent-staff council for its decisions and the policy it is pursuing (Sections 8-10 to 8-13, WMS).

Financial management

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (FB)

FB1. Continuity 5
The governing body is financially healthy and able to meet its short and long-term financial obligations.

Basic quality
To ensure continuity, it is important that the governing body be aware of its current financial position and of likely developments over the next three years, and has formulated a policy accordingly. The continuity section of the annual report should describe these expected developments and their financial repercussions. The governing body discusses this matter with the internal regulator and the staff council, and if necessary takes corrective action. It accounts for all these activities in the annual report.

Self-defined quality factors
Is any additional policy concerning the continuity of the governing body and the schools in place, how is it being implemented and is it effective?
Possible factors:
- how the governing body safeguards the long-term survival of the institution;
- the financial position of the governing body and its ability to meet all its short and long-term obligations;
- analysis of key figures and their comparison with alert values.

Summary of statutory requirements
The requirement that the competent authority include a continuity section in its annual report derives from Article 4-4 of the National Directive for Annual Reports in Education (Richtlijn Jaarverslag Onderwijs, RJO).
The sectoral statutes require that the internal regulator approve the annual report, including the continuity section, and account for this in the report itself (Sections 17c-1a and 1e, WPO).
The internal regulator's mandatory duty to perform the tasks and exercise the powers necessary in order to undertake sound regulation can be satisfied by means of "regular discourse" enshrined in institutional policy (Section 17c-2, WPO).
Each annual report, including the continuity section, must be submitted to the staff council for its consideration (Article 8-2b, WMS). Between reports, the council should be notified of any developments likely to affect the continuity of the school or institution. It may also take the initiative to discuss such developments with the governing body.

FB2. Efficiency
The governing body makes efficient and effective use of its maintenance funding.

Basic quality

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5 With respect to statutory requirements for schools, the Inspectorate believes that those related to financial continuity would best be regulated in the sectoral statutes. A proposal to this end might eventually result in expansion or modification of the factors described under "basic quality". Until then, however, the items concerned will continue to fall under "self-defined quality factors" and as such will be regulated by the Inspectorate as part of its quality-promotion remit. In the meantime, financial continuity will only be judged "Inadequate" if a governing body fails to comply with the "basic quality" standard as currently worded.

> The governing body, in its capacity as competent authority, spends government maintenance funding in such a way that this contributes effectively towards achieving the ambitions set out in the school plan for good educational provision and the development of all pupils.

Summary of statutory requirements
In the event that any of the school's maintenance funding is spent inappropriately, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science is empowered to correct it (Section 34a, WPO Maintenance Funding Order). As a consequence of these powers, the competent authority is required to ensure that the funds in question are spent in an efficient and effective way, not only in the sense that unnecessary expenditure is avoided but also by making sure that funds do not go unspent without good reason.

FB3. Legitimacy
The governing body secures and spends its maintenance funding in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

Basic quality
The governing body possesses the necessary expertise and acts in a transparent and conscientious manner. It accounts fully for its income and expenditure, with these records audited by a qualified accountant appointed by the internal regulator and operating in accordance with the professional standards of the NBA [6] as well as the special Educational Accountancy Protocol (Onderwijsaccountantprotocol) compiled by the Inspectorate.

Summary of statutory requirements
The sectoral statutes contain various provisions governing how maintenance funding is secured and spent. The requirement that the governing body ensure a well-managed school (Section 17a, WPO) implies that it must be expert in its task. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science is empowered to impose sanctions if a governor is found to have engaged in mismanagement (Section 163b, WPO).
The annual report must be transparent and present a truthful picture of the situation. Volume 2, chapter 9 of the Dutch Civil Code (Burgerlijk Wetboek, BW), Article 3a, RJO, and the Educational Accountancy Protocol contain numerous rules to ensure this. An auditor's opinion is mandatory under Article 2, RJO, and Section 2:393, BW.

3.4 Other statutory requirements

The assessment framework does not contain all the requirements imposed under every education law and sectoral statute. For example, there is no mention of the Certificate of Good Conduct or (Verklaring omtrent gedrag, VOG) or the voluntary parental contribution. This is because they are not associated with a standard part of the framework. We classify them as "other statutory requirements".

Our annual working plan, published on the Inspectorate website, states which themes and specific requirements we are currently examining as part of our regime of systemic inspections (see chapter 10). Failure to fulfil one or more of these "other statutory requirements" will not in itself result in a school's quality being judged as "Inadequate" or its teaching as "Very weak", but it or its governing body will be expected to rectify the situation within a deadline set by the Inspectorate and included in our report.

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[6] Royal Netherlands Institute of Chartered Accountants (Nederlandse beroepsorganisatie van accountants).

4   BENCHMARKING AND JUDGEMENTS

In this chapter we describe how, using the assessment framework from chapter 3, we arrive at judgements concerning the quality of schools' educational provision and of quality assurance and financial management by their governing bodies.

4.1   Judgements at three levels

The quality of educational provision, quality assurance and financial management are judged primarily at the level of individual standards. In 4.2 we describe the benchmarks applicable to statutory requirements and in 4.3 the guidelines for the assessment of self-defined quality factors.

As explained in the subsequent sections, the aggregate outcomes for the individual standards produce judgements for each quality area (4.4) and for the school as a whole (4.5).

4.2   Standard-level benchmarks

Our defined standards for schools and their governing bodies include both statutory requirements and self-defined quality factors. In determining whether performance in respect of a particular standard is judged "Adequate" or "Inadequate", we consider only compliance with the statutory requirements. The rating "Good", however, also takes into account fulfilment of the self-defined factors.

Judgement/rating	Benchmark (norm) for standards with statutory requirements
Good	The school complies with all the statutory requirements for the standard in question, and also convincingly fulfils its own self-defined quality factors.
Adequate (basic quality)	The school complies with all the statutory requirements for the standard in question.
Inadequate	The school does not comply with the statutory requirements for the standard in question.

4.3   Assessment of self-defined quality factors

Self-defined quality factors are assessed in one of two ways, depending on the standard concerned.
1.   In the case of those standards with statutory requirements, assessment of the self-defined quality factors determines whether the rating "Good" is awarded (see 4.2).
2.   In primary education, the standards "Teaching climate", "Social abilities" and "Subsequent achievement" have no basis in law and hence no statutory requirements. If the school sets itself no aspirations or targets in any of these areas, or fails to achieve those it has set itself, this results in the rating "Could do better" rather than the statutory judgement "Inadequate".

If the school does set itself ambitious targets, and achieves them convincingly, it is rated "Good" in respect of the standard concerned.

Rating	Guideline for assessment of self-defined quality factors
Good	The school convincingly fulfils its own self-defined quality factors.
Adequate	The school fulfils its own self-defined quality factors.
Could do better	The school fails to fulfil its own self-defined quality factors or has not defined them.

4.4 Quality-area benchmarks

In the quality areas "Educational process", "School climate" and "Learning outcomes", we have defined so-called "core standards". Weighted more heavily than the others in judging the school's performance in their respective areas as "Adequate" or "Inadequate", they are "Development perspectives" and "Didactics" (Educational process), "Safety" (School climate) and "Results" (Learning outcomes). Bearing this in mind, the aggregate judgements at individual standard level result in the following outcomes for each quality area.

Educational process	Benchmark (norm)
Good	All six standards in this area Adequate or better, with at least two Good.
Adequate	Both "Development perspectives" and "Didactics" Adequate or better, and no more than one of the others Inadequate.
Inadequate	Either "Development perspectives" or "Didactics" Inadequate, or two of the other standards Inadequate.

School climate	Benchmark (norm)
Good	Both standards in this area Adequate or better, with at least one Good.
Adequate	"Safety" Adequate or better.
Inadequate	"Safety" Inadequate.

Learning outcomes	Benchmark (norm)
Good	All three standards in this area Adequate or better, with at least one Good.
Adequate	"Learning outcomes" Adequate or better.
Inadequate	"Learning outcomes" Inadequate.

Quality assurance and ambition	Benchmark (norm)
Good	All three standards in this area Adequate or better, with "Quality culture" Good.
Adequate	All three standards Adequate or better.

Inadequate	One or more standards Inadequate.
Financial management[7]	**Benchmark (norm)**
Adequate	All three standards in this area Adequate or better.
Inadequate	One or more standards Inadequate.

4.5 School-level benchmarks

Our judgement or assessment of a school's quality is based on the following benchmarks.

Judgement/ rating	Benchmark (norm)
Good	All standards Adequate or better, with "Quality culture" plus at least two standards in the quality area(s) "Educational process" and/or "School climate" Good.
Adequate (basic quality)	"Development perspectives", "Didactics", "Safety" and "Results" all Adequate or better, and no more than one standard in the quality area "Educational process" Inadequate.
Inadequate	Any of "Development perspectives", "Didactics", "Safety" or "Results" Inadequate, or two or more standards in the quality area(s) "Learning outcomes", "Educational process" and/or "School climate" Inadequate.
Very weak	"Results" plus any of "Development perspectives", "Didactics" or "Safety" Inadequate.

At the school level, we award the rating "Good" only if the governing body has requested us to undertake a voluntary inspection to that end. This can be done to coincide with the quadrennial inspection (see chapter 7).

4.5.1 Statutory benchmark for very weak education

The benchmark for the judgement "Very weak" is established in law [Section 10, WPO]. This states that a school's educational provision is deemed "Very weak" if its overall learning outcomes at the end of Year 7 or Year 8 are seriously and enduringly below the required standard, with these shortcomings attributable to a failure on the part of the competent authority to comply with one or more of the statutory criteria. Our interpretation of this legal benchmark for the assessment framework is given in the table above.

A governing body can lodge objections and appeals against the judgement "Very weak" (Section 20-6, WOT).

Benchmarking of unjudgeable results

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[7] For the standards "Legitimacy" and "Efficiency", the judgement "Inadequate" is based on objective findings.

The law [Section 10-5, WPO] states that, in the event that it is not possible to judge a school's learning outcomes using the rules in place, the quality of its educational provision will be deemed "Very weak" if it fails to comply with two or more of the statutory criteria and, as a result thereof, either does not provide pupils with the standard of safety at school required under Section 4c, WPO, or has not organized its provision in such a way that pupils enjoy both unimpeded development and an education adapted to suit their progress, as defined in Section 8-1, WPO.

Based on this definition, we apply the following benchmarks whenever we are unable to judge outcomes.

Benchmarks (norms) for unjudgeable outcomes in primary education	
Inadequate	Any of "Development perspectives", "Didactics", "Safety" or "Quality assurance" Inadequate, or two or more standards in the quality area "Educational process" Inadequate.
Very weak	Any two or more of "Development perspectives", "Didactics", "Safety" and "Quality assurance" Inadequate.

4.6 Governance-level benchmarks

At the governance level, we issue two judgements, in the quality areas "Quality assurance and ambition" and "Financial management" respectively. The benchmarks for these are as follows.

Judgement/ rating	Benchmark (norm): Quality assurance and ambition	Benchmark (norm): Financial management
Good	All three standards Adequate or better, with "Quality culture" Good.	Not applicable.
Adequate (basic quality)	All three standards Adequate or better.	All three standards Adequate or better.
Inadequate	Any standard Inadequate.	Any standard Inadequate.

Phased introduction of the "Quality assurance and ambition" standards

In our first round of quadrennial inspections, at governance level we will issue judgements on each of the three standards making up "Quality assurance and ambition" but not an overall verdict on this quality area. Our report will instead provide a subjective description of performance in it, based on those three judgements. Following subsequent quadrennial inspections, a judgement of "Quality assurance and ambition" will be issued.

In the "Financial management" quality area, the benchmark as described above will apply as soon as the new Inspection Framework takes effect.

4.7 Judgements and assessments

4.7.1 Compliance with statutory requirements

In reaching our judgements, we use the above benchmarks as guidelines. The key determining factor in our verdicts is the extent to which a school's educational practice reflects the essence and intent of the statutory requirements, in particular. The basic principle we apply is that those requirements must be met, standard by standard, in order for performance in each to be deemed "Adequate". We do not assess compliance with each individual requirement in itself, however, but in relation to the overall level of quality the standard seeks to assure. It is thus possible for a school to be judged "Adequate" in respect of a particular standard even though it does not yet comply strictly with all its constituent requirements, as long it is addressing the shortcomings positively and so is likely to rectify the situation relatively easily and quickly, whilst in the meantime the overall impact of its non-compliance is limited. The governing body is responsible for doing this, and is expected to notify the Inspectorate once the matter has indeed been rectified (see also 9.2.1).

4.7.2 Assessment of self-defined quality factors

Whilst we apply clear guidelines, based on the basic quality criteria, in determining whether performance on any given point is "Adequate" or "Inadequate", the terms of reference for the rating "Good" are not so well-defined. Obviously, all the statutory requirements must be met or exceeded. But on top of that we also look more particularly at the self-defined quality factors: can the school demonstrate convincingly that it is applying and achieving its own quality policy for the item in question and is it thus delivering good education by empirical standards? The school plan is our most important source of information here, but with greater room for interpretation the primary bases for our assessments are the governors' own ambitions and the choices the school makes.

4.7.3 Contextual factors

Contextual factors – essentially, the environment in which the school operates – can affect the quality of its educational provision and its financial continuity in either a positive or a negative way. Such factors may include the composition of the pupil population and workforce, premises, past mergers, organizational and governance developments and internal regulation. Our judgements always concern the quality of the education pupils are currently receiving, regardless of such outside influences. But whilst they do not affect our findings, contextual factors may play a part in designing any remedial interventions they give rise to. The effect of non-compliance with a particular statutory requirement can vary according to the group directly affected by it, and this is something we take into account when imposing any restorative measures. Depending on the contextual factors, for example, the preferred intervention might be more or less directive in nature. We discuss this further in chapter 9.

4.7.4 *Expert opinion*

An assessment framework combining a solid statutory basis with the more discretionary nature of self-defined quality factors makes great demands on our expertise. Within that framework, we use our own guidelines to judge the education pupils are receiving. Because of this approach, we consider our verdicts "expert opinions". By combining our expertise as a regulator with a thorough knowledge of the specific quality areas we are examining, we are in a position to reach comparable judgements in comparable situations. But we also want to be able to make differentiated judgements in differentiated situations.

Our judgements in respect of statutory requirements have a legal basis and are reached after consulting a variety of sources, including internal documents from the institution being inspected and conversations with its teachers, pupils, parents and representative bodies. Whenever we make a judgement, we offer the right of reply. We work in teams, with our final opinions reached by consensus between the inspectors concerned. At the reporting stage, the justifications for our findings are subject to peer review. Thanks to this way of working, we reach well-substantiated conclusions.

In assessing self-defined quality factors, our approach is similar although our role in this case is as a "critical friend". The initiative here lies with the school and its governing body, so we adapt our approach accordingly.

Whether judging or assessing, our first priority throughout the inspection process is to do proper justice to the quality of the educational provision we encounter. We have succeeded in doing this if the schools and governing bodies concerned consider our opinions fair.

5 QUADRIENNIAL INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS AND GOVERNING BODIES

In this chapter we describe the organization of the quadrennial inspection. This is conducted in line with the principles outlined in chapter 2 and using the assessment framework and benchmarks set out in chapters 3 and 4. The overall process has three phases: preparation (7.2), the inspection itself (7.3) and completion (7.4). But we begin here with the underlying research questions.

5.1 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of the quadrennial inspection is to find answers to the primary question below and its associated secondary questions.

Primary question

Is the school properly managing the quality of its educational provision and its finances?

Secondary questions

1. Has the governing body agreed objectives with its schools, does it have sufficient insight into the quality of the education they provide and is it endeavouring to improve that quality?
2. Does the governing body have a professional quality culture and does it operate transparently and conscientiously?
3. Does the governing body communicate actively about its own progress and achievements, and those of its schools?
4. Is the financial management sound?

In seeking the answers to these secondary questions, we focus on standards in the quality areas "Quality assurance and ambition" and "Financial management"

5.2 Preparation

5.2.1 Expert analysis of governor accountability

> **Purpose:** to gain an initial impression of quality assurance, the quality of educational provision and financial management.
> **Result:** expert analysis, as a basis for the governors' meeting.

Every inspection begins with an expert analysis of the information available to the inspectorate. We analyse the school plan (does it comply with the statutory criteria, and what ambitions does it set out?), the annual reports and other relevant documents, such as policy plans, as well as materials related to quality assessment and evaluation. Alongside these items, we also consider external and internal signals, inspection history, examination results and other key figures.

Data for the analysis may be collected on paper or electronically, on location or by gaining remote access to the school's systems. In exceptional cases, we may ask the governing body for additional documentation.

We check that our information concerning the institution is up to date and addresses our research questions (see 7.1), and hence covers the quality areas defined in the assessment framework.

The results of the expert analysis form the basis for the agenda of the initial governors' meeting.

5.2.2 Initial governors' meeting

> **Purpose:** to gain an initial impression of the current performance of both the governing body and its schools, and to outline the structure of the forthcoming inspection process.
> **Result:** agreements concerning the selection of schools for verification, quality and voluntary inspections (see 5.2).

At the initial meeting, we ask the governing body to present its analysis of its schools' performance and development. We then compare this with our own expert analysis to gain a first impression of the state of the institution's quality assurance and financial management.

Drawing on both our analysis and the input from the governing body, we also discuss which schools will in principle undergo verification inspections. If the expert analysis identifies one or more schools as "risk-affected", we will subject them to quality inspections. The governors can also request that we conduct a voluntary inspection of what they believe is a "good" school.

For a full description of these three types of inspection (verification, quality and voluntary), see 5.2.

The governing body notifies the selected schools that they are to be inspected, using information provided by us.

5.2.3 Inspection plan

> **Purpose:** to inform the governing body and the selected schools about the purpose, structure, content and scope of the forthcoming quadrennial inspection, with justification of the choices made.
> **Result:** an inspection plan compiled and adopted by the Inspectorate.

We translate the results of the expert analysis and the governors' meeting into an inspection plan. This is a clear, well-structured summary of the activities to be undertaken during the subsequent phases of the inspection process. In the case of verification inspections, it states what standards we want to verify and how we intend to do that. The same applies, mutatis mutandis, to quality and voluntary inspections (5.2.4). It also contains details of the standards we intend to examine as part of the process of systemic regulation (see chapter 10).

In planning and organizing our subsequent inspection activities, as far as reasonably

possible we wish to co-ordinate with the governing body of the schools concerned. It is therefore expected to check the inspection plan in terms of its organizational and logistical feasibility for the institution. Within reason, we will endeavour to make any adjustments deemed necessary.

Where a governing body is responsible for activities in more than one sector (both primary and secondary education), the plan also sets out which schools we intend to inspect in each sector.

5.2.4   *Presentation by schools*

> **Purpose:** to understand the school's image of itself.
> **Result:** the inspection team has as complete a picture as possible of the school's vision, ambitions, objectives and results.

As far as possible, we seek to appreciate the school's image of itself through the information it provides us with. In this respect, the school plan is particularly important to us. At the start of a verification or quality inspection process, we also offer schools the opportunity to deliver a presentation. This allows its staff team to let us know what they stand for. What is their vision? What are their ambitions? Their goals? What results have they achieved? What do they hope to achieve in the future? The form is free. We watch, listen and ask questions in an effort to obtain as much relevant information as we can for the purposes of the inspection. We also look at how that information relates to the school plan. The presentation is scheduled in consultation with the school.

5.3   The inspection proper

5.3.1   *School inspection*

> **Purpose:** to answer the primary and secondary questions from the inspection plan at school level.
> **Result:** preliminary judgements about the governing body's assurance of the actual quality of educational provision by the school and about compliance at school level with the standards being inspected.

The inspection, of whatever type it may be, is conducted in accordance with the inspection plan and our judgements are formed as per the assessment framework. Drawing on multiple sources and reaching a consensus are key principles in this process. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the inspection can be conducted as planned.

Quality and voluntary inspections always end with a round of feedback, revealing our findings and preliminary judgements.

5.3.2   *Governing body inspection*

> **Purpose:** to share our findings at the school level and to obtain additional information about quality assurance and financing in order to form judgements on those matters.
> **Result:** preliminary judgements concerning the status of quality assurance and financial management.

Based on our findings at the school level, we form preliminary judgements and then discuss these with the governing body to see how closely they reflect its view of the situation. If we have identified any risks, does it recognize them and how is it tackling them? Do our verifications confirm what the governors have told us? If necessary, the governing body can provide additional information at this stage.

5.4 Completion

5.4.1 Report

> **Purpose:** to record and justify our findings and judgements in such a way that both the governing body and the school(s) recognize themselves in the outcome of the inspection and so are motivated to make any necessary or recommended improvements.
> **Result:** draft report of the quadrennial inspection.

Having sufficiently discussed its preliminary findings and judgements, the inspection team compiles its draft report. Regardless of the type(s) of inspection conducted, this provides substantiated answers to the primary and secondary research questions, as well as the inspectors' judgements and assessments concerning the school(s) and details of any remedial action they deem necessary. The report is concise and is written for the governing body.

Once it has received the report, the governing body has the opportunity to correct any factual inaccuracies and to make additional comments in writing.

5.4.2 Feedback meeting

> **Purpose:** to ensure that our judgements and assessments are recognized and acknowledged.
> **Result:** broad support for our judgements and starting points for remedial actions and improvements.

We want our judgements and assessments to be meaningful for the school and its governing body, not only in the sense that they are recognized and acknowledged but also in such a way that they facilitate any necessary improvements. Based on our draft report, we therefore provide both the school and the governors with feedback about our findings.

Only in the case of quality inspections are feedback meetings held at school level, at its request. Feedback following verification inspections is at governance level.

The feedback meeting allows us to explain our judgements, if necessary referring to specific cases and/or answering direct questions. It is also an opportunity to share more information with the teaching staff and school leadership than we are able to provide in our reports. If self-defined quality factors are involved, we relate them to the school plan. The timing of any feedback meeting is decided in consultation with the school or its governors.

5.4.3   *Final governors' meeting*

> **Purpose:** to inform the governing body of the answers to our research questions, and to make any necessary agreements concerning remedial actions and improvements.
> **Result:** final inspection report.

At the final meeting we explain our conclusions and, if necessary, agree on remedial actions and improvements. In this respect we draw a distinction between what *has* to be done better (statutory requirements) and what *can* be done better (self-defined quality factors). We also mention what is being done well and make a link with the school plan. Depending on our findings with regard to quality assurance by the governing body, we may also make agreements concerning its role in any follow-up inspection (see 9.1).

Following this meeting, we compile our final report and send it to the governing body. It is then entitled to submit a formal response (see 8.3).

It may be that the earlier feedback meeting has already discussed our findings and conclusions at sufficient length, making a final governors' meeting unnecessary.

5.5   **Schedule**

The total length of a quadrennial inspection exercise depends first and foremost on the number of schools involved, and so can vary quite considerably.

6 REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION

All our inspections end with the production of a final report, and all of these are in the public domain.[8] This ensures that we are transparent in our approach, judgements and assessments. In this chapter we describe the different types of report we issue, then end by explaining how we wish to encourage the broad sharing of the knowledge and information we acquire through our inspections.

6.1 Quadrennial inspection report

The report of the quadrennial inspection is written for the governing body, to provide it with a complete picture of our findings at the governance level and at those schools subjected to verification, quality or voluntary inspections. In it we distinguish between judgements in respect of statutory requirements – whether the schools and their governing body meet the basic quality criteria – and assessments of self-defined factors, goals and ambitions. By including both in the same report, we present a comprehensive overview of the schools in question and the quality of their governance.

The findings from verification inspections are reported in two ways. We first describe quality assurance at the governance level: what we found at the schools and how that tallies with the picture painted by the governing body. In addition, we set out how the quality assurance system works through to classroom level – an assessment based on objectives defined by the governing body and selected by us. Secondly, we report the outcome of the verification exercise itself: our judgement of the inspected schools in respect of the selected standards.[9]

6.1.1 Governance profile

Our judgements and assessments at the governance level are summarized in the form of a governance profile. Below are two examples.

Example 1. Governance profile, quality assurance and financial management.

QUALITY AREA/standard	Judgement/assessment
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION	ADEQUATE[10]
Quality assurance	Adequate
Quality culture	Adequate
Accountability and dialogue	Good

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8 Section 15 of the WOT requires that all such reports be published, unless the nature or scope of the inspection dictates otherwise.

9 Those in the quality areas "Educational process", "Learning outcomes", "School climate" and "Quality assurance and ambition".

10 In our first round of quadrennial inspections, at governance level we will issue judgements on each of the three standards making up "Quality assurance and ambition" but not an overall verdict on this quality area (see 4.6). Our report will instead provide a subjective description of performance in it, based on those three judgements.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	ADEQUATE
Continuity	Adequate
Efficiency	Adequate
Legitimacy	Adequate

In the second example, below, we only report on those particular standards inspected at different schools in order to verify quality assurance at the governance level. Comparing these judgements with the information obtained from the governing body enables us to confirm, or otherwise, that that information is correct and complete.

Example 2. Governance profile, verification of quality assurance in respect of educational provision.

Standard	School 1	School 2	School 3
Development perspectives	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Didactics	Good	Good	Adequate
Safety	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Quality culture	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate

Further explanation of our judgements concerning the quality of educational provision is provided in a separate chapter of the report.

6.1.2   *School quality profile*

Following a quality inspection of a school identified as "risk-affected" or a voluntary inspection of a potentially good school, we report our findings in respect of the standards examined in tabular form. Referred to as the "quality profile", this provides a straightforward overview of our judgements and assessments at standard, quality area and school level, including our overall final verdict on the school as a whole (see example 3).

Example 3. School quality profile.

QUALITY AREA/standard	Judgement/assessment
EDUCATIONAL PROCESS	**ADEQUATE**
Provision	Good
Development perspectives	Adequate
Didactics	Adequate
Additional support	Inadequate
Cooperation	Good
Testing and progression	Adequate
SCHOOL CLIMATE	**GOOD**
Safety	Adequate
Teaching climate	Good
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**ADEQUATE**
Results	Adequate
Social abilities	Adequate
Subsequent achievement	Could do better
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION	**INADEQUATE**
Quality assurance	Adequate
Quality culture	Good
Accountability and dialogue	Inadequate
Overall verdict on school	**ADEQUATE**

6.1.3   *Quality assurance and educational quality development*

As well as governance and school quality profiles, we also describe how the institution has been developing and is likely to develop in the future, complete with details of those contextual factors influencing the quality of the educational provision we found.

6.1.4   *Follow-up inspection*

Finally, the inspection report sets out the restorative or remedial action needed to overcome any non-compliance with statutory requirements, including the deadlines by which they must be completed (see also chapter 9). We also state when we will conduct a follow-up inspection, if required, and explain what the governing body can do in the meantime to ensure that it becomes compliant or otherwise improves quality.

6.2 Report of risk-based quality inspection

If we have conducted a quality inspection prompted by the outcome of the annual performance analysis, we again compile a final report for the governing body. As well as describing our findings, as in example 3 above this also contains a school quality profile setting out our judgements and assessments in respect of each standard and quality area, plus our overall final verdict on the school as a whole. Both the report and the profile are posted on our website.

6.3 Publication, formal response and objections

All our reports are in the public domain. As required by law (Section 21-1, WOT), we post them on our website during the fifth week following completion of the final version. If the governing body has submitted a formal response, this is appended to the published report. Such a response is not intended to correct factual inaccuracies, which should have been addressed when the report was in its draft stage.

Following a so-called "Article 15 inspection" (see 5.3), the governing body can object to the publication of the resulting report (but not its content).

6.4 Online public information

We have a statutory public duty to inform parents and the community about our findings, which we fulfil through our reports, our website and our public helpdesk (Onderwijsloket). All our reports are accessible through the website.

Alongside the complete reports on each governing body and school we have inspected, we also post the accompanying school quality profiles (see 8.1.2) in an easy-to-consult manner. The full final report of a quadrennial inspection can be found on the same page as information about the governing body, together with the governance profile containing our judgements about its quality assurance and financial management.

If a quadrennial inspection has covered one or more "risk-affected" schools, information about them is included in the inspection report. We also post the school quality profile(s) separately, with a link to the full report.

The judgements derived from verification inspections are included in the quadrennial inspection report, and we provide a link to the associated governance-level report. No overall quality profile is presented in this case, however, since we examined only a limited number of standards.

When we have judged a governing body's quality assurance as "Good" [11] and its financial management as "Adequate" (see 4.4), we trust it to provide us with reliable quality information and to implement improvements as and where necessary. In such cases we include a link to the institution's own website and, in the entry for each of its schools (whether or not we have inspected them individually) on our website, we include a statement confirming that we have inspected the governing body and have confidence in the information it issues about its schools, specifically: *"The governing body is fully aware of the quality of its schools and makes*

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[11] That is, all three standards in "Quality assurance" are Adequate or better, with "Quality culture" Good (see 4.6).

improvements where necessary. It is also financially healthy. For more information, please refer to its website." Where we have inspected a school individually, we post its quality profile on our website.

If a follow-up inspection (see chapter 9) confirms that a governing body has taken the measures necessary to correct the shortcomings we identified, our revised judgement appears shortly afterwards in our monitor, in the annual performance analysis of the governing body and its schools and in the public section of our website.

When a governing body conducts its own internal follow-up inspection at our behest and that finds that quality is now adequate, this outcome is reported on our website with a link to the institutional site.

Sectoral councils support institutions in their respective sectors by providing current data about the performance of schools and governing bodies. With our public information as one of the sources they draw on, in so doing they foster transparent accountability on the part of individual governing bodies and the sector as a whole. Once it is comprehensive enough, in the future we will be able to publicize that information more widely as a reliable source.

Our public helpdesk answers questions from parents, schools and governing bodies about education in general and about specific schools they are interested in. They can also register complaints here. These have an indicative function, providing input for our annual performance analyses and the expert analysis conducted prior to each quadrennial inspection. However, we do not resolve individual complaints.

6.5   The state of education

Once a year, in April, we publish a comprehensive national report entitled *The State of Education in the Netherlands*. This describes the current overall performance and quality of the Dutch education system, by sector, and is compiled using research data drawn from our quadrennial inspection reports on schools and their governing bodies, our thematic inspections and specific inquiries.

Issued on behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, *The State of Education* is written primarily for public consumption. Nonetheless, it also provides schools and their governing bodies with plenty of relevant information, particularly when it comes to comparing their own performance with the national picture.

6.6   Sharing knowledge

We are keen to make our professional knowledge of educational quality more easily accessible for schools and their governing bodies. Activities we have introduced to help achieve this include the following.

Feedback meetings

During our inspection, we gather a lot of information. Much of this is included in our reports, but the need to keep them as concise as possible also means that much is excluded.

To prevent that knowledge being lost forever, we organize feedback meetings with

schools and governing bodies at the end of each inspection. These allow us to discuss the findings underlying our judgements in more detail than in the subsequent report, in the hope that they will be recognized and acknowledged and that they will provide good specific pointers for improvement.

Compliance assistance

If a school or governing body has questions about how to comply with statutory requirements it is currently failing to meet, we are happy to answer them. We may also refer it to relevant examples of good practices we have encountered in our work.

Themed meetings and inspection labs

Based on our inspection findings and the overall picture painted in our annual report, *The State of Education in the Netherlands*, each year we select a number of themes on which we want to engage in a dialogue with the education sector. To facilitate this dialogue, we organize themed meetings and so-called "inspection labs". These are intended primarily for school managers, governors and trustees.

APPENDIX 1. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

This appendix contains the assessment framework and the standards for preschool education. The explanation of the changes made to the assessment framework and/or the standards can be found in Section 11.1.

QUALITY AREAS AND STANDARDS	
OP. Developmental process	
OP1	Educational provision
OP2	Monitoring development
OP3	Pedagogical-educational approach
OP4	Support and additional support
OP6	Cooperation
OR. Developmental results for preschool education	
OR1	Developmental results
KA. Quality assurance and ambition	
KA1	Quality assurance
KA2	Quality culture
KA3	Accountability and dialogue

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS (OP)

OP1. Educational provision
The educational provision prepares children (aged 2-4) for primary school.

Self-defined quality factors

- Does the preschool facility offer a comprehensive provision appropriate to the level (or the intended level) of all the children?
- Is the provision tailored to the level of the children entering the preschool facility?
- Is the provision tailored to the characteristic needs of the child population?
- Does the provision prepare them for the educational level at the start of primary school?
- Do the pedagogical staff distribute the provision evenly and coherently over the preschool period?
- Do the pedagogical staff work effectively to carry out the provision?
- Do the pedagogical staff utilize materials for play and learning in the group that are tailored to the developmental phase of the children?
- Do the pedagogical staff organize the group rooms or the play and learning environment in an attractive and challenging way that takes into account the development phase of the children?

OP2. Monitoring development
The preschool facility charts the development of the children with a view to ensuring their ongoing development.

Self-defined quality factors

- Does the preschool facility systematically gather information about the knowledge and skills of the children in the various development areas from the moment of arrival, while also making use of the information provided by parents?
- Do the pedagogical staff compare this information with expected development?
- Are these signs and analyses used to tailor preschool education to the needs of both groups and individual children?
- Does the preschool facility check to see where development is stagnating and seek possible explanations if children do not seem to be benefiting sufficiently from the educational opportunities provided?
- Does the preschool facility consider what is needed to resolve any deficit in children's learning and the role parents might play in this regard?
- Are these observations made using at least a standardized observational tool that enables early identification of possible deficits in the various developmental areas?
- Does the preschool facility use this observational data in a cyclical process that entails setting objectives, offering children appropriate education, and evaluating and adapting objectives and the range of educational opportunities provided?
- Do the pedagogical staff discuss their findings with parents at set times in the course of the year?
- Do pedagogical staff recognize talents in a timely manner and are they willing and able to implement appropriate programmes and pathways for individuals or groups of children?

OP3. Pedagogical-educational approach
The pedagogical-educational approach taken by the pedagogical staff enables children (aged 2-4) to learn and develop through play.

Self-defined quality factors

- Do the pedagogical staff plan and structure their approach with reference to the information they have about the children?
- Do the pedagogical staff ensure that the level of provision matches the intended final achievement level of the children (as a group and individually)?
- Do the pedagogical staff take a results-oriented approach and set concrete goals for the children in relation to the zone of proximal development?
- Do the pedagogical staff distribute activities evenly over the day/part of the day?
- Does the preschool facility pursue an active policy to ensure that all children attend activities intended for them?
- Does the pedagogical climate make playful learning possible? Are the children active and involved?
- Are there clear rules and a predictable and reliably positive climate in which promises are kept?
- Do the pedagogical staff use appropriate assignments and clear explanations, free play and supervised play to structure the provision in such a way that the children can make it their own?
- Do the pedagogical staff stimulate active involvement among the children and enrich learning through play?
- Do the pedagogical staff teach children social skills and demonstrate exemplary behaviour?
- Do children, pedagogical staff, management and other personnel treat each other with respect and show concern for each other's well-being?
- Are the pedagogical staff able to use the time planned for preschool education effectively by employing efficient working methods in the group?
- Do the pedagogical staff adapt instructions, guided play, assignments and the time devoted to various activities based on the needs of groups and individual children?
- Is the appropriate level focused on both supporting and challenging the children, in accordance with their needs? Is the preschool climate not only supportive but also stimulating?
- Do the pedagogical staff encourage a broad range of development among the

children?
- Do the pedagogical staff use instructions and set tasks that are appropriate to the educational principles and working methods?
- Do the pedagogical staff encourage children to interact both with staff members and with other children?
- Do the pedagogical staff check whether the children have understood the tasks and whether the staff's objectives have been achieved?
- Do the pedagogical staff give the children process-related feedback on their play and learning?

OP4. Support and additional support
Children (aged 2-4) receive additional provision, support and guidance as needed.

Self-defined quality factors
- Does the preschool facility provide external care (or referral to and registration for external care) if it cannot provide the required care itself?
- Does the preschool facility also arrange its own suitable provision, within or outside the group, for children receiving additional structural support from an external organization and are these arrangements tailored to the possibilities of the child in question?
- Does the preschool facility conduct its own regular evaluations and/or evaluations with external partners – most importantly with parents – to check whether the extra support and supervision provided for groups or individual children is having the desired effect, and does it adapt interventions where necessary?

OP6. Cooperation
The preschool facility works with relevant partners.

Self-defined quality factors
- Does the preschool facility work with primary schools, previous preschool facilities, parents and other partners in the chain by exchanging information on children in the target group and offering preschool education as part of a continuous learning pathway? Does the preschool facility at least indicate which early childhood education programme the child has followed and for how long, and are agreements in place on how the preschool facility will provide the primary school with relevant data on the children (Article 167, Section 3 of the Primary Education Act)?
- During the preschool period, at the end of this period and in the event of a child's intermediate departure, does the preschool facility inform parents and, if necessary, the primary school about the children's development (see also standard DP2)?
- Does the preschool facility see parents as partners in promoting the development of their children and does it tailor its parent policy accordingly?
- Does the preschool facility work with partners in caring for children who are in need of additional support (see standard DP4)?
- Do the preschool facility and the subsequent primary school provide a continuous learning pathway from preschool to early school education? Is there a consistent line in the provision, care, support, parent policy and quality assurance that surrounds the young child?

DEVELOPMENTAL RESULTS (OR)

OR1. Developmental results
At a minimum, the preschool facility achieves language and arithmetic results with its children in line with set objectives. The preschool facility assesses whether the children are sufficiently well equipped for primary school. The children also gain social

competencies and motor skills at a level that is at least in line with set objectives.

Self-defined quality factors

- Does the preschool facility have high expectations of the developmental progress children can make by the end of the preschool period?
- Does the preschool facility set its own objectives in the various developmental areas, in line with the characteristics of the child population?
- Does the preschool facility evaluate whether its own objectives in the various developmental areas are met, so that the children leave preschool education with the knowledge and skills appropriate to the characteristics of the child population?
- Does the preschool facility incorporate the developmental growth of the children in this process?
- Does the preschool facility have internal and external discussions about the development of the children in relation to the objectives, taking into account the specific characteristics of this young age group?

11.24   QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (KA)

KA1. Quality assurance

The preschool facility has formulated objectives that stem from its societal mission. It regularly and systematically evaluates the extent to which these objectives have been achieved and uses these evaluations as a basis for improving its preschool education.

Self-defined quality factors

Licence holder:
- Does the licence holder, together with the preschool facility (or facilities), describe in his policy plan the tasks that need to be carried out by the facility for the purposes of preschool education?
- Has the licence holder also indicated how he monitors quality and does this include the children's developmental progress and the alignment of preschool education with the children's development?

Preschool facility:
- Has the preschool facility formulated ambitious objectives that reflect its societal mission?
- Does the preschool facility evaluate all the objectives from its pedagogical policy plan using a cyclical system of quality assurance and does it assess whether children are sufficiently well-prepared for primary school? Does this quality assurance also include objective evaluations of the provision, educational approach, parental involvement, developmental overview and the children's development results?
- Does the preschool facility also include the satisfaction and feedback of its stakeholders in this process?
- On the basis of these evaluations, does the preschool facility take planned and targeted measures for improvement?

KA2. Quality culture

The preschool facility has a clear structure, has a professional quality culture and operates with transparency and integrity.

Self-defined quality factors

- Do the management and pedagogical staff work together to constantly improve their professionalism?
- Is there broad support for the preschool facility's policy and the aim of realizing its ambitions and its quality vision for preschool education?
- Is there a great willingness to jointly improve preschool education?

- Does the management demonstrate leadership and quality awareness?
- Do the pedagogical staff and other stakeholders take a results-oriented approach? Are they accountable for the agreements they make and aware of how their actions affect the quality of preschool education and the development of the children?
- Does the preschool facility operate on the basis of a transparent and ethical culture in which actions are taken with demonstrable care and is this reflected in the experience of external stakeholders?
- Is there a clear division of responsibilities?

KA3. Accountability and dialogue
The preschool facility takes an accessible and reliable approach to internal and external accountability as regards its ambitions, objectives and results, and engages in active dialogue on these issues.

Self-defined quality factors
- Does the preschool facility (via the licence holder) ensure accountability to the municipal authorities for the policy it pursues with regard to preschool education?
- Does the preschool facility involve internal and external stakeholders in the development of its policies?
- Does it regularly discuss its ambitions and the results it achieves?
- Does the preschool facility encourage these parties to become involved in and committed to the realization of its ambitions and objectives?
- Is the preschool facility open to wishes and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders and is it seen to take them seriously?

Guideline for assessment
The standards for preschool education have no legal basis and an assessment on the basis of these standards can therefore not lead to a facility being classed as inadequate. If the practical situation encountered does not correspond or barely corresponds with the standards, the rating 'can do better' is given

Rating	Rating criteria in relation to standards
Good	The preschool facility convincingly demonstrates the aspects of quality.
Adequate	The preschool facility demonstrates the aspects of quality.
Can do better	The preschool facility does not demonstrate the aspects of quality or does so only to a limited extent

No final assessment
Given that the assessment framework only concerns the educational aspects of the location and not the location as a whole, we do not give preschool facilities a final assessment.