



Inspectie van het Onderwijs  
*Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap*

# **INSPECTION FRAMEWORK 2021**

## **for the supervision of special (secondary) education**

Effective from 1 August 2023



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# Summary

## Introduction

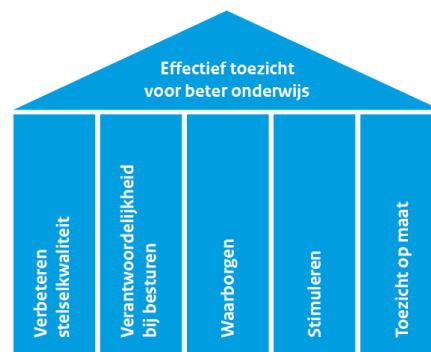
Supervision requires continuous updating and continuous improvement in order to be and to remain effective. The Inspectorate of Education has therefore updated its 2017 Inspection Framework on the basis of evaluations, experiences and recent developments.<sup>1</sup> The responsibility of school governing boards for the quality of their schools and educational programmes served as the starting point for the updated supervision that was introduced then. That trend is continued and further reinforced by this updated version of the framework.

The inspection framework describes how the supervision of education is structured. It includes the assessment framework that is applied to issue judgements and appraisals, and describes the working method used to do this.

## Vision

The interests of pupils and students are central to the supervision of education. The goal is to ensure that the education system functions in a way that provides pupils and students with the essentials, both now and during their future paths through the education system and through life. Everybody has the right to education that is of satisfactory quality, and everybody should be able to assume that schools are providing that quality. Our mission of 'effective supervision for better education' reflects this. The aim of our supervisory activities is to assure and to promote the quality of education.

Our mission is based on five principles. These principles are interrelated and reinforce one another. With respect to each individual principle, but particularly in relation to the coherence between them, supervision aims to help improve the quality of the education system. In addition, supervision reflects the responsibility that school governing boards have with respect to education; it involves monitoring basic quality requirements (quality assurance); and it aims to promote better education (promoting quality). We select the intensity of supervision for each school governing board individually (proportionality), and we take into account the organizational characteristics and circumstances of that school governing board during our supervisory activities (tailored supervision).



Supervision of the quality of education focuses on three levels that arise from our statutory duties: the system level, the school governing board level and the school level. Below, we explain how supervision is structured at each of these levels.

## Supervision of the education system

Supervision of the quality of education focuses on the context in which schools and school governing boards carry out their work: in other words, the education system as a whole. We look at different parts of the system and the relationships between those parts in order to evaluate the quality and proper functioning of the system as a whole. This is how we address the reflective component of supervision: based on our statutory duty at the system level, we reflect on the quality of the education system as a whole.

System-level supervision is based on the interest that our society as a whole has in education: the public interest. Accordingly, our supervision focuses on specific opportunities and threats, specific areas of the system or specific groups of pupils. As a supervisor, we therefore need to know how education is developing and, if something goes wrong, to inform the rest of society of this. In our supervisory

<sup>1</sup> A report has been written evaluating our supervision: Evaluation of updated supervision. Progress report 2018/2019. You can find that report on our website ([www.onderwijsinspectie.nl](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl)).

activities, we take the core functions of education – qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities – as the starting points for defining the quality of the education system.

System-level supervision was already part of the Inspectorate of Education's supervisory activities, but what is new is that we have defined quality using a framework. That is not a framework that we use to assess an individual school governing board or school, but one we use to assess the education system as a whole. It provides guidance and focus in order to gain insight into trends and bottlenecks within the system. We use this framework to identify risks and to intervene where necessary and appropriate at the system level, based on the supervisor's duty to identify risks and promote improvements.

In our annual *The State of Education* report, we define and evaluate the core functions and requirements of the education system. In addition, we often produce separate themed reports.

### **Supervision of school governing boards and their schools**

School governing boards are responsible for ensuring that the education provided in their schools is of satisfactory quality and that the financial administration meets requirements. The updated inspection framework encourages school governing boards even more emphatically to reflect on their own ambitions. Once every four years, the Inspectorate of Education carries out a 'Four-Yearly Inspection of School Governing Board and Schools' for every school governing board, which relates to the extent to which a school governing board takes responsibility and whether its schools meet quality requirements.

The quality of governance is evaluated in the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition. At the core of this quality area is the school governing board's governance of the quality of education in its schools, and its responsibility for ensuring good organization and a quality culture. The judgement for this quality area shows whether the school governing board is capable of guaranteeing and continuing to improve the quality of education and financial administration in the schools. What is new is that the financial administration is an integrated part of the standards in this quality area.

To ascertain whether the governance activities of the school governing board are adequate, we carry out inspection activities at the levels of the school and the governing board, which we describe in advance in an research plan. We carry out verification activities to evaluate the extent to which school governing boards and its schools have an adequate picture of the quality of their education, financial administration and how the governing board manages these aspects. We interview participation councils, student councils and internal supervisors, for instance. We also carry out activities in schools, such as speaking to pupils, parents and school leaders and making classroom visits. We may also carry out a risk-based inspection or an inspection relating to a 'Good' appraisal. The inspection involves a judgement or appraisal for each standard. Based on the decision criteria, we also assess governance at the level of each quality area. This latter approach is new for some sectors, compared to 2017. We can award a 'Good' appraisal at the level of an individual standard or quality area if the school governing board not only meets the statutory requirements but also achieves ambitions that go beyond these. We publish a report on our inspection, including the relevant judgements and appraisals, on our website.

Depending on the quality of governance and any shortcomings identified, a decision will be made regarding follow-up supervision. It may be decided to intensify supervision, or to relax supervision. The follow-up supervision may be carried out by the school governing board or by the Inspectorate of Education. In addition, it is possible that an interim inspection will take place if this is necessary in the light of certain information, such as signals or key financial data. If a school governing board is unable to guarantee the good governance of quality (or aspects of quality) in its schools, we conduct (part of) the interim inspection ourselves.

### **Supervision at individual schools**

The school governing board is responsible for the quality of education in its schools, while school leaders are responsible for managing quality within their school. The Inspectorate of Education's duty to guarantee quality reflects this. This duty to guarantee quality is reinforced by making more and better use of signals and other data and information, including school-specific information such as the school plan. The supervision of individual schools is therefore additional to the supervision that the school governing board carries out itself, and which the school governing board reports on. In addition to carrying out verification activities in schools where we are inspecting aspects of quality, we may also

evaluate (a selection of) standards or assign an appraisal at the school level. We do this as part of inspections that focus on risks and inspections that relate to a 'Good' appraisal. When we identify risks, we carry out all or part of the inspection at the school (depending on the nature of the risks). This may take place either as part of or separate from the four-yearly inspection.

When conducting a risk-based inspection or awarding a 'Good' appraisal, we apply standards from the assessment framework for schools. We evaluate standards within the quality areas of the Teaching-Learning Process, Secure Environment and Atmosphere; Learning Outcomes; and Management, Quality Assurance and Ambition.<sup>2</sup> A judgement or appraisal is assigned to each standard. In addition, on the basis of a decision criterion, a school may receive an overall judgement of 'Very Weak', 'Unsatisfactory', 'Satisfactory' (basic standard of quality). These judgements and/or appraisals, which are often part of the report on the four-yearly inspection, are published on our website.

As with school governing boards, follow-up supervision of schools is also possible if there are shortcomings or if a judgment of 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Very Weak' has been assigned. As indicated above, we may also carry out an interim inspection focusing on risks if, for example, there are serious signals of this. The intensity of follow-up supervision will depend, just as with school governing boards, on the quality of the governing board. We assume that the school governing board will seek to ensure that effective measures are taken. A final type of inspection that involves visiting schools is the thematic school visit. We bring the results of thematic school visits to the attention of the school governing boards, schools and wider society in various ways.

## **Conclusion**

The above describes the supervision of primary and secondary education and senior secondary vocational education (MBO). A specific inspection framework has been drawn up for each educational sector based on the relevant legislation and regulations and developments in the sector. In addition, there are specific applications of and exceptions to the regular inspection framework, such as with respect to inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education and types of education and facilities that are governed by specific legislation and regulations.

The inspection framework describes how the supervision of education is structured, and what the Inspectorate of Education expects from schools and school governing boards. Ultimately, the responsibility for providing all pupils with better education begins with the school itself. The school governing board can encourage the schools and assure that standards are met. The Inspectorate of Education monitors this process, intervenes when necessary and promotes further quality improvements.

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<sup>2</sup> In MBO, this also involves Quality Assurance and Certification.





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Education is constantly evolving as a result of changes and new developments in society. That means it is necessary to update the way in which we supervise the quality of education regularly. The system of supervision was updated in 2017. Since then, the responsibilities of school governing boards for the quality of their schools have served as the starting point for supervision. The interests of pupils and students are a priority in the supervision of education in the Netherlands.

The Inspectorate of Education has now had several years of experience working with the 2017 inspection framework. Following an evaluation, we are making changes to our supervision. We are doing this not only on the basis of the experience gained, but also on the basis of current developments, suggestions for improvements from those working in the field and changes to policy, legislation and regulations. These changes have been incorporated into the present inspection framework. The framework is based on the statutory duties of the Inspectorate of Education and the legislation and regulations that apply to the relevant sectors. In addition, the principles for supervision, as previously formulated in the 2017 Inspection Framework, have been further embedded in this revised inspection framework.<sup>3</sup>

The inspection framework adopted by the relevant minister in 2021 (hereafter: 'inspection framework'), issued by the Inspectorate of Education (hereafter: the Inspectorate), describes how the inspection of special education in the Netherlands is carried out. The inspection framework includes the framework that is applied to issue judgements and appraisals, and the relevant working procedures. The inspection framework is intended to make the working procedures of the Inspectorate transparent and to ensure that supervision is carried out in a transparent manner.

In this first chapter, we describe the legal basis of the inspection framework and describe the main concepts in supervision. In chapter 2, we discuss the vision and principles that our supervision is based on. Chapter 3 describes system-level supervision in more detail and chapters 4 and 5 describe the assessment framework for supervision at the level of school governing boards and schools. We then describe how we reach judgements and appraisals (chapter 6), our working procedures (chapter 7) and our communication (chapter 8). Finally, we provide an overview of educational facilities that are subject to specific legislation and therefore to a different assessment framework and working method (chapter 9). These different assessment frameworks can be found in the appendices.

## 1.2 What are we monitoring in our supervisory activities?

Among other things, the Education Regulation Act (WOT) states in Article 3, section 1 that the Inspectorate supervises compliance with legislation and regulations regarding education, is responsible for promoting the development of education and quality of education, and for assessing and promoting financial compliance, efficiency and continuity.

The inspection framework applies to all school governing boards and schools that provide education on the basis of legislation on education listed in the box below.<sup>4</sup> The Inspectorate also supervises the school governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education. Our supervision focuses on school governing boards, schools, educational programmes and the governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships. We call these our 'objects of supervision'.

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<sup>3</sup> We have based these on the version adopted on 22 June 2020. This is because the inspection framework is updated every year due to changes in legislation and regulations.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to schools and educational institutions for: hearing-impaired children; children with severe speech difficulties; visually impaired children; children with a physical disability; children with a long-term illness (other than a physical disability); children with serious learning difficulties; children with serious behavioural issues; children with multiple disabilities. The Inspectorate also supervises the schools affiliated with pedagogical institutes.

### **Statutory framework for the inspection of special secondary education**

The legal basis for our supervision regime is the Education Regulation Act (Wet op het onderwijstoezicht, WOT). The act entrusts the inspection regime to the Inspectorate, charging it with the task of ensuring compliance with legislation and regulations and assessing<sup>5</sup> and promoting the quality of education and the associated financial administration, as specified in the following legislation:

- Expertise Centres Act (WEC);
- School Attendance Act 1969 (Leerplichtwet, LPW 1969).
- The School Councils Act (Wet medezeggenschap op scholen, WMS).
- Miscellaneous Education, Culture and Science Subsidies Act (Wet overige OCW-subsidies).

## **1.3 Terms and definitions**

In this section we define a number of concepts that are important in supervision.

### *Supervision*

The activities of the Inspectorate with respect to schools and inter-institutional partnerships, arising from the tasks set out in Article 3 of the WOT.

### *School governing boards*

According to Article 1, section k of the Education Regulation Act (WOT) a school governing board is the competent authority as referred to in the Education Act.<sup>6</sup>In addition, there are also governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education.

### *Statutory requirements*

Statutory requirements are general quality standards which are based in law and pertain to school governing boards. They relate to the quality of education (in a broad sense) and financial administration.

### *Assuring quality*

Based on its duty to guarantee the quality of educational provision as set out in the relevant legislation pertaining to education, the Inspectorate is responsible for ensuring that schools comply with the relevant statutory requirements. This concerns what the school governing board and the school are legally required to do. Schools that fail to comply with these regulations do not provide education of satisfactory quality. Inadequate quality of education and/or inadequate financial administration may lead to increased supervision and sanctions.

### *Promoting quality*

As part of its duty to promote quality, the Inspectorate evaluates how the school governing board's own ambitions contribute to the quality of education (and to the continuous and sustained improvement of quality). In this way, the Inspectorate promotes quality at the level of the school, school governing board and the education system as a whole. Those ambitions relate to goals that are set by the school governing board or school itself. The school describes this in its school plan.

### *Interventions*

All actions that we take on the basis of our role as supervisor are referred to as interventions. We define three categories in this regard:

- interventions that are based on our duty to guarantee quality: this concerns compliance with the law;
- interventions that are based on our duty to promote quality: these focus on the ambitions of the individual institution or programme;
- system-level interventions: ensuring that system-level issues are prioritized.

<sup>5</sup> We refer here to the task of the Inspectorate as referred to in Article 3, section 1, subsection c of the Education Regulation Act (WOT).

<sup>6</sup> In the case of The 1969 School Attendance Act or The School Attendance Act BES this is taken to be the head of the school or institution and in the case of the supervision on the performance of the inter-institutional partnership duties this is taken to be the board of the legal entity, as referred to in article 18a, section 4 of The Primary Education Act and article 2.47, section 5 of the Secondary Education Act 2020. For the sake of completeness it is noted that when the competent authority concerns a legal entity maintaining the institution, the inspection will regard (the executive part of) the school governing board as a point of contact.

### *System-level supervision*

We refer to the consideration of the functioning of the system as the reflective component of supervision, or system-level supervision.

## **1.4 Levels of supervision**

There are various levels in supervising the quality of education: the education system as a whole, individual school governing boards, and individual schools.

### *The level of the education system*

We focus on the functioning of the education system as a whole because the quality of the education system is more than just the sum of its constituent parts. Increasingly, issues transcend the scope of individual schools and school governing boards, and tackling them requires broader-based cooperation. We define the education system as all schools, institutions, school governing boards, school types and educational programmes. The Inspectorate looks at what is going well and where there are bottlenecks. We identify those bottlenecks, analyse them and ensure that they are prioritized, both nationwide and regionally. We refer to our supervision of the functioning of the education system as a whole as the 'reflective' component of supervision.<sup>7</sup> The *State of Education* report is an example of this type of supervision.

### *School governing boards*

School governing boards are responsible for ensuring that the education provided in their schools is of satisfactory quality and that their financial administration meets requirements. With respect to supervision, this means that we verify whether school governing boards have an adequate insight into quality and are providing adequate management in this area, so that they can guarantee that pupils are getting satisfactory quality at the schools that they are participating in.

School governing boards are an important link: by maintaining quality at their schools, they contribute to the functioning and quality of the education system as a whole. For example, in order to function independently in society, pupils must be equipped for success in the rest of their educational careers and in the labour market. The education system must ensure that pupils leave school with satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, and with the necessary knowledge and skills. It is also important that every pupil has an equal opportunity to access suitable education: it should make no difference who their parents are, where they come from or which school they go to. It is also important that pupils and students develop as individuals; that their education contributes to their self-knowledge, their knowledge of the world they live in and their ability to make independent decisions. In this way, they will also learn to contribute to the cohesion of our society.

### *Schools*

School leaders, together with their teams, shape education at their schools. Together with the school governing board, they strive to achieve quality goals and ambitions for the education of their pupils. The school plan describes how they will do this. The school plan also describes their policies on education and staffing and the system of quality assurance. We conduct our inspections with this school-specific information in mind. The key questions regarding the quality of education are: are pupils learning enough? Are they receiving good teaching? And are they safe and secure?

## **1.5 Effectiveness and evaluation**

The present Inspection Framework takes effect on 1 August 2023. In accordance with Article 13, section 3 of the WOT, it has been published in the *Staatscourant*, on the website of the Inspectorate of Education and on [www.wetten.nl](http://www.wetten.nl).

The inspection framework has been established on the basis of Article 13 of the Education Regulation Act (WOT) and is a policy regulation as referred to in Article 1:3, section 4, of the General Administrative

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<sup>7</sup> The Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) advocates the strengthening of the reflective component of supervision. The WRR would like to see supervision that periodically reflects on the developments, opportunities, risks and threats inside and outside the field that may influence its own functioning, prioritization and/or field of influence (WRR, 2013). The government supports the WRR's arguments for strengthening the reflective component of supervision and thus the feedback role of supervision (Cabinet response, September 2014).

Law Act (AWB). The Minister of Education, Culture and Science uses this inspection framework to specify the working methods of the Inspectorate of Education with respect to its responsibilities and competences involving inspection. The inspection framework is also a legally interpretative policy regulation. The statutory requirements described in the assessment framework are based on a reasonable interpretation of the law and the regulations based thereupon.<sup>8</sup> Consultations have been held within the professional field regarding both the explanation of statutory requirements and the working procedure, in accordance with Article 13, section 2 of the Education Regulation Act (WOT).

Ongoing agreements and supervisory interventions, including those made on the basis of the 2021 Inspection Framework from 1 August 2022, remain valid. (Remedial)school visits that take place after 1 August 2022 are based on the 1 August 2023 version of the 2021 Inspection Framework.<sup>9</sup>

Articles of law that have not yet entered into force at the time of publication of this framework in the *Staatscourant* are shown in square brackets ([ ]).

We will evaluate the effects and effectiveness of the inspection framework before 1 January 2025. The new inspection framework remains subject to change at any time, either in whole or in part, on the basis of experiences of its application or wider political, societal, educational and policy developments. The period of validity for the 2021 inspection framework is, in principle, four years.

The inspection framework is updated every year based on changes in legislation and regulations. The Inspectorate consults with the professional field periodically in order to gain insight into experiences and developments.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the Annual Reporting Regulations for Education (RJO).

<sup>9</sup> This is taken to be the first day of the inspection on location (other than the kick-off meeting with the board in the case of a four-yearly inspection), be it a physical or online inspection.

## 2. Vision and principles of supervision

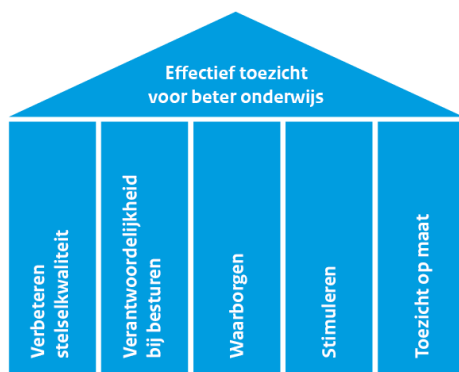
### 2.1 Introduction

The Inspectorate supports better education for all pupils. We look at education in a broad sense, including both the education that is provided at school but also remote teaching and learning. The law stipulates the minimum requirements that education must achieve. The Inspectorate ensures that this basic standard of quality is being guaranteed by school governing boards: the boards guarantee the quality provided by the schools, while we in turn guarantee the quality of the work done by the school governing boards (administrative conduct). We do this by assessing the degree of insight they have into quality and the leadership that they provide with respect to quality, which is something that we expect from every school governing board. Where necessary, we can intensify our supervision of school governing boards. In addition, we encourage school governing boards and schools to pursue their own specific ambitions and to achieve improvements above and beyond the basic standard of quality that is required. The Inspectorate wishes to showcase what is going well in schools, in school governing boards, and across the education system as a whole. Therefore, we reflect on the functioning of the education system as a whole. In this chapter, we set out our vision of supervision (section 2.2). We then describe the principles that we apply when carrying out supervision (section 2.3).

### 2.2 Vision

Education fulfils an important role in our society. It guides pupils towards higher forms of education or towards the workplace, as an employee or an entrepreneur. Education must also ensure that children learn how to become fully-fledged citizens and members of society. To enable every young person to participate in the economy and to find employment, education must provide the knowledge and skills that are required. After all, it is through education that all pupils can flourish and achieve their full potential. In other words, the core functions of the Dutch education system relate to teaching (qualification), providing children with the skills to participate and contribute to society (socialization), and paving the way to further education and the labour market (allocation, including selection and equal opportunities).

*Vision and mission*



**Figure 2.3a** The principles of supervision

Everybody has the right to education that is of satisfactory quality. Every day, teachers, school governing boards and other professionals dedicate themselves to achieving this goal for their pupils and students. All those efforts contribute to the quality and proper functioning of the education system, so that all pupils can have a good education. Our mission of 'effective supervision for better education' reflects this. The aim of our supervisory activities is to assure and to promote the quality of education. We focus on the functioning of the system as a whole (promoting quality) and on school governing boards and their schools (assuring and promoting quality). School governing boards guarantee quality at their own schools and the quality of education for the pupils who attend them. We adjust the intensity of our supervisory activities and follow-up supervision in line with the extent to which the governing board complies with the relevant statutory requirements and assures quality at its schools. All school governing boards and schools are part of the education system and thus contribute to the functioning of the system. We refer to the consideration of the functioning of the system as the reflective

component of supervision, or system-level supervision.<sup>10</sup> The strengthening of the role of supervision in this area is advocated by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) and is supported by the government.

### **2.3 The principles of supervision**

Our mission of 'effective supervision for better education' is based on five principles (see figure 2.3a). These principles are interrelated and reinforce one another. With respect to each principle individually, and in particular in relation to the coherence between all five, the aim of supervision is to help improve the quality of the education system. In addition, supervision reflects the responsibility that school governing boards have with respect to education; it involves monitoring basic quality requirements (quality assurance); and it aims to promote better education (promoting quality). We select the intensity of supervision for each school governing board individually (proportionality), and we take into account the organizational characteristics and circumstances of that school governing board during our supervisory activities (tailored supervision). We will explain these principles in more detail below.

#### **2.3.1 Improving the quality of the education system**

Schools and school governing boards are part of the education system. That system also forms the broader context in which they do their work. By system-level quality, we mean the degree to which all school governing boards and schools, working with and alongside all the others, contribute to achieving the core functions of education for all pupils. Together, they ensure that these core functions of education – qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities – are fulfilled successfully and in a balanced manner.

System-level supervision (promoting quality) and the supervision of school governing boards and schools (promoting and assuring quality) are interlinked, and each has its own role in the system of supervision. School governing boards and schools are separate objects of supervision. System-level supervision focuses primarily on cohesion from the perspective of promoting improvement and setting priorities: the work of school governing boards, schools and inter-institutional partnerships is important in this regard, as well as other matters that play a role in the development of the core functions of education. We use the core functions of the education system to give substance to system-level supervision. This can lead to interventions aimed at promoting quality at the level of the system, school governing board and school.

The functioning of the system therefore encompasses more than the sum of the results of the supervision of school governing boards and schools. This is why we also monitor developments at the system level – such as the extent to which all children enjoy equal opportunities in education, for instance. We identify both positive examples and bottlenecks and ensure these are prioritized; we also look at how we can improve the quality of the system in coordination with the educational field. Every year, we report on system-level quality in the *State of Education* report, a task that is specified in the Education Regulation Act (WOT). During school visits and inspections, we also initiate an open dialogue with school governing boards about how they are contributing to system-level quality through their schools, without assigning judgements or appraisals. In schools, we also focus on themes that affect core functions through thematic school visits. We refer to all of these activities collectively as system-level supervision.

#### **2.3.2 The responsibilities of the school governing board**

By school governing board, we mean the competent authority for one or more schools. The competencies of a school governing board include internal supervision. Because we hold school governing boards accountable for their responsibility for the quality of education in their schools, we refer to this as board-level supervision. School governing boards guarantee quality at their own schools and the quality of education for the pupils who attend them. School governing boards are responsible for ensuring that the education provided in their schools is of satisfactory quality and that their financial administration meets requirements.

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<sup>10</sup> Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) (2013). *Supervising Public Interests. Towards a broader perspective on government supervision* (no. 89). The Hague/Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

School governing boards also have a statutory duty to provide inclusive education. Essentially this means that the most inclusive form of education is provided for all pupils with specific educational needs. In this respect, school governing boards have a duty of care with respect to pupils who need extra support. All school governing boards are required to affiliate with one or more (regional) inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education. We supervise the implementation of agreements within those inter-institutional partnerships by the school governing boards involved. We also supervise the governing board of the inter-institutional partnerships. This is explained in more detail in chapter 9.

We ensure that school governing boards carry out their duties (monitoring and promoting the basic standard of quality and continuity) adequately. If this is not the case, or is not being done adequately, we initiate stricter supervision over the school governing board and schools in question. This is part of our duty to guarantee quality. In addition to board-level supervision, we also visit and assess schools when a school governing board has failed to achieve basic quality requirements. School governing boards also identify ambitions of their own that they wish to achieve, often including ambitions that affect the core functions of the education system. We review those ambitions as part of our role in promoting quality.

### **2.3.3 Assuring quality**

Society should be able to have confidence that pupils and students are receiving an adequate education. All the more so because education for pupils up to the age of 16 is compulsory and young people under the age of 23 are required to achieve a qualification.<sup>11</sup> The benchmark for the basic standard of quality is that schools and school governing boards must comply with the statutory requirements that relate to quality of education, quality assurance and financial administration. We have included these requirements in the assessment framework for schools and school governing boards (see chapters 4 and 5).

We hold school governing boards accountable for not achieving the basic quality requirements in their schools. If they fail to do this, we issue one or more remedial action orders. In such cases, we also focus on the individual schools involved. In the event of one or more failures in relation to standards, once the decision criteria have been applied, the schools receive an overall judgement of 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Very Weak'. Where necessary, our supervisory activities will be intensified.

### **2.3.4 Promoting quality**

In addition to intervening in cases where things are not going well, we also promote the ongoing development of education and quality improvements. We do this at several levels. At the system level, we use inspection activities and data collection to monitor the core functions of education. If we identify risks in relation to those core functions, we ensure that these are prioritized, depending on how urgent they are. We identify important themes and highlight these in *The State of Education* and other thematic reports, for example. We thus point out opportunities for improvement at the system level, and thus aim to promote quality across the whole system. We bring the results and analyses of our inspection activities to the attention of various stakeholders in various ways, in order to raise awareness and come up with solutions to the problems identified. Sometimes it is important for stakeholders to discuss a theme together. For example, school governing boards, municipalities and inter-institutional partnerships can play a role together in preschool education or youth care. We also bring our findings to the attention of school governing boards and schools, and discuss ways of helping to resolve system-level bottlenecks with them.

In addition to promoting improvements by highlighting where improvements could be made, we also do this by highlighting instances of good quality. We also look specifically at the quality achieved by schools and school governing boards that go beyond basic quality requirements. In such cases, we award a 'Good' appraisal at the standard level. This appraisal means that a school or school governing board not only meets the statutory requirements but is also achieving additional ambitions that go above and beyond these.. Finally, we include the ambitions of the school governing board (and whether these are being achieved) in our inspections and we strive to approach our inspection activities and deliver our

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<sup>11</sup> Pupils who have not yet achieved a basic qualification are required to continue attending school until the age of 18, and young people under the age of 23 are required to achieve a qualification.

findings in a way that is encouraging and constructive: we provide positive feedback and, in addition to pointing out what could or should be improved, we also mention what is already going well.

### **2.3.5 Proportionality and tailored supervision**

Schools and school governing boards are all different. The quality that they deliver is different, and they may also be structured differently. Their development and the circumstances in which they operate can also be different. We seek to adapt our supervision to those differences: we determine the intensity of our supervision in proportion to the quality standards achieved by the school governing board. In addition, our inspection activities are tailored, taking into account the characteristics of the school governing board and the schools concerned. In this way, we arrive at an effective, reasoned judgement, and limit the burden that is associated with supervision.

Society expects schools and school governing boards to meet basic quality requirements. One important purpose of supervision is to assess how effectively a school governing board is ensuring that basic quality requirements are met in its schools. This relates to the quality of education, the way in which professionalism within the institution and the school governing board is assured, the extent to which statutory requirements are met, and whether the school's finances also meet requirements. The better a school governing board manages to monitor and promote quality in its schools, the less intensive our supervision will be. In such cases, the emphasis is more on discussions regarding the school's ambitions and civic mission, and we ask the school governing board to report on changes and improvements in quality based on its own perspective. Where applicable, we will also ask the school governing board to report on what action is being taken to comply with remedial action orders.

In cases where a school governing board is less successful in achieving the required level of quality, we intensify supervision in a proportionate manner. This may mean conducting several inspections into the quality of education within a short period of time or involving several persons or bodies within or around the school governing board in an inspection.

As part of our duty to guarantee quality, we review the development and performance of a school governing board and its schools every year. Based on supervision and quality data that we have previously gathered through monitoring, we continue to monitor the quality of the school governing board and the schools. This is an important aspect of fulfilling our duty to guarantee quality.

When carrying out (proportionate) supervision, we adapt our inspection activities to the circumstances of the school governing board. This is known as tailored supervision. We describe how we apply proportionality and tailored supervision in more detail in chapter 7. That chapter is about our working methods.



## **3. System-level supervision**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Supervising the quality of education also means focusing on the context in which schools and school governing boards carry out their work: the education system as a whole. We look at different parts of the system and the relationships between those parts in order to evaluate the quality and proper functioning of the system as a whole. This is how we address the reflective component of supervision: based on our statutory duty at the system level, we reflect on the quality of the education system as a whole. We use our findings to carry out interventions at the system, board and school levels in order to promote improvements. In this chapter, we provide a framework that defines what we mean by system-level quality. That framework is based on the core functions of education.

In section 3.2, we first define what we mean by system-level quality and system-level supervision. We also indicate which statutory duties are important in this regard. Section 3.3 presents the framework for system-level quality.

### **3.2 System-level quality and system-level supervision**

#### **3.2.1 A system of education services**

In the Netherlands, the government is responsible for the organization and functioning of the system of education services. As a society, we want pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills that match their abilities and talents, so that they can contribute to society and to the labour market. Good education is essential if we want to ensure that all the core functions of education are achieved. In a multiform society, this is a necessity. One aspect of good education is that all pupils can develop to their full potential and enjoy equal opportunities. This means that our education system needs to function properly and that all pupils and students must benefit from the core functions of our education system: qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities.

Within the system of education services, there is interdependence: some sectors of education are closely intertwined with others, as well as with other public services. Major societal problems affect educational institutions as well as bottlenecks at the institutional level, and this requires a broader system-level perspective.

In order to explain how the system works, we describe the quality of education as a whole on the basis of the core functions of education (see section 3.3). Both system-level quality and system-level supervision are based on the government's responsibility for the education system as a whole (Article 23 of the Constitution and Education Regulation Act (WOT), Article 3, section 1, subsection d; Article 4, section 4 and Article 8, section 1). This involves both the duty to promote quality and the reflective component of supervision.

We define system-level quality as the extent to which the entire system of schools, school governing boards and other actors is successful in ensuring that the core functions of education – i.e. qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities – are carried out successfully and in a balanced manner. These core functions represent the building blocks for defining quality in the education system.

#### **3.2.2 System-level supervision**

Supervision is based on the interest that our society as a whole has in education: the public interest. Accordingly, our supervision focuses on specific opportunities and threats, specific areas of the system or specific groups of pupils. As a supervisor, we therefore need to know what is happening in the education sector and to reflect on that; and if something goes wrong, to inform the rest of society of this. System-level supervision can therefore be seen as focusing on the functioning and quality of the education system as a whole. Because this transcends the level of individual school governing boards, we engage in activities that aim to promote system-level functioning and quality. We apply a cycle of observation (monitoring), analysis, identifying issues (prioritization) and intervening in a way that promotes

improvement, and in doing so we supervise quality at the system level. The results of system-level supervision are important for society, parliament and the government, and they help us to carry out our supervisory activities in a way that is targeted and effective. System-level data thus shows us how the education system is performing as a whole and which problems school governing boards and schools are facing. We raise these problems with schools and school governing boards, and discuss how they intend to deal with them in an open dialogue.

We also monitor the quality of the system in conjunction with our inspection activities with respect to schools and school governing boards. The information gathered is one of the sources used when we write our *State of Education* report, individual publications such as thematic reports, and undertake interventions to promote quality.

System-level supervision is based on the duties of the Inspectorate described in the Education Regulation Act (WOT). For example, the Inspectorate has a duty to report on the development of, and in particular the quality of, education and on the fulfilment of statutory tasks by educational institutions, inter-institutional partnerships and the Cooperative Organization for Vocational Education and Industry, and in particular the quality thereof (Article 3, section 1, subsection d, WOT).

Our experience in educational practice has taught us that this relates to another of the Inspectorate's duties: promoting the development of, and in particular the quality of, the education provided by and the governance of institutions referred to in the relevant education legislation (Article 3, section 1, subsection b, WOT).

The activities of the Inspectorate also aim in part to inform the relevant parties about the development of, and in particular of the quality of, education (Article 4, section 4, WOT). The law also stipulates that '[the] Inspectorate [...] reports upon request and on its own initiative to Our Minister regarding developments in, and in particular of the quality of, education and, on that basis, makes proposals that it deems to be in the interest of education' (Article 8, section 1, WOT).

Although system-level supervision is based on the WOT, it differs from the supervision of school governing boards and schools. The supervision of schools and school governing boards involves supervising compliance with education legislation and regulations. This is how we judge standards and, where necessary, issue remedial actions to promote improvements by school governing boards and schools. In system-level supervision, by contrast, there are various ways in which we can point out and prioritize issues that affect the system as a whole and promote improvements<sup>12</sup>, but we cannot prescribe remedial action. After all, system-level supervision does not involve supervising compliance.

In chapter 2, we indicated that system-level supervision is related to the supervision of schools and school governing boards, especially where this relates to their ambitions. Bottlenecks at the system level, as identified through thematic school visits for example, can play a role in promoting quality within the supervision of school governing boards and schools.

### **3.3 Framework for system-level quality**

In order to monitor the quality of the system, we apply a framework. This framework describes the functioning and quality of the system in relation to the core functions of education. It provides a focus in order to assess the functioning of the system as a whole and the trends and bottlenecks at the system level. The framework indicates the themes that pertain to the activities that we carry out in the field of observation, analysis and prioritizing bottlenecks. In order to maintain and promote the quality of the education system, efforts are required from all those involved. In this respect, it helps to focus attention on what is important for pupils and for society, but also on what requires urgent action in the light of current developments and longer-term trends. For this reason, we formulate focus points to encourage the various actors to work together in addressing bottlenecks. A few examples: 'Digital literacy and numeracy skills for every pupil'; 'Equal opportunities to access a suitable curriculum for every pupil'; 'Pupils who are equipped to contribute to society'; 'Pupils who can succeed in secondary education and

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<sup>12</sup> To describe the Inspectorate's duty to promote quality, the phrase that is consistently used is 'the development of, and in particular the quality of, education'. This wording includes both development and quality at the level of the education system, and at individual institutions. This formulation is also in line with the government's intention to provide better insight into the development of the quality of education at institutions in addition to providing a snapshot. Dutch House of Representatives, parliamentary year 2014-2015, 33862, no. 12.

the labour market' and 'Pupils who know themselves and their environment, and can make independent choices'. These are also subjects for discussion with school governing boards and involve the education provided at schools.

We listed the core functions in the 'Framework for system-level quality' (see below). In the description, we identify three core functions: qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities. Personal development is part of the core function of socialization. In addition to the three core functions, we also describe the requirements that must be met in order to address these core functions adequately. The description reflects the essence of the core function. In chapter 7, on working methods, we elaborate on how we carry out system-level supervision.

## **FRAMEWORK FOR SYSTEM-LEVEL QUALITY**

### **Core function: Qualification**

Education provides pupils with the knowledge, attitudes and skills that meet the needs of society and are appropriate to the abilities and talents of pupils.

#### **Description**

The educational achievements and the level achieved by all pupils collectively are of an optimum level, across various groups and subject areas. One aspect of this is that every pupil is literate and numerate with respect to his or her abilities. Educational achievement is consistent with the needs of society, meaning that every pupil will ultimately be able to function well in society. In comparison with (previous) trends, both national and international, there is stability or movement in the direction of the ambitions of society. The quality of assessment and examinations leads to relevant and reliable statements at the system level regarding the level, educational achievement and reference levels of pupils. The quality of the curriculum includes knowledge, attitude and (digital) skills and is regularly evaluated in the light of current events and (international) scientific standards.

### **Core function: Socialization**

Education contributes to the acquisition of the social and civic skills necessary for proper participation in and a proper contribution to society.

#### **Description**

The knowledge, attitude and skills of pupils are consistent with the level that is required to function properly in a multiform society governed by a democratic state. This means social and civic skills, and the fundamental values<sup>1</sup> of a democratic state, which are necessary in order to participate successfully in it. In evaluating education's contribution to society, previous results achieved in the education system, international comparisons and substantive requirements are leading, as well as the needs and ambitions of society. A free and multiform society requires citizens who respect basic democratic rules and norms, who can form opinions independently, are willing to take responsibility and are equipped to deal with diversity.

**Core function: Allocation, including selection and equal opportunities**

Pupils pursue an educational career that is consistent with their abilities and talents and with the labour requirements of society.

**Description**

Education ensures that pupils pursue an educational career that is appropriate to them and gives them an equal opportunity to take part in the type of education that suits them best. Education ensures that pupils succeed in their (subsequent) education and obtain a qualification that enables them to find a suitable place in the labour market or to continue their education in a suitable way. School referral, the choice of school, the transition between schools and connections within (inclusive) education are effective and do not hinder pupils' advancement. In other words, education is equally accessible and available to all those pupils who belong there based on their abilities. In comparison with (previous) trends, both national and international, there is stability or movement in the direction of the ambitions of society.

**Requirements for fulfilling the core functions**

The education is resourced and organized in such a way that continuity can be ensured and it can contribute to the three core functions outlined above.

**Description**

Education is organized in such a way that it is able to fulfil the three core functions of the system by means of cooperation and a shared dynamic. Good governance and a proper vision of what needs to be achieved are important in this respect. Cooperation between institutions – in order to achieve inclusive education for example – also contributes to the quality of education for pupils. Resources and opportunities are deployed and utilized adequately. There are enough staff members, who are adequately equipped for the teaching duties they are required to carry out. The resources, organizational methods and staff are at an acceptable level in relation to (previous) trends, both national and international, or are moving in the direction of the ambitions of society.

## 4. Assessment framework for school governing boards

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we describe the framework for assessing the governance provided by the competent authority. The competent authority consists of the executive section of the school governing board and the internal supervisory board. Although these functions are separate, collectively all parties ensure, each based on their own role and responsibility, that quality at their schools is guaranteed and that the financial administration meets the requirements. For the sake of clarity, when we refer to the school governing board, we mean the competent authority.

Our aim is to ascertain whether the school governing board is capable of guaranteeing the basic standard of quality in its schools, improving quality further, and ensuring proper financial administration and continuity with respect to the future. We assess the quality of governance based on the applicable legislation and regulations (hereafter: statutory requirements) mentioned under the quality area of 'Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition'. The interpretation of the core functions of the system by the school governing board (see chapter 3) also plays a role here.

The judgement for this quality area indicates whether the school governing board is capable of guaranteeing and continuing to improve the quality of education in its schools through its governance activities. Using this knowledge regarding the quality of governance, we are able to make decisions regarding (follow-up) supervision in a manner that is proportionate (see chapter 7).

In addition to the assessment framework that provides standards for governance, quality assurance and ambition at the level of the school governing board (GQA), there are also standards for Management, Quality Assurance and Ambition at the school level (MQA). These standards are included in the assessment framework for schools and we describe these in chapter 5. We differentiate between school governing boards and schools because the governance (of one or more schools) by a school governing board and the management of a school by the school leaders are distinct from each other. This distinction enables us to match our supervision better with the responsibilities and working methods of school governing boards and schools. These levels are not at all separate from each other, however. The school governing board sets the parameters for quality and financial administration, within which school leaders are free to give shape to their responsibility for managing quality at school. Together, the school governing board and the schools ensure that the intended results are achieved with respect to the quality of education and financial quality.

In section 4.2, we explain how the assessment framework for school governing boards is structured. Subsequently, we describe the content of that assessment framework in section 4.3.

### 4.2 The structure of the framework

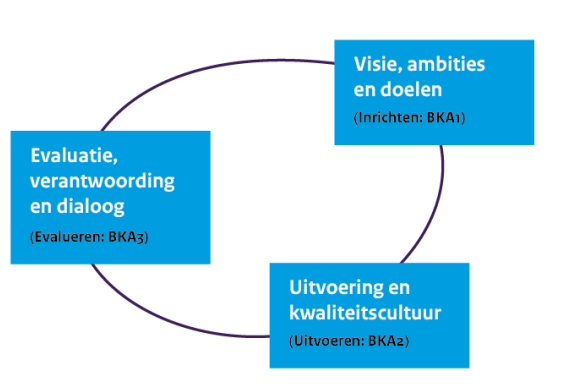


Figure 4.2a Structure of the quality area

The core of the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition (GQA) is that the school governing board directs the governance of the quality of education in its schools, ensuring proper organization and a quality culture. This ensures that pupils are able to learn and develop in a safe and secure environment. Financial administration – including financial continuity, legal compliance and efficiency – is also an integral part of this. We view governance as a cyclical process. Together, the three standards of the assessment framework provide an insight into the quality cycle of the school governing board. If this quality cycle meets requirements, the school governing board is able to satisfy and guarantee the basic quality requirements, to improve education further and to ensure proper financial administration. In this way, the school governing board contributes to the core functions of the system. There is also a quality culture that is oriented towards progress: the current policy is monitored and adjusted on the basis of evaluation.

For the first standard (GQA1), we assess the way in which the school governing board organizes governance and sets parameters based on a vision for education that is elaborated in terms of ambitions and goals. This also affects the core functions of the system, as stated in chapter 3. Implementation is central in the second standard (GQA2): how does the school governing board achieve its vision, ambitions and goals and what kind of quality culture is apparent? Finally, in the third standard (GQA3), we examine how the school governing board evaluates and analyses, reports to third parties and to society, reflects on results and discusses those results. This leads to adjustments and the further development of the vision, ambitions and goals referred to in the first standard, thus completing the cycle of directing, implementing and evaluating. The quality culture is important to the effective management of this cycle (all the standards together). It is this which guarantees the quality of education.

### 4.3 Quality area and standards

The assessment framework for school governing boards, the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition (GQA), is divided into three standards that include direction, implementation and evaluation. These standards are interrelated and together they constitute the system of quality assurance. This means that we consider these standards in conjunction with one another.

For each standard, we indicate what we mean by basic quality requirements and what the law requires from school governing boards (what school governing boards are obliged to do).<sup>13</sup> We assume that school governing boards approach their work on the basis of a vision and an ambition. In addition to the ambitions that school governing boards must have in order to comply with statutory obligations, there are also ambitions that go beyond the basic quality requirements. We refer to these as additional ambitions. We also discuss these ambitions with school governing boards. A 'Good' appraisal can be assigned with respect to those ambitions. In this way, our supervisory activities promote quality improvements. In the assessment framework, this manifests itself in the form of questions regarding the achievement of the additional ambitions of the school governing board. Through their ambitions, school governing boards contribute to the core functions of the education system.

#### QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

##### GQA1. Vision, ambitions and goals

The school governing board has a vision of quality, has identified ambitions and goals in relation to that vision, and seeks to achieve those.

##### Basic standard of quality

The school governing board has a vision for good education and the associated governance. That vision has been interpreted appropriately and in concrete terms in the form of ambitions, goals and the associated policy. These make it possible to monitor quality, the results achieved by education and the associated requirements. To this end, a system of quality assurance has been established that enables the school governing board to guarantee the basic quality requirements for education.

<sup>13</sup> We have paraphrased the statutory requirements. Please refer to the legal articles mentioned for the full legislative texts.

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

The goals relate to compliance with statutory requirements, at minimum, including the statutory requirements that relate to the curriculum, the didactic process and the assessment policy. The vision, ambitions and goals also address the implications of previous results of evaluation and the results of internal and external dialogue.

The school governing board works with the schools to ensure that the vision, ambitions, goals and policy lead to improvements in the education that pupils receive. The schools, in turn, formulate goals that match the needs of pupils with respect to their progress through the education system. The school governing board defines the requirements that must be met in order to achieve those goals, including the allocation and administration of (financial) resources, in order to guarantee the quality of the teaching-learning process, the atmosphere at the school and the results. To this end, the school governing board sets a multi-annual budget that clarifies the relationship with policy and the goals. In order to achieve (financial) quality, an effective division of responsibilities between the internal supervisory board, the school governing board and the schools has been agreed upon, based on the applicable legislation and regulations.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to the vision and goals, and if so how are these achieved?
- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education is organized in such a way that pupils undergo an uninterrupted process of development; education is designed to achieve progress in the development of the pupils.
- Articles 19 and 21, section 4, WEC: The school governing board ensures quality at its schools using a system of quality assurance. It implies, for instance, that verifiable goals have been formulated.
- Article 21, sections 1, 2, 3 and 4, WEC: The school governing board ensures that all its schools have a school plan. In all cases, the school plan describes the policy on education, staffing policy and the system of quality assurance. The school's special needs support programme is included in the description of policy on education. This includes a description of the facilities available for pupils who need additional support and care.
- Article 28h, section 1, WEC: There must be a functional or organic separation between the executive section of the school board and the internal supervisory board.
- Article 28i, section 1, subsection c, WEC: The internal supervisory board ensures that the school governing board spends and uses funds efficiently and lawfully.
- Article 29, section 7, WEC: Every year, the school governing board determines policy with regard to staffing across the different categories of staff at the schools.
- Article 31, section 1, WEC: The school governing board adopts a management statute that shows the division of responsibilities with respect to the management of the school.
- Articles 143 and 161, WEC [in conjunction with AMvB] and Article 43, WEC Funding Decree: The school governing board must spend government funding lawfully and must prevent any evidently inefficient use of the (financial) resources available.
- Article 157, WEC in conjunction with Article 4, section 4, RJO: Every year, the school governing board prepares an annual report which includes the results of the financial policy and a section on financial continuity.
- RJO, in conjunction with Article 157, WEC: The manner in which the school governing board reports on its financial administration is consistent with the regulations set out in the RJO.

### GQA2. Implementation and quality culture

The school governing board, together with the schools, achieves the goals relating to quality, promotes a quality culture, sets parameters and makes interim adjustments where necessary.

### Basic standard of quality

As part of its system of quality assurance, the school governing board implements the vision and goals pertaining to the quality of education with the schools in an effective manner. There is an honest and transparent quality culture which contributes to the goals that have been set.

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

The school governing board promotes a quality culture that focuses on cooperation, learning and improvement, so that the goals and ambitions can be achieved. The school governing board ensures that educational leadership is firmly anchored in the organization across all levels. The school governing board also encourages school management and teams to work together on their professionalism in relation to the relevant competence requirements, and seeks to instil a culture of improvement.

Within that quality culture, the school governing board carries out quality assurance that focuses on the quality of education, the agreements in the special needs support programme for the inter-institutional partnership for inclusive education, and compliance with statutory regulations. The school governing board encourages and ensures that implementation is consistent with policy, so that the goals identified are achieved. The school governing board monitors the implementation of the policy and the intended improvements and makes interim adjustments where necessary.

The (financial) resources available contribute to the achievement of the objectives set by the school governing board and are used efficiently and lawfully. Monitoring this is part of the remit of the internal supervisory board. The school governing board prevents any evidently inefficient use of available (financial) resources. In addition, the school governing board focuses on an effective financial administration, such that the continuity of education is guaranteed and funding is acquired lawfully.

The internal supervisory board also performs its duties independently and correctly and is facilitated in this by the executive section of the school governing board.<sup>14</sup> The school governing board ensures proper employee participation and operates in accordance with a Good Governance Code, explaining any deviation from this in the annual report. The school governing board fulfils its duty regarding the prompt obligation to consult and report and ensures that staff members may promptly notify the school governing board in the situation of a reasonable suspicion of a sexual offence. Finally, the school governing board ensures the effective processing of internal and external signals and complaints.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to implementation and quality culture, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirement

- Article 4a WEC: The school governing board consults promptly in the case of (there being reasonable grounds for the suspicion of) a sexual offense and will report it to the authorities when necessary. In doing so, the school governing board immediately informs the confidential inspector.
- Article 9, section 1, subsection b, WEC: One of the tasks of the institutions is to provide ambulant support to pupils in regular education.
- Articles 19 and 21, section 4, WEC: The school governing board and school management ensure legal compliance and that, if necessary, improvement measures are taken with respect to quality. That means, for example, that the school governing board and the schools have an insight into the quality of education. The functioning of the quality cycle must play a central role in this.
- Article 3 and article 21, sections 1 and 3, Article 32b and Article 34a, WPO: The school governing board provides qualified staff and enables them to maintain and expand their competences.
- Article 22, section 1, subsection e, WPO: The school governing board explains the complaints procedure in the school prospectus(es).
- Article 23, WEC. The school governing board has a complaints procedure that provides for the proper handling of complaints, which meets the specific requirements mentioned in this article.
- Article 28g, in conjunction with 10, WEC: Based in part on the obligation referred to in Article 19, the school governing board is responsible for ensuring a properly managed school, including a

<sup>14</sup> According to Article 1, subsection c, RJO: the entirety of the reporting documents consisting of the annual accounts, the management report and the other information referred to in Article 392, Title 9, Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code.



## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

separation between the executive functions of the school governing board and the supervisory functions, and with lawful systems of management and governance.

- Article 28h, WEC: The internal supervisory board (or its members) functions independently of the executive section of the school governing board.
- Article 28i WEC: The internal supervisory board supervises the execution of the duties by the executive section of the school governing board and the exercise of its powers, assists the executive section of the school governing board by providing advice and has a certain number of tasks at the least.
- Article 28i, sections 2 and 4, WEC: The duties and powers of the internal supervisor or internal supervisory body are such that it can exercise internal supervision properly and independently.
- Article 31a, sections 3 and 4, WEC: The school should give teachers independent responsibility for assessing pupils' educational achievements and give them an adequate opportunity to provide input when it comes to subject-specific, didactic and pedagogical processes within the school.
- Articles 113 and 145, WEC [in conjunction with AMvB] and Article 20, WEC Funding Decree: The school governing board must spend government funding lawfully and prevent any evidently inefficient use of the (financial) resources at its disposal.
- Article 113, section 1, sub a WEC: The school governing board manages the resources of the school in such a way that continuity of the school is assured.
- Article 141, section 1, subsection a, WEC: The school governing board must apply a Good Governance Code, providing an account of any deviations from this in the annual report.
- Article 145, section 4, WEC: In the event of any obviously inefficient use of funds, financial consequences may be imposed, such as changes to funding and the restitution of funding that has been unduly provided.<sup>15</sup>
- Article 145, section 5, WEC [in conjunction with AMvB]: By or pursuant to the AMvB, further rules will be established regarding the manner in which it is to be ascertained whether an obviously inefficient use of funding has occurred.
- Article 4, section 4, RJO: The school governing board includes a continuity section in the annual report.

### GQA3. Evaluation, accountability and dialogue

The school governing board systematically evaluates and analyses whether it is achieving the goals and reports on this. Where necessary, it adjusts policy and involves internal and external stakeholders through a proper process of dialogue.

#### Basic standard of quality

As part of its system of quality assurance, the school governing board evaluates and assesses the extent to which the ambitions, goals and policy are being achieved. In this way, the school governing board gains an insight into the quality being provided, the results of education for pupils, and the financial situation. The school governing board actively collects external information and uses this information in its evaluation and assessment of its policy and the quality of education. Based on its evaluation, the school governing board responds to potential opportunities and threats in a timely manner, sets policy (regarding improvements) where necessary, and takes appropriate measures to guarantee the quality of education in its schools.

The school governing board enables accountability by providing accurate, up-to-date and publicly accessible information about the quality achieved. At least once a year, it reports to its internal and external stakeholders regarding its goals and the results achieved in its educational programmes. The information provided through the annual report is reliable and (the content of) the annual report meets the statutory requirements.

<sup>15</sup> The amendment (House of Representatives, 2019–2020 session, 35 102, no. 11) provides that a funding-related sanction can only be imposed on a school governing board once the term 'obviously inefficient spending' has been elaborated in more detail through a general administrative order (AMvB). Without such an order, the enforcement of 'obviously inefficient spending' is not possible. Until the date of entry into force of the order, however, the Inspectorate will focus on its promoting duties in this area and an 'Unsatisfactory' appraisal will only be given if a school governing board fails to comply with the elements currently included under the basic standard of quality.

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

The school governing board is, in all cases, responsible for the curriculum, the didactic process, the approach to assessment and financial administration. The reflection on the results of evaluation provides all levels of the organization, the internal supervisory board and the participation council with an adequate insight into the effectiveness of governance and implementation. The school governing board analyses and assesses the results of evaluation and reporting. The school governing board then takes account of these where necessary, in order to modify the ambitions, goals and improvement goals and policy or formulate new ambitions, so that the results of the dialogue contribute to the development and improvement of education and the way in which it is managed. The school governing board also ensures that there is a dialogue on this that involves internal and external stakeholders, and that at least pupils, staff, the regional business community and the internal supervisor are involved in it. The school governing board also actively works with other parties on goals that go beyond governance and also relate to core functions. In this way, the school governing board complies with the agreements in the special needs support programme of the inter-institutional partnership for inclusive education and facilitates accountability in this regard.

### Additional ambitions

Are there additional ambitions with respect to evaluation, accountability and dialogue, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 1, and Article 3, subsection f, RJO, in conjunction with Article 103, WEC: The school governing board updates internal and external stakeholders every year regarding policy intentions, policy implementation and regarding the results of the policy implemented.
- Article 4, section 4, RJO, in conjunction with Article 157, WEC: The school governing board produces an annual report every year which includes the results of financial policy as well as a report on the future development of education.
- Article 8, School Councils Act (WMS): The (Joint) Participation Council is provided with all information reasonably required from the school governing board in a timely manner, so that it can fulfil its duties; it is in all cases provided with the information that is prescribed by law.
- Article 10, WMS: In certain cases, the competent authority requires the prior consent of the (Joint) Participation Council for decisions that relate to that case (for example when amending the school's educational objectives).
- Article 11, WMS: The school governing board must give the (Joint) Participation Council the opportunity to advise in advance on decisions regarding certain matters (such as confirming or amending the main points of the school's multi-annual financial policy).
- Article 12, WMS: The school governing board requires the prior consent of the staff members in the (Joint) Participation Council with respect to decisions on certain matters (such as when confirming or changing the composition of the staff).
- Article 14, WMS: The school governing board requires the prior consent of the parents and pupils section of the (Joint) Participation Council with respect to certain decisions (such as when approving the school prospectus).
- Articles 19 and 21, section 4, WEC: The school governing board ensures quality at its schools using a system of quality assurance. This means, for instance, that there are regular evaluations regarding whether these goals are being achieved.
- Article 28i, section 1, WEC: The internal supervisory board supervises the execution of the duties by the school governing board and the exercise of its powers, assists the school governing board by providing advice and has a certain number of tasks. The internal supervisory board accounts for the execution of these duties and the exercise of powers in the annual report.
- Article 28i, section 1, subsection c and e, WEC: The internal supervisory board ensures that the school governing board spends and uses funding lawfully and efficiently. The internal supervisory board accounts for this in the annual report.
- Article 141, section 1, subsection a, WEC: The school governing board must apply a Good Governance Code, providing an account of any deviations from this in the annual report.

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

- Article 141, sections 7 and 8, WEC: The governing board publishes the annual report. Further regulations regarding the manner and time of publication of the annual report may be specified by ministerial ruling.
- RJO, in conjunction with Article 157, WEC: The manner in which the school governing board reports on its financial administration is consistent with the regulations set out in the RJO.



## 5. Assessment framework for Schools

### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we described the framework for assessing governance by the school governing board. In this chapter, we will describe the assessment framework used to assess quality at schools. These two frameworks are closely related. The school governing board sets the parameters for quality and financial administration, within which school leaders are free to give shape to their responsibility for managing quality at school. In addition to standards for management and quality, this assessment framework also includes standards for the teaching-learning process, the atmosphere at the school and the learning outcomes. The standards relating to Management, Quality Assurance and Ambition at the school level (MQA) are related to those for Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition at the level of the school governing board (GQA), and they focus on the statutory requirements at the school level.

We use the assessment framework for schools when we carry out inspections at the school level.

We describe the structure of the framework in section 5.2. Subsequently, the assessment framework for the school level is included in section 5.3. In the last section, 5.4, we discuss the additional statutory requirements that are not linked to a specific standard.

### 5.2 The structure of the framework

In the school-level assessment framework, we differentiate four different quality areas: Teaching-Learning Process; Secure Environment and Atmosphere; Learning Outcomes; and Management, Quality Assurance and Ambition. The assessment framework provides answers to the three basic questions about education for pupils: are they getting a good education? (Teaching-Learning Process); do they feel safe? (Secure Environment and Atmosphere); and are they learning enough? (Learning Outcomes). In addition, we look at management and quality improvement (Management, Quality Assurance and Ambition). These are important aspects for the quality and development of pupils' education. In assessing the quality of education, we assess the overall level of attainment of the school in these four areas. The Inspectorate assesses financial management at the level of the school governing board.

The assessment framework for special secondary education is structured as follows:<sup>16</sup>

QUALITY AREAS AND STANDARDS, SPECIAL EDUCATION, SCHOOL LEVEL	
<b>TLP TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS</b>	
TLP0	Basic Skills
TLP1	Curriculum
TLP2	Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support
TLP3	Teaching Strategies
TLP4	Planned Teaching Time
TLP5	Practical Training/Internship
TLP6	Completion of Secondary Education
<b>SE SECURE ENVIRONMENT AND ATMOSPHERE</b>	
SEA1	Safety and Security
SEA2	Atmosphere at the School

<sup>16</sup> Wherever 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.

QUALITY AREAS AND STANDARDS, SPECIAL EDUCATION, SCHOOL LEVEL	
<b>LO LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	
LO1	Results
LO2	Social and Civic Skills
<b>MQA MANAGEMENT, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION</b>	
MQA1	Vision, Ambitions and Goals
MQA2	Implementation and Quality Culture
MQA3	Evaluation, Accountability and Dialogue

### 5.3 Quality areas and standards<sup>1</sup>

Each quality area in the school-level assessment framework for special secondary education comprises a number of standards, of which there are fourteen in total. With respect to each standard, we indicate what is meant by the basic standard of quality (which requirements *must* the school meet?).<sup>17</sup> To substantiate the requirements for the basic standard of quality, we indicate the statutory requirements that apply for each standard. We also refer to the legal requirements as statutory requirements.

In practice, schools have ambitions that involve the basic standard of quality. However, schools often go beyond this. As well as ambitions that relate to the basic standard of quality, schools may also have ambitions that go beyond that level, which they have formulated with the school governing board. The school plan forms the basis for these school-specific ambitions. We discuss all these ambitions with the schools. A 'Good' appraisal (at the standard level) can be assigned with respect to those ambitions. In this way, our supervision promotes continuous improvement. In the assessment framework, this manifests itself in the form of questions regarding the achievement of the additional ambitions.

Through these ambitions, both those that involve the basic standard of quality and those that go beyond that, schools and their school governing boards contribute to the quality of the core functions of the education system.

QUALITY AREA: TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS (TLP)
KWALITEITSGEBIED ONDERWIJSPROCES (OP)
<p><b>OP0. Basic Skills</b></p> <p>The education provided in basic skills prepares pupils for their subsequent education and for participation in society.</p>
<p><b>Basic Standard of Quality</b></p> <p>The school has a purposeful and coherent curriculum for teaching the basic skills of Dutch literacy (oral language skills, reading, writing, glossary and use of literacy), numeracy-mathematics (numbers, ratios, measuring and geometry, and equations) and citizenship that is appropriate to the school's pupil population.</p> <p>The content of the curriculum for Dutch literacy and numeracy-mathematics at least covers the attainment targets and works towards the reference levels for at least the destination profiles labour market and subsequent education. The curriculum has a logically progressive structure of goals and prepares pupils for the following years, subsequent education, work or care placement, and society. The implementation of the curriculum is recognizable in educational practice.</p> <p>Citizenship focuses at least on stimulating the fundamental values of a democratic state and the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are important in this regard. This applies equally to the social and</p>

<sup>17</sup> We have paraphrased the statutory requirements. Please refer to the legal articles mentioned for the full legislative texts.

civic competencies needed in a pluralistic democratic society, and the attainment targets related to them.

#### **Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to the basic skills education provided, and if so how are these achieved?

#### **Statutory requirements**

- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education is geared to enabling the pupils to achieve progress. It is organized in such a way that pupils undergo an uninterrupted process of development. Where possible, it includes children in mainstream education in primary or secondary education.
- Article 11, section 4, WEC: Education promotes active citizenship and social cohesion (knowledge of and respect for fundamental values and the development of social and civic skills).
- Article 13, Article 14a, article 14c, article 14f, in conjunction with WEC and WEC Attainment Targets Decree: The provided education in Dutch literacy and numeracy-mathematics reflects the attainment targets and the corresponding reference levels and is, where possible, organized in a coherent manner.
- Article 14a, section 2, in conjunction with WEC and WEC Attainment Targets Decree: Education in special secondary education – the destination profile for subsequent education is based on the programmes of final examination. These programmes and the education within this profile are provided in accordance with the regulations arising from the relevant articles in the Secondary Education Act 2020.
- Articles 14c, and 14f, WEC and WEC Attainment Targets Decree: In the destination profiles of care placement and employment, education focuses on preparing pupils for the relevant destinations.
- Article 21, WEC: The school plan includes an elaboration of the school’s policy concerning a pedagogical-didactic approach.

#### **TLP1. Curriculum**

The curriculum provided prepares pupils for their subsequent placement and for participation in society.

#### **Basic standard of quality**

The school prepares pupils for subsequent education, work or a care placement, and to enter society. It provides a broad curriculum that is based on the attainment targets. <sup>18</sup>For the VSO destination profile of subsequent education, the curriculum covers the examination programmes. If cooperation with regular schools is necessary to cover the examination programmes, the school has organized this. By curriculum we mean the content of all lessons, including lessons provided digitally or online. The curriculum provided by the school is geared to the pupil population and is in line with the pupils’ (linguistic) ability and learning needs. Where necessary, the school’s curriculum deepens and broadens as pupils progress through their school career, enabling them to undergo an uninterrupted process of development. The curriculum is targeted, coherent and distinctive. Furthermore, the school has ensured that the curriculum is distributed evenly and coherently across the years.

#### **Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to the education provided, and if so how are these achieved?

#### **Statutory requirements**

- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education is geared to enabling the pupils to achieve progress. It is organized in such a way that pupils undergo an uninterrupted process of development. Where possible, it includes children in mainstream education in primary or secondary education.
- Article 11, sections 3 and 4, WEC: The education focuses on emotional, intellectual development and the development of creativity, on the acquisition of the required knowledge and the acquisition of social, cultural and physical skills.

- Article 11, section 4, WEC: Education promotes active citizenship and social cohesion (knowledge of and respect for fundamental values and the development of social and civic skills).
- Article 11, section 7, Article 13, section 13 and Article 14c, section 12, WEC: In providing education based on the attainment targets for the Dutch language and maths, the school takes the reference levels for language and maths as its starting point (wherever possible).
- Articles 13, 14a, 14c and 14f, WEC and WEC Attainment Targets Decree: The education provided reflects the attainment targets and reference levels, and is, wherever possible, organized in a coherent manner.
- Article 14a, section 2, WEC: Education in special secondary education
  - the destination profile for subsequent education is based on the programmes of final examination. These programmes and the education within this profile are provided in accordance with the regulations arising from the relevant articles in the Secondary Education Act.
- Articles 14c, and 14f, WEC and WEC Attainment Targets Decree: In the destination profiles of care placement and employment, education focuses on preparing pupils for the relevant destinations.
- Article 21, section 2, subsection a, WEC: The school plan includes an elaboration of the statutory tasks for the principles, objectives and content of the education.

## **TLP2. Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support**

The school monitors the development of the pupils and offers appropriate guidance and extra support where necessary.

### **Basic standard of quality**

From the moment when pupils enter the school, information is collected systematically on the pupils' knowledge and skills in all areas that are relevant to education. The school draws up an appropriate progress and development plan for each pupil based on all the data available on that pupil; this plan serves as a guide for the planning and monitoring of the pupils' progress. The reference levels literacy and numeracy apply for pupils receiving language and mathematics education in at least the destination profiles labour market and subsequent education. Education is aimed at ensuring that pupils can move into regular education if possible. The school involves parents in the content, implementation and evaluation of the progress and development plan.

The collection of (assessment) data is carried out systematically and carefully, using standardized tests for the subject areas of language and maths. The school uses a pupil system to collect and record (assessment) data. This information enables the school to tailor its teaching to the learning needs of both groups and individual pupils. The school has high expectations of all pupils. It enables the school to ensure that pupils are developing and receive support. The school can therefore guarantee the uninterrupted progress and development of its pupils, while also promoting equal opportunities. The school informs parents about their child's development and progress regularly.

If individual pupils or groups of pupils do not appear to be benefiting adequately from their education, the school identifies the areas where their development is falling behind and the reason(s) why that might be the case. The school then decides how best to respond if pupils are falling behind in certain areas, or progressing more rapidly than expected. The school then provides support in a structured manner for the development of cognitive, social and motor skills. Where necessary, the school involves the inter-institutional partnership, the municipality and the health authorities in supporting its pupils.

This gives the pupils the support they need in order to complete their education as effectively as possible. The school has a clear and structural focus on preventing children from falling behind.

The school has identified which facilities it can offer to pupils who need additional support in a special needs support programme. The school provides the support as planned. The school fulfils its duty of care with respect to inclusive education. If the school is unable to provide the required extra support for a pupil, together with the child's parents and, if necessary, the inter-institutional partnership, it looks for another suitable school or education centre.

### **Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to developmental support and supervision, and if so how are these achieved?



### **Statutory requirements**

- Article 1, WEC: The school's special needs support programme describes the facilities that are in place for pupils who need additional support.
- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education is geared to enabling the pupil to achieve progress. The school ensures that pupils can develop without interruption. If necessary, the school governing board consults the inter-institutional partnership, the municipalities involved and the care centres involved.
- Article 11, section 2, WEC: The school governing board determines the special needs support programmes at least once every four years.
- Article 11, section 3, WEC: The school works to prevent pupils falling behind in a clear and structured manner.
- Article 11, section 4, WEC: The education promotes active citizenship and social cohesion in a targeted and coherent manner. This includes regular monitoring of the development of citizenship skills so that education can be adapted to the current learning needs of pupils.
- Article 48c, section 1, WEC: The school monitors the development of pupils' knowledge and skills using a pupil monitoring system. In language and maths, this is done using standardized tests.
- Article 20, WEC: The school keeps parents informed about the pupils' progress (or, in the case of pupils who are over the age of majority and capable of making their own decisions, the pupils themselves).
- Article 21, section 2, WEC: The school plan sets out how the special needs support programme is incorporated into the school's overall policy on education.
- Article 21, section 4, subsection a, WEC: The school has described how it tailors its education to pupil development in the school plan.
- Article 40, section 3, WEC: The school assesses whether a pupil needs additional support.
- Article 40, sections 5 and 18, WEC: The school fulfils its duty of care with respect to inclusive education.
- Article 40b, WEC: The composition of the guidance committee shall be such that, taking into account the pupil's disability, it can provide adequate advice from an educational, pedagogical, psychological and medical point of view on the tasks mentioned in the article, including the establishment and adjustment of the progress and development plan.
- Article 41, WEC: The composition of the committee of inquiry shall be such that, taking into account the pupil's disability, it can provide adequate advice on the basis of the expertise mentioned in the article on the tasks mentioned in the article, including advising on the establishment and adjustment of the progress and development plan.
- Article 41a, sections 1 and 3, WPO: After consulting with the parents or the pupil, the school governing board draws up a progress and development plan for pupils who are receiving special secondary education.
- Article 41a, section 2, WEC: After receiving advice from the supervision committee regarding supervision or research, the school governing board must reach agreement with the parents regarding the actions section of the progress and development plan.
- Article 41a, section 4, WEC: The school governing board evaluates the progress and development plan with the parents or the pupil at least once every school year.
- Article 41a, section 5, WEC: The school may amend the progress and development plan if advised to do so by the supervision committee and following consultation with the parents or pupil.

### **TLP3. Teaching Strategies**

The teachers' (ortho)pedagogical-didactic approach is designed to ensure that pupils develop and make progress, and are able to do this without interruptions.

**Basic standard of quality**

In their classes teachers create a (n ortho)pedagogically and didactically sound and stimulating learning environment which ensures that pupils feel safe and are actively involved. The teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They ensure orderly managed classes and an efficient use of teaching time. Teachers make sure the goal of the lesson is understood. During classes, they monitor if the pupils' progress towards the lesson goals is sufficient and adjust their teaching as needed. Teachers explain the subject matter in a clear manner and give pupils sufficient time to practice with the learning material. They adapt instructions, processing and planned teaching time to the learning needs of groups and individual pupils alike. Teachers provide their pupils with individual feedback on their completed work and on their learning process. They encourage pupils to reflect on their own development.

**Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to teaching strategies, and if so how are these achieved?

**Statutory requirements**

- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education is designed to ensure that pupils develop and make progress, and are able to do so without interruptions. To achieve this 'unimpeded development', it is essential that the school's teaching strategies correspond with the pupil's current level of development.
- Article 11, section 4, WEC: Education promotes active citizenship and social cohesion (knowledge of and respect for fundamental values and the development of social and civic skills).
- Article 21, sections 2 and 3, WEC: The school has formulated its teaching strategies in the school plan. The school's teaching policy and approach are evident in the teachers' day-to-day actions.

**TLP4. Planned teaching time**

The pupils are given sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the curriculum provided.

**Basic standard of quality**

The school offers a programme of education that meets the requirements of statutory planned teaching time. To this end, the school determines which activities fall under planned teaching time, with the agreement of the participation council. The school plans educational activities carefully over the school year, and these are carried out under the supervision of qualified teachers.

The school divides time between subjects in such a way that pupils are able to master the compulsory curriculum. The school has a policy for preventing unauthorized absenteeism and pupils dropping out with the aim being to achieve the statutory planned teaching time at the level of every individual pupil.

Where necessary and in the interest of an individual pupil, and in accordance with statutory regulations, the school exercises the option of deviating from the compulsory planned teaching time and/or the option of allowing a specific pupil to spend part of the planned teaching time at another school.

**Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to planned teaching time, and if so how are these achieved?

### **Statutory requirements**

- Article 2.38, section 5, WVO 2020: In special secondary education, planned teaching time in the destination profile of subsequent education is filled with activities that are provided as part of the curriculum.
- Article 12, section 1, WEC, Article 14a, section 2, WEC, in conjunction with Articles 6g and 6g1, WVO, Article 25, section 1, WEC: The school provides the legally required number of hours and days of education.
- Article 12, section 2, Article 14a, section 2, subsection f, and Article 25, section 5, WEC, in conjunction with Policy Rule on agreeing to a deviation from planned teaching time, WEC: In certain cases, the school governing board requests the approval of the Inspectorate before deviating from the planned teaching time.
- Article 13, section 2, and Article 14, section 4, WMS: Prior to the adoption of the school prospectus, the participation council (parent/pupil section) must agree to:
  - which types of educational activities are part of planned teaching time;
  - the policy on class cancellations;
  - which days the school does not provide education on.
- Article 22, section 1, subsection i, WEC: The school has included its policy on absenteeism in the school prospectus.
- Article 24, WEC, and Article 12, sections 1 and 2, Educational Decree, WEC: A school for (special) primary education, a school for secondary education or an institution for education and vocational training may implement part of a school plan insofar as this relates to special education or special secondary education, respectively. To this end, the school governing boards will draw up a symbiosis agreement.
- Article 24, WEC, Articles 12 and 13, Educational decree: If a pupil receives part of his or her programme of education at a different school and the school governing board meets the conditions for this, then the time spent at that other school counts towards the minimum number of hours of education that the pupil must receive.
- Article 32, section 5, WEC: Education is provided by teachers who meet the requirements of Article 3, WEC or Article 56, WVO.

### **TLP5. Practical training/internship**

The practical training/internship is prepared, implemented and supervised effectively.

### **Basic standard of quality**

Internships that are part of practical vocational training and/or the social internship contribute to the planned learning activities. The objective, content, scope and organization of the internship are described in the internship agreement. The school makes agreements with the pupil regarding which learning activities the pupil will focus on developing as part of the internship plan. The school helps the pupil to choose and prepare for an internship, draws up the required internship agreement together with the pupil and the host organization, and arranges insurance for the pupil and the internship teacher. Supervision and assessment are carried out in the agreed manner, and the school is aware of the pupil's performance during the internship and makes adjustments if necessary.

### **Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to practical training/internship, and if so how are these achieved?

### **Statutory requirements**

- Article 7 Educational decree, WEC: The school describes the purpose, content, scope, structure and organization of the internship in an internship plan.
- Article 9 Educational decree, WEC: The school governing board, or the legal representative thereof, signs a written internship agreement with the pupil and the internship provider, which covers, among other things, supervision and the method of assessment.
- Article 10 Educational decree, WEC: The school governing board is responsible for arranging insurance for the internship pupil and the internship supervisor during the time spent at the internship location and travelling to and from the internship location.

- Article 14a, section 2, WEC, in conjunction with Article 6f, section 2, WVO: The curriculum provided in special secondary education - destination profile for subsequent education - may include a social internship.
- Article 17, WEC: Special secondary education includes one or more internships for pupils in the labour-market profile from the age of 14 upwards. Education for pupils in the other destination profiles may include internships.

#### **TLP6. Completion of Secondary Education<sup>19</sup>**

Secondary education at the school is completed in a satisfactory manner.

#### **Basic standard of quality**

The school ensures that all pupils are properly prepared to complete their education and move on to a subsequent destination. All pupils receive appropriate advice from the school, which is based on standardized testing wherever possible.

All pupils in special education sit a final test at the end of the school period (unless exempted from doing so by law). The teachers administer the test in accordance with the relevant regulations. The school also informs parents about which information about the pupil will be passed on to their new school.

Pupils in special secondary education with the destination profile of subsequent education can take their final examination. [Designated VSO schools with an examination license have their own testing and graduation programme, examination regulations and an independent and expert examination committee that guarantees the quality of testing and examinations.] VSO schools where pupils take state examinations must arrange registration (and any special examination methods) for their pupils. A separate examination programme, examination regulations and testing and graduation programme apply to them. These documents make it clear to pupils and parents, well in advance, how the school examination and the national exams are organized, which rules apply and which measures the school takes with respect to pupils who do not comply with the rules. It must also be clear which examinations pupils can resit and how they can do this, what subject matter is examined and when, what the examination counts for and which exemptions apply.

VSO schools that work with a secondary school are subject to the testing and graduation programme that is applied by the secondary school. Examinations take place in accordance with the testing and graduation programme and examination regulations. When VSO pupils take an examination through a regular secondary school, at an MBO institution as an external examination candidate or at a training centre for adult education (VAVO), agreements regarding the preparation and administration of the examination are clearly set out.

Pupils in the destination profiles of employment and care placement who leave education are provided with transfer documentation. Eligible pupils are provided with a VSO school diploma, including a portfolio detailing the results achieved. Pupils who have only completed part of the programme, who have left the VSO school and who are not eligible for a school diploma, are provided with a statement.

#### **Additional ambitions**

- Are there additional ambitions with the completion of secondary education, and if so how are these achieved?

#### **Statutory requirements**

- Article 20, WEC: The school keeps parents informed about the pupils' progress (or, in the case of pupils who have reached the age of majority and are able to make their own decisions, the pupils themselves).
- Article 43, section 1, WEC: The director drafts an educational report for the new school.

<sup>19</sup> Regulations are being drafted (Decree amending the Decree on Final Examination in Secondary Education and equivalent in the Caribbean Netherlands, in order to improve the quality of organization around school examinations in (special) secondary education and secondary general adult education) under which school governing boards in special secondary education with an examination licence will be required to appoint an examination committee. The relevant passages will only be included in the assessment when these legislative proposals have been adopted and have taken effect.

- Article 43, WEC: The school follows a careful procedure when providing advice for subsequent education or a subsequent placement, and makes every effort to place pupils at an appropriate level. Involving pupils and parents in this and evaluating existing procedures may be regarded as necessary guarantees for the quality of the associated activities.

*Specific to special education:*

- Assessment Decree in primary education: The final test is administered in accordance with regulations.
- Article 43, section 1, WEC: The final test serves to prevent recommendations that are too low at the end of primary education.
- Article 43, section 2, WEC: Before 1 March, the school governing board makes a school recommendation for every pupil in the eighth school year of special education regarding subsequent education, but reconsiders that recommendation if a pupil scores higher in the final test than the recommendation. If the result achieved in the test deviates from the recommendation given, the reason for this is communicated to the parents.
- Article 48d: All pupils in special education sit a progression test at the end of the school period (unless exempted from doing so by law).

*Specifically for VSO schools with an examination licence:*

- Article 14a, section 1, subsection b, WEC, Article 59a, WVO, Article 2, Decree on Final Examination WVO: Designated VSO schools (with an examination licence) may administer the final examination, as also happens in regular secondary education. This includes the following regulations, in all cases: Article 3 Decree on Final Examination in Secondary Education: The director and examiners of the school administer the final (part) exam under the responsibility of the school governing board.
- Article 2.51a WVO 2020: The director of the school nominates a member of staff as the secretary for the final examination; he/she is also the secretary for the final part exams.
- Article 2.51, section 3: The examination secretary supports the director in organizing and administering the final (part) exam. The examination secretary also supports the director in the correct implementation of the examination regulations and the testing and graduation programme.
- Article 2.51, section 4, WVO 2020: The director must draw up a clear description of the duties of the examination secretary.
- Article 2.60, section 1, WVO 2020 The governing board of a school sets examination regulations, which in all cases include: a. rules about the organization of the final examination and procedures for final examinations; b. information on the application of the measures referred to in Article 2.61; c. resit measures for the school examination; the composition and address of the appeals committee referred to in Article 2.63
- Article 2.60, section 4, WVO 2020 The school governing board of a school requires the approval of the participation council of the school to adopt the examination regulations.
- Article 2.60, section 5, WVO 2020 The adopted examination regulations must be sent by the school governing board to all candidates and the Inspectorate annually, before 1 October.
- Article 2.60a, section 1, WVO 2020: The school governing board of a school establishes a testing and graduation programme for the current school year before 1 October.
- Article 2.60a, section 2, WVO 2020 The testing and graduation programme states, in all cases: a. which sections of the school examination will be tested during the school examination; b. which components will be tested in the school examination, as determined by the school governing board; c. the content of the tests that are part of the school examination; d. the manner of and time period within which the tests and resits for the school examination take place.
- Article 2.60a, section 3 WVO 2020: The governing board of a school must indicate clearly in the testing and graduation programme which tests contribute to the completion of: a) the compulsory components of the examination programme that are part of the school examination; b. the components of the examination programme that are part of the central examination, but which are also tested in the school examination; c. the parts chosen by the school governing board.
- Article 2.60b, section 1, WVO 2020 The governing board of a school deviates from the programme when determining the testing and graduation programme after consultation with the examination board/
- Article 2.60b, section 3 WVO 2020: The school governing board of a school requires the approval of the participation council of the school to adopt the testing and graduation programme.

- [Article 2.60b, section 4, Decree on Final Examination in Secondary Education: The adopted testing and graduation programme must be sent by the school governing board to all candidates and the Inspectorate annually, before 1 October.
- Article 2.60c, section 1, sub b WVO 2020 The school governing board of a school can only change the testing and graduation programme after 1 October in order to correct a manifest inaccuracy or incompleteness].
- Article 2.60c, section 4, WVO 2020: The amended testing and graduation programme must be sent by the school governing board to all candidates and the Inspectorate as quickly as possible.
- Article 2.60d, WVO 2020 The school governing board establishes one or more independent and expert examination committee(s) for the purpose of overseeing the quality of testing and examination at the school, such that the specific requirements mentioned in this article are fulfilled.
- Article 2.60e, WVO 2020: The purpose of the examination committee is to guarantee the quality of testing and examination and the concluding nature of the school examination.

*Specifically for VSO schools without an examination licence:*

- Article 14a, section 2, subsection a, and Article 47, WEC: For VSO schools without an examination license, pupils in the destination profile for secondary education may take a final examination at a school for regular education.
- Article 2.51, WVO: A VSO pupil who is not registered at a secondary school may be admitted to the final examination at a secondary school. The VSO school uses the regulations and testing and graduation programme of that secondary school.
- Article 2, section 1, subsection b, and section 2, State Examination Decree for secondary education: VSO schools have the option of allowing pupils to take the state examination.
- Article 2, section 2, appendix 1 of the Regulations for State Examination Regulations for 2021: If the VSO school allows a pupil to take the state examination, the VSO school will register that pupil in good time and inform him or her of any non-standard examination methods in good time.
- Article 14b, WEC: VSO schools can make use of the option of having pupils take their examination through a partnership with an institution for VAVO examinations and make agreements about this in a partnership agreement.

*Specifically for VSO schools with destination profile of employment and care placement:*

- Article 14d, section 1, and Article 14g, section 1, WEC: The director issues a VSO school diploma to pupils in the destination profile of employment or care placement who leave the school, provided the director judges that the pupil qualifies for this. The director bases his/her judgement on regulations adopted by the school governing board.
- Article 14d, section 2, and Article 14g, section 2, WEC: A portfolio including the results achieved is part of the school diploma.
- Article 14d, section 3, and Article 14g, section 3, WEC: In order to prevent differences between the school diplomas issued by individual schools, a template for the school diploma is drafted according to ministerial regulations.
- Article 14d, section 4, and 14g, section 4, WEC: If the pupil does not receive a VSO school diploma after completing part of the programme and leaving school, he or she will receive a statement.
- Articles 14e and 14h, WEC: The school draws up a transfer document for pupils with the destination profiles of employment and care placement who leave education.

## **QUALITY AREA: SECURE ENVIRONMENT AND ATMOSPHERE (SEA)**

### **SEA1. Safety and Security**

The school provides a safe and secure learning environment for pupils.

#### **Basic standard of quality**

The school assures its pupils' social, psychological and physical safety at school throughout the school day. A school is safe when the social, physical and psychological safety of pupils is not undermined by the actions of others. This is evident from the pupils' own feeling of safety and well-being, for example. The school monitors this at least once a year using a standardized instrument.

## QUALITY AREA: SECURE ENVIRONMENT AND ATMOSPHERE (SEA)

The school has drafted a policy on safety and security that is made up of a coherent set of measures. The policy is designed to prevent, manage, record and evaluate any incidents, and the school puts this policy into practice. Should the findings of its monitoring procedures so dictate, the school takes adequate measures to improve the situation. Wherever possible, the school prevents bullying, cyber-bullying, aggression and violence in any form, and acts quickly and appropriately if they occur. The same applies to forms of expression that conflict with the fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state, such as discrimination and intolerance. The school has appointed a contact person for parents and pupils in the event of bullying; he or she also coordinates the school's policy to prevent bullying.

The school applies the reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse. The school also fulfils its obligations regarding reporting and consultation involving sexual misconduct.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to safety and security, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 4a, WEC: The school governing board adheres to its statutory obligations with regard to reporting and investigating possible cases of sexual misconduct, and for reporting these to the relevant authorities if there is a reasonable suspicion that a sex crime has been committed. The school governing board contacts the confidential inspector immediately in such cases.
- Article 5, WEC: The school governing board establishes a reporting code for staff that specifies how signals of domestic violence or child abuse are to be handled. In addition, the school governing board must promote awareness of and the use of the reporting code.
- Article 5a, section 1, subsection a, WEC: The school governing board has a policy with regard to the safety and security of pupils and also implements that policy.
- Article 5a, section 1, subsection b, WEC: The school governing board monitors the safety and security of pupils using an instrument that provides a representative and up-to-date picture.
- Article 5a, section 1, subsection c, WEC: The school governing board has delegated the following tasks to one person:
  - coordination of the school's anti-bullying policy;
  - point of contact for matters relating to bullying.
- Article 5a, section 2, WEC: Safety and security comprise: the social, psychological and physical safety of pupils.
- Article 5a, section 4, WEC: The school governing board sends the findings of the monitor to the Inspectorate once these findings are available.
- Article 11, section 4, WEC: Education focuses on instilling respect for and knowledge of fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state. This also implies that the school takes action if there is insufficient evidence of a culture that is consistent with fundamental values.

### SEA2. Atmosphere at the School

The school has an atmosphere that is conducive to the development of social and civic skills.

#### Basic standard of quality

The school prepares pupils for life in society. To this end, it creates a place where pupils can receive support for and practise developing their social and civic skills. Pupils at the school gain experience in dealing with the fundamental values of a democratic state and a pluralistic society. The school governing board ensures that there is an atmosphere that reflects the fundamental values of the democratic state and contributes to promoting those values.

The conduct of staff at the school provides an example that pupils can emulate: staff members visibly embody the fundamental values referred to.



## QUALITY AREA: SECURE ENVIRONMENT AND ATMOSPHERE (SEA)

The school adapts its approach and curriculum to the pupil population served by the school and the world in which the pupils live. The school also identifies and corrects statements by pupils that conflict with fundamental values.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to the atmosphere at the school, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 11, section 4, WEC: Education promotes active citizenship and social cohesion in a targeted and coherent manner, focusing on instilling respect for and knowledge of fundamental values and the development of social and civic skills, for instance.
- Article 11, section 4a, WEC: The school governing board ensures a school culture that reflects the fundamental values of the democratic state, and creates an environment in which those values can be practised and are actively promoted.

## QUALITY AREA: LEARNING OUTCOMES (LO)

### LO1. Results

The school achieves learning outcomes that are in line with the target levels associated with the intended leaving profile of the pupils or higher.

### Basic standard of quality

The school has a good picture of the characteristics of its pupil population and, on that basis, it has set ambitious target levels for the learning outcomes that pupils can achieve. In this regard, the school also ensures that these are consistent with subsequent education, the labour market or a care placement, respectively.

The extent to which the school achieves the progress and development plans yields information about the results that the school achieves with its pupils. The Inspectorate assumes that at least 75 percent of pupils will achieve the target levels in core subjects envisaged by the school by the end of their period in school. These target levels are consistent with the destination profile specified in the progress and development plan. For pupils in special education who are required to take the final test, the school will substantiate the results for the core subjects using the results of the final test. For pupils in special secondary education with the destination profile of subsequent education, the learning outcomes are substantiated in relation to the examination results.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to learning outcomes, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education must reflect the development potential of the pupils, and must be organized in such a way that pupils can undergo an uninterrupted process of development. Where possible, it includes children in mainstream education in primary or secondary education.
- Article 48b and article 48d WEC, and Assessment Decree for primary education: All pupils sit a progression test at the end of the school period (unless exempted from doing so by law) that is administered in accordance with regulations.
- Article 41a, WEC, and Articles 4 and 5, Educational decree, WEC: The school draws up a progress and development plan that includes the expected destination profile for the pupil as well as a substantiation.

### LO2. Social and civic skills



## QUALITY AREA: LEARNING OUTCOMES (LO)

Pupils acquire social and civic skills that meet or exceed the level that corresponds with the intended leaving profile of the pupils.

### Basic standard of quality

The school has a good picture of the characteristics of its pupil population and, on that basis, it has set ambitious target levels for the social and civic skills that pupils can achieve. The school takes the needs of subsequent education and participation in society as its starting point when it comes to determining target levels.

During the school period, the school checks whether the pupils are achieving the target levels and determines whether the results achieved are consistent with its own benchmarks. In this way, the school demonstrates that it is adequately equipping pupils for their subsequent destination. The school assesses the results achieved in a reliable and accessible manner.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to social and civic skills at the school, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 11, section 1, and Article 14a, section 2, subsections c and f, Articles 20 to 22, and Article 41a, and associated regulations, WEC: The destination profile achieved guarantees that the pupil is adequately equipped to participate successfully in the destination associated with the destination profile.
- Article 11, section 3, WEC: The education has an identifiable focus on emotional, intellectual and creative development and on the acquisition of knowledge and social, cultural and physical skills.
- Article 11, section 4, WEC: The education focuses identifiably on the development of social and civic skills that enable pupils to be part of and contribute to the pluralistic, democratic society of the Netherlands.

## QUALITY AREA: MANAGEMENT, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (MQA)

### MQA1. Vision, ambitions and goals

The school's vision for good education has wide support, and the school has identified ambitions and goals in relation to that vision, and aims to achieve those goals.

### Basic standard of quality

As part of its system of quality assurance, the school has a broadly supported vision, ambitions and goals designed to achieve good education, ensuring that pupils can make unimpeded progress and development. School management translates the school's vision, ambitions and goals into policy on education and aims to achieve the intended results. School management describes how it ensures that the intended quality of education is achieved, assured and improved, and how it achieves compliance with statutory requirements.

School management ensures that its vision, ambitions and goals reflect the priorities of the school governing board and the characteristics of the school's pupil population. One way in which the school does this is by indicating how it caters for pupils with particular needs, such as support with literacy, and how it meets its statutory duty to promote citizenship and provide for specific learning needs, thereby contributing to equal opportunities for all pupils. The results of previous evaluations, internal and external dialogue are reflected in the goals that relate to policy on education.

School management sets the requirements for achieving its educational goals and ambitions, including determining staffing policy and the way in which education is organized. There is a clear internal division of responsibilities in this respect.

## QUALITY AREA: MANAGEMENT, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (MQA)

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to the vision and goals, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 11, section 3, WEC: Education is designed in such a way that it has a structural and clear focus on preventing pupils from falling behind, in particular when it comes to command of the Dutch language.
- Article 11, section 4, WEC: Education promotes active citizenship and social cohesion (knowledge of and respect for fundamental values and the development of social and civic skills).
- Article 19, WEC: The school governing board must ensure the quality of education at a school. That responsibility means ensuring that the school complies with the statutory requirements and implements the system of quality assurance. It implies, for instance, that verifiable goals have been formulated.
- Article 21, section 1, WEC: The school plan describes the policy regarding the quality of education that is provided at the school, and must address policies on education and staffing policy and the system of quality assurance, at minimum.
- Article 21, section 2, WEC: The description of policy on education includes, at minimum: the content of education, the school's own duties with respect to education, the pedagogical-didactic atmosphere and security. Reference is also made to the school's special needs support programme.
- Article 21, section 4, WEC: Through its system of quality assurance, the school ensures that pupils' development is unimpeded and that its education is tailored to the pupils' progress and development, in part with the help of a pupil and education monitoring system. It must also determine where improvement measures are needed.
- Article 31, section 1, WEC: The school governing board adopts a management statute that shows the division of responsibilities with respect to the management of the school.

### MQA2. Implementation and quality culture

The school achieves the goals with respect to quality, promotes a quality culture, sets parameters and makes interim adjustments where necessary.

### Basic standard of quality

The school achieves the goals of good education, which are based on its vision and ambitions. To this end, school management ensures a safe and professional culture of learning and improvement at the school. Within this quality culture, the school management and (qualified) teaching staff implement the system of quality assurance jointly, so that the school as a whole works towards achieving the educational objectives. School management makes interim adjustments where necessary.

School management ensures that the professional development of the staff takes place within the objectives set. Teachers (working in teams) exercise their own responsibility in organizing the education that they provide.

School management demonstrates educational leadership and ensures the targeted deployment of resources to achieve the objectives set. The school implements the special needs support programme. It works together with other schools, the inter-institutional partnership and other organizations to ensure that no pupil is left behind, that the school can provide a broad curriculum and that pupils can progress to regular education, if possible.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to implementation and quality culture, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 11, section 1, WEC: If necessary, the school governing board consults with the municipality,

## QUALITY AREA: MANAGEMENT, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (MQA)

- youth healthcare services, a social support agency or a healthcare provider.
- Article 11, section 2, WEC: The school governing board determines its special needs support programmes at least once every four years.
  - Article 19, WEC: The school governing board must ensure the quality of education at a school. That responsibility means ensuring that the school complies with the statutory requirements and implements the system of quality assurance. That means, for example, that the school governing board and the schools have an insight into the quality of education. The functioning of the quality cycle must play a central role in this.
  - Article 21, section 3, WEC: The school plan includes a description of the staffing policy. This staffing policy covers, in all cases, the way in which the requirements relating to competencies and maintaining competencies are to be met, the contribution of the staff to the policy on education, the teaching strategies, and the proportional representation of women in the school management, as referred to in Article 30, and the way in which pupils' perspectives on policy are taken into account.
  - Article 28a, WEC: The school governing board is affiliated with an inter-institutional partnership.
  - Article 31a, sections 1 to 3, WEC: The school gives teachers independent responsibility for assessing pupils' educational achievements and give them an adequate opportunity to provide input when it comes to subject-specific, didactic and pedagogical processes within the school. Ongoing agreements for this are recorded in a professional statute.
  - Articles 32b and 34a, WEC: For staff members who require particular qualifications or competencies, the school governing board ensures that adequate information is available regarding their skills and how these are maintained.

### MQA3. Evaluation, accountability and dialogue

The school analyses and systematically evaluates whether it is achieving the goals and reports on this. Where necessary, it adjusts school policy and involves internal and external stakeholders through a proper process of dialogue.

#### Basic standard of quality

As part of its system of quality assurance, school management monitors, evaluates, analyses and assesses the extent to which the ambitions, goals and policy are being achieved and informs the school governing board on this. It actively collects information, both internally and externally, to gain a better insight into implementation, the results of education for pupils and potential opportunities for and threats to the further development of education.

To ensure a good transfer to subsequent education and to keep track of the results achieved by its pupils after they leave, the school maintains contact with the schools/institutions which they go on to attend.

School management ensures joint decision making. To this end, it actively engages in dialogue with parents, staff, the (Joint) Participation Council ((J)PC) and, where applicable, pupils, municipalities, inter-institutional partnerships, educational institutions, (regional) employers and/or care centres.

The school updates stakeholders in an accessible manner at least once every year regarding its goals and working methods, and regarding the results it has achieved.

The school management analyses and assesses the results of the evaluation and, where necessary, incorporates these into its (improvement) policy, so that they contribute to the development and improvement of education. In addition, the school uses the results of the evaluation to improve management. In doing so, it makes clear what effect the input of stakeholders is having on safeguarding and adjusting school policy.

#### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to evaluation, accountability and dialogue, and if so how are these achieved?

**Statutory requirements**

- Article 8, School Councils Act (WMS): The (Joint) Participation Council is provided with all the information reasonably required from the school governing board in a timely manner, so that it can fulfil its duties; it is in all cases provided with the information that is prescribed by law.
- Article 10, WMS: In certain cases, the school governing board requires the prior consent of the (Joint) Participation Council for any decision (for example when amending the school's educational objectives of the school).
- Article 11, WMS: The school governing board must give the (Joint) Participation Council the opportunity to advise in advance on decisions regarding certain matters (such as confirming or amending the main points of the school's multi-annual financial policy).
- Article 11, section 1, WEC: Education is organized in such a way that pupils undergo an uninterrupted process of development; education is designed to achieve progress in the development of the pupils.
- Article 12, WMS: The school governing board requires the prior consent of the staff members in the (Joint) Participation Council with respect to decisions on certain matters (such as when confirming or changing the composition of the staff).
- Article 14, WMS: The school governing board requires the prior consent of the parents and pupils section of the (Joint) Participation Council with respect to certain decisions (such as when approving the school prospectus).
- Articles 19 and 21, section 4, WEC: The school governing board ensures quality at its schools using a system of quality assurance. This means, for instance, that there are regular evaluations regarding whether these goals are being achieved.
- Article 22, section 1, subsection a, WEC: In the school prospectus, the school clarifies what the goals of education are and which results are achieved through the didactic process.
- Article 22, section 1, subsection l, WEC: The school prospectus must report on findings of the system of quality assurance and the measures taken as a result.
- Article 44, WEC: Up until two years after the pupil has left the school, the school governing board of the school where the pupil followed special secondary education advises the parents, or the pupil if they are of age and deemed capable of acting, at their request about following continued education, holding a position on the labour market or functioning in a form or care placement.

**5.4 Additional statutory requirements**

Not all the statutory requirements set out in the legislation and regulations that pertain to the education system are included in the inspection framework. This applies to the Certificate of Good Conduct (Verklaring omtrent gedrag, VOG) and the voluntary parental contribution, for example. This is because these are not associated with a standard part of the assessment framework, so we classify them as 'additional statutory requirements'. The school plan is an important accountability document for school policy, and often in relation to additional statutory requirements too.

Our annual work plan, published on the Inspectorate website, states which themes we will be looking at that year. Partly on the basis of the reports and signals we receive, we may ask schools and school governing boards about possible non-compliance with the additional statutory requirements. Non-compliance with (one or more of) the additional statutory requirements cannot, in that case, lead to a judgement of 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Very Weak'. However, the school or school governing board will be required to rectify the shortcoming by a deadline specified by the Inspectorate.

## 6. Judgements and appraisals

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we describe how we assign judgements and appraisals. We do this as transparently as possible, based on the assessment framework for school governing boards and the assessment framework for schools, and using the evaluation descriptors included in this chapter. Our judgements always relate to the quality of management and governance achieved and the education that pupils receive.

In this chapter, we first discuss how we apply the framework for the core functions at the system level (section 6.2), as included in chapter 3. We apply these exclusively as part of our role in promoting quality. We then explain how we arrive at judgements and appraisals based on the assessment framework for school governing boards and the assessment framework for schools (chapters 4 and 5). In general, whether or not the standard is 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory' will depend on whether the statutory requirements have been fulfilled (judgement). We allocate a 'Good' appraisal when ambitions relating to basic quality requirements and/or which surpass them are achieved. This is described in more detail in section 6.3. Section 6.4 describes the decision criteria for assessing the standards for school governing boards, and the decision criteria for assessing the quality of education in schools are described in section 6.5.

As of August 1, 2024, the standard Basic Skills will be of equal importance as the standards Results, Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support, Teaching Strategies and Safety and Security. Like these standards, it will therefore count more heavily than the other standards in the assessment at school level from that date. Until August 1, 2024, the standard Basic Skills does count in the assessment at school level, but not yet with the weight of the standards Results, Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support, Teaching Strategies and Safety and Security.

### 6.2 Promoting quality at the system level

Chapter 3 describes system-level supervision. While we do reflect on the system level, we do not issue any judgements or appraisals at this level. We apply the framework in order to examine the three core functions of education: qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities, as well as the essential requirements for each of these areas. In our annual *The State of Education* report (section 7.2), we describe system-level performance relating to the core functions and requirements of the education system as a whole.

We discuss these themes as part of our inspection activities with respect to school governing boards and schools. Our data at the system level may sometimes indicate that in a particular region quality is being achieved to a greater or lesser extent with respect to (certain) core functions. By discussing and exploring the ambitions of school governing boards in relation to those core functions through an open dialogue, we can build up a better picture of schools and the way in which they address the core functions.

### 6.3 Judging and appraising standards for school governing board and school

In order to assess and assign judgements and appraisals for the quality of school governing boards and schools, we apply the standards described in chapters 4 and 5. A standard consists of a description of the basic standard of quality, based on the statutory requirements. For each standard, we also look at the questions relating to additional ambitions.

In determining whether a particular standard is judged as 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory', we consider whether the school governing board or school is compliant with the statutory requirements, and thus whether the basic standard of quality has been achieved. A 'Good' appraisal involves the achievement of ambitions. The table below shows how the judgement and appraisal are reached for the standard level:

Judgement/appraisal standard	Benchmark for the standard
Good	The board/school complies with all the statutory requirements and also achieves ambitions that go beyond these standards.
Satisfactory	The board/school complies with all the statutory requirements and thereby achieves the basic quality requirements.
Unsatisfactory	The board/school does not comply with the statutory requirements.

#### 6.4 Judgements and appraisals at the board level

In order to assure the basic standard of quality in schools, we assume that the board is able to implement the quality cycle, as described in the statutory requirements of the three standards in the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition (see chapter 4). When this is not the case, an 'Unsatisfactory' judgement will be forthcoming in the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition. If the board meets the statutory requirements and achieves its ambitions, we rate this quality area as 'Good'. The way in which the board-level judgement or appraisal is arrived at is as follows:

Judgement/appraisal at school governing board level	Benchmark for quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition
Good	Two standards from the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition are 'Good' and the third is 'Satisfactory' or higher.
Satisfactory	All three standards from the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition are 'Satisfactory' or higher.
Unsatisfactory	One (or more) standard(s) from the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition is/are 'Unsatisfactory'.

Failure to meet a statutory requirement that relates to financial continuity or lawfulness will, in all cases, lead to a remedial action order for the school governing board concerned. This also applies if the annual accounts of the school governing board have not been submitted as required by law. The extent to which the judgement or appraisal of the relevant standard within the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition is adjusted depends on the seriousness of the shortcoming.

#### 6.5 Judgements and appraisals at the school level

Our judgement or appraisal of the quality achieved by a school<sup>20</sup> (overall judgement) is based on the following benchmarks:

Overall judgement at school level	Benchmark
Satisfactory (basic standard of quality)	The standards Results, Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support, Teaching (Strategies) and Safety and Security are 'Satisfactory', and no more than one other standard in the quality areas of Teaching-Learning Process or Secure Environment and Atmosphere is 'Unsatisfactory'.
Unsatisfactory	The standard Results or Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support or Teaching (Strategies) or Safety and Security is 'Unsatisfactory', or two or

<sup>20</sup> In secondary education, we always make statements at the level of the department/type of education.

Overall judgement at school level	Benchmark
	more other standards in the quality areas of Teaching-Learning Process or Secure Environment and Atmosphere are 'Unsatisfactory'.
Very Weak	Two of the following standards are 'Unsatisfactory': Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support, Teaching Strategies, Safety and Security, and/or Implementation and Quality Culture (MQA2).

### Benchmarking as of Aug. 1, 2024

As of Aug. 1, 2024, the assessment of the quality achieved by a school will be based on the benchmarks in the table below.

	Benchmark
Satisfactory	The standards Results, Basic Skills, Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support, Teaching (Strategies) and Safety and Security are 'satisfactory', and no more than one other standard in the quality areas of Teaching-Learning Process or Secure Environment and Atmosphere is 'unsatisfactory'.
Unsatisfactory	The standard Results or Basic Skills or Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support or Teaching (Strategies) or Safety and Security is 'unsatisfactory', or two or more other standards in the quality areas of Teaching-Learning Process or Secure Environment and Atmosphere are 'unsatisfactory'.
Very Weak	The standard for Results is 'unsatisfactory' and one or more of the following standards Basic Skills and/or Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support and/or Teaching (Strategies) and/or Safety and Security is/are 'unsatisfactory'.

#### 6.5.1 Statutory benchmark for very weak education

The benchmark for the judgement of 'Very Weak' is defined by law. Article 19a, WEC states that the quality of education is 'Very Weak' if the school fails to comply with two or more of the statutory criteria and, as a result thereof, either does not provide for a safe environment in the school as stipulated in Article 5a, WEC, or has not organized its provision in such a way that pupils enjoy both unimpeded development and an education that has been designed to suit their progress, as defined in Article 11, section 1, WEC.

An inspection report in which the Inspectorate concludes that the quality of the education is 'Very Weak' is to be viewed as a Decree under the definition of the General Administrative Law Act (AWB), once it has been adopted. A school governing board can appeal against the judgement 'Very Weak', and can also appeal against the relevant Decree (Article 20 section 6, WOT).

### 6.6 Opinion-forming

#### 6.6.1 Compliance with statutory requirements

In reaching our judgements, we use the above benchmarks as guidelines. The key factor in our judgement is, in particular, the extent to which educational practice reflects the spirit and intent of the statutory requirements. For a 'Satisfactory' judgement, we generally assume that all the statutory requirements associated with the relevant standard have been met. We assess quality as defined in the standard as a whole, rather than with respect to every individual statutory requirement for the standard. It is thus possible for a school or school governing board to be rated as 'adequate' with respect to a particular standard even though it has not yet achieved strict compliance with all the relevant constituent requirements. As long as this has a limited effect on the quality observed at the school or for pupils, and as long as the shortcoming can be rectified relatively easily and quickly, a 'Satisfactory' judgement for the standard will be forthcoming. The school governing board will then be issued with remedial action for

that particular aspect of the standard and must ensure that this is carried out. If the statutory requirements relating to financial continuity or compliance have not been met, the relevant standard within the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition cannot be rated as 'Satisfactory' or 'Good'.

### **6.6.2 Evaluating ambitions**

Both school governing boards and schools identify ambitions based on their vision. These ambitions may relate to basic quality requirements but some ambitions may also go beyond those. In addition to meeting statutory requirements, we base a 'Good' appraisal on all the ambitions achieved by the school governing board or by the school with respect to a specific standard. We examine whether the school governing board (in the case of a four-yearly inspection) or the school (in the case of a school-level inspection) is working towards and achieving its stated ambitions. The vision and plans at the level of the school governing board and their implementation at the school level by school management, as set out in the school plan, play an important role in this.

### **6.6.3 Environment of school governing board and school**

The environment and conditions in which the school governing board and the school are operating can positively or negatively influence the quality of education and financial administration. Environmental factors and conditions include, for example, the characteristics and development of the pupil population served, the availability of staff, recent mergers, school buildings and facilities, organizational development and the development of governance. We expect school governing boards and schools to respond to these factors in their vision, ambitions, goals and policy in order to achieve the core functions of education for all their pupils. Our judgements always relate to the quality of management and governance achieved and the education that pupils receive. The environment and operating conditions mainly play a role in determining the details of the inspection and possible follow-up supervision.



# 7. Supervisory procedure

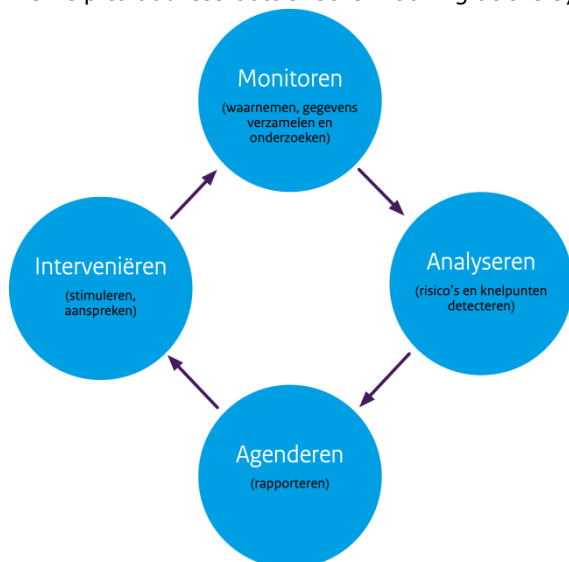
## 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter we describe the manner in which we exercise supervision. First, in section 7.2 we describe our method for system-level supervision. School governing boards and schools address the core functions of the system. In addition, school governing boards guarantee the implementation and quality of education in the schools that they are responsible for. In section 7.3, we describe our method for supervising school governing boards and schools. Section 7.4 describes the activities that we undertake for this purpose. In the last section of this chapter, we discuss our method of follow-up supervision.

## 7.2 System-level supervision

### 7.2.1 Procedure for system-level supervision

We provide a picture of the quality of the Dutch education system as a whole through system-level supervision. We identify where things are going well and where they are not, we prioritize themes and we help to address bottlenecks. Looking at the system as a whole helps us to understand, for example:



**Figure 7.2.1a Cycle of system-level supervision**

pupils' progress through the education system, bottlenecks around the transition between sectors and equality/inequality of opportunities. This helps us to ensure that education continues to improve for pupils. Chapter 3 includes a framework for this, together with a description of system-level quality.

A number of steps are involved in system-level supervision (see figure 7.2.1a):

- We monitor trends and developments within the Dutch education system.
- We analyse where things are going well, but also reflect on the issues that may pose a risk to quality across the system as a whole.
- We ensure that the main risks and bottlenecks that we identify in the education system are prioritized, and we report on these every year in our report entitled *The State of Education*.
- We intervene where appropriate, based on the supervisor's task of encouraging improvements. We do this through system-level, board-level and school-level supervision, but also through other activities designed to promote quality in the field of education.

We will discuss our monitoring and analytical activities in more detail in section 7.2.2. In section 7.2.3, we will describe how we prioritize issues and intervene.

### 7.2.2 Monitoring and analysis of developments

We systematically monitor developments in the education system using the framework of the system-level quality descriptors (see chapter 3). We look at how all school governing boards and schools are fulfilling the three core functions: qualification, socialization and allocation, including selection and equal opportunities. We also look at the conditions that are essential to this: efficiency, as evidenced by the

availability and spending of financial resources, staffing policy, quality assurance and administrative conduct.

We collect data from various sources for the purpose of monitoring and subsequent analysis. We use existing data, data from system-level and institution-level supervision, signals received and we also collect data ourselves through thematic school visits.

*Existing data*, data from system-level and institution-level supervision, signals

We use data gathered through the supervision of school governing boards and schools, including data that the school governing board itself has available. In addition, we use signals that we receive about education. We also use data from other organizations and from academic research. We analyse the majority of the data at least once every year, but we may also carry out several analyses per year. We also analyse educational attainment in a broader sense and look specifically at risks to the quality of education.

*Thematic school visits*

We monitor developments by reviewing boards and schools or by collaborating with others to collect data. We refer to this as thematic school visit. A thematic school visit can have various objectives, such as:

- to establish a picture of changes in the quality of a particular aspect of the education system across school governing boards or schools.
- to identify risks or system-level bottlenecks, such as a bottleneck affecting a particular region or a specific target group, and where possible find explanations for these issues.

We structure thematic school visits on the basis of current issues or system-level issues that have already been identified. We sometimes do this for a school governing board or a school. In this case, we may combine the thematic school visit with the four-yearly inspection of the school governing board and the schools, as described in section 7.3. We may also conduct our inspection in a different way, by using questionnaires, observing the teaching-learning process, holding discussions with several school governing boards or schools at the same time or holding discussions with academics and experts, for example.

The aim of thematic school visits is to explore the extent to which the education system is successfully achieving the core functions of education outlined previously. We will also look for explanations in the areas that are not performing as well as they should be, and identify what does and does not contribute to the successful achievement of the core functions. We actively initiate a dialogue with stakeholders about this.

Our Annual Work Plan details the areas that we wish to inspect. In this plan, we describe multi-annual inspection programmes and one-off thematic school visits that are aimed at exploring the core functions or system-level bottlenecks that have been identified. Themes that require urgent research may lead to changes to our inspection agenda.

### **7.2.3 Prioritizing and intervening**

We distinguish four types of activities when it comes to prioritization and intervening on the basis of system-level supervision. These are described below. Prioritization and intervening are sometimes closely related, because prioritizing is a form of intervention.

*The State of Education*

Every year, we publish *The State of Education*. This is our report on how the education system in the Netherlands is doing. What is going well, and where are there bottlenecks, opportunities and risks? The information derived from our thematic school visits is also incorporated into *The State of Education*. The Inspectorate's duty to report in this way is enshrined in the Constitution (Article 23, section 8) and in the Education Regulation Act (WOT).

*Thematic reports*

We bring the results of thematic school visits to the attention of the school governing boards, schools and wider society in various ways. The purpose of this is to reflect the current situation with respect to

the relevant theme and to prioritize risks and bottlenecks. We also encourage collaboration so that (further) improvements can be made. We often do this in the form of an inspection report, but also by means of a symposium, visits from inspectors, a podcast or webinar. We focus as closely as possible on the target group that is most involved, such as teachers or, for example, all the partners in a specific region.

#### *Themes as a part of the supervision of school governing boards and schools*

When supervising school governing boards and schools, we sometimes discuss themes, specific bottlenecks and good examples from the regional or local setting. This gives us some entry points to initiate discussions with the school governing board and schools regarding their ambitions that affect the core functions linked to their environment, or risks.

#### *Tailored interventions*

In addition to the activities outlined above, we also deploy specific interventions, where appropriate. From a range of sources, themes relating to the education system as a whole emerge that we wish to address in the public interest. For example, there may be a bottleneck that involves several school governing boards, an inter-institutional partnership, groups of employers and the local municipality, all of which play a role at the local level. In such cases, it is worth putting that bottleneck on the agenda of those actors. Examples include regional discussions on tackling the shortage of teaching staff, demographic or economic decline, or special needs care for specific groups of pupils.

### **7.3 Supervision of school governing boards and schools**

Our supervision of school governing boards and schools focuses on how school governing boards guarantee the (financial) quality of education and promote improvements. To answer these questions, we conduct inspection activities at the level of school governing board and schools. Below, we first explain our working methods, and then discuss the supervisory activities that we carry out.

#### **7.3.1 Procedure for the supervision of school governing boards and schools**

The school governing boards are ultimately responsible for the quality of education at their schools. When supervising school governing boards and schools, we base our approach on proportionality, tailored supervision, transparency and accountability. We explain the concepts of proportionality and tailored supervision in more detail in section 7.3.2.

- proportionality: we adapt the intensity of our supervision of the board and of the schools in line with the quality of the board. This is explained in section 7.3.2;
- tailored supervision: because school governing boards and schools vary greatly in terms of size, regional and local circumstances and development, we choose the structure and design of each inspection individually. We engage in various inspection and verification activities.
- transparency and accountability: at the start of an inspection, we enter into a dialogue with the school governing board and substantiate the design that has been chosen. During the inspection, we will inform the board of any changes made to this design. After the inspection, we will substantiate the results presented in the report and the adversarial procedure will begin. We base our judgements on at least three different sources, wherever possible. This principle assures the quality of our inspection activities and we refer to it as triangulation.

#### **7.3.2 Proportionality and tailored supervision**

We adapt the intensity of our supervisory activities to the quality achieved by the school governing board. Supervision is thus proportional. The more effectively the school governing board is able to oversee the quality of education and financial administration, guarantee quality in its schools and ensure accountability in relation to quality, the less intensive the supervision that is required. Conversely, the less the school governing board is able to guarantee quality (including in relation to finances) and to ensure accountability for quality, the more intensive our supervision will be. Urgent signals or complaints can, in all cases, lead to an inspection or visit, even if the previous quality assessment for the relevant school governing board was 'Satisfactory' or 'Good'. To determine whether this is necessary, wherever possible, we first discuss the relevant signal with the school governing board concerned.

We determine the intensity of our supervisory activities based on our information on the quality of the school governing board. We make this estimate by analysing the data that is available to us and other additional sources:

- We have inspected and assessed all school governing boards over the past four years. The results of these and other inspection activities and forms of contact provide the initial elements of our picture of the quality achieved by a school governing board and the board's fulfilment of its duty to guarantee quality (internally).
- We supplement this picture using data from the performance and risk analysis that we carry out every year for each school governing board and for all schools (see section 7.3.3). We analyse trends and changes in the data over time and relate these to other school governing boards.
- In our analysis, we take account of signals received by the Inspectorate about a particular school governing board and its schools, in order to add to our picture of the quality of the school governing board. This can include recent developments, such as possible incidents or other reports.

We analyse all this information in order to determine the intensity of our supervision. This gives us an insight into whether or not there are (potential) risks to the quality of education and/or risks to the quality of the school governing board. This forms the basis on which we determine the proportionality of supervision – it may be intensive, but also less intensive.

Subsequently, we identify the supervisory activities that are the most appropriate given the circumstances of the school governing board. Which instruments will we need to assess the quality of that particular school governing board? Is just one school involved or is the school governing board responsible for several schools? For smaller school governing boards and single-school boards, we take into account the way in which school management interconnects with the school governing board level. Whom do we need to speak to, how and where will we observe the educational process? These are tailored aspects of our supervisory activities.

We describe more and less intensive forms of (follow-up) supervision in sections 7.4 and 7.5.

### **7.3.3 Annual performance and risk analysis**

Monitoring performance at the level of the school governing board and its schools helps us to identify potential risks early and gain an insight into the functioning of the school governing board. This is done in accordance with Article 11 of the Education Regulation Act using a number of indicators. These indicators include financial data, data on staff, safety at schools, pupils' results and how quickly those were achieved. At least once annually, we carry out an analysis of the data we obtain through the monitor. If we suspect that there may be risks, we perform a risk analysis.

This expert analysis may or may not confirm our suspicions of shortcomings with regard to the quality of education and/or financial administration. The analysis is carried out by a team of experts that includes knowledge and expertise in the fields of data analysis, quality of education and financial administration. This provides a comprehensive picture of the quality of education, governance and management, and financial administration.

### **7.4 Supervisory activities in relation to school governing boards and schools**

The supervision of school governing boards and schools encompasses a number of activities. We inspect school governing boards once every four years. This inspection is known as the 'four-yearly inspection of school governing boards and schools' (or hereafter: four-yearly inspection). As described in section 7.3, this is done in a way that is proportionate and tailored. As part of the four-yearly inspection, we also look at schools, because it is at the school level that we verify whether the governance provided by the school governing board is effective and whether the school governing board acts on the basis of up-to-date information on quality. We describe this type of inspection in more detail in section 7.4.1.

We also carry out interim inspections at schools. We do this if risks have been identified and during the thematic school visits that are part of system-level supervision. School visits and inspections may be announced or unannounced. We describe school-level inspections in section 7.4.2.

Checks on financial administration may take place both as part of the four-yearly inspections of school governing boards and schools and interim inspections. We describe these in section 7.4.3. Finally, there are a few other inspection activities, which are described in section 7.4.4.

### 7.4.1 Four-yearly inspection of the school governing board and schools

In the four-yearly inspection we seek to find out whether the governance and management on the quality provided by the school governing board is adequate, whether there is sound financial administration and how this contributes to the core functions of education (system-wide themes). We use the assessment framework for school governing boards, as described in chapter 4.

The four-yearly inspection usually consists of the components described in figure 7.4.1a. We determine the intensity of our supervisory activities (proportionality) based on our information on the quality of the school governing board, and while carrying out the inspection we take account of the specific structure and context of the school governing board and the schools (tailored supervision).

**Figure 7.4.1a Steps in the four-yearly inspection of school governing boards and schools**



An important part of our working method for the four-yearly inspection is verification. Verification activities involve speaking with those involved in the schools, school governing boards or other involved parties in order to ascertain whether the school governing board has an adequate view of the quality of its education, financial administration and the governance provided by the school governing board.

#### **Verification activities**

We carry out verification activities to determine whether the board is focusing sufficiently on the quality of schools and financial developments. We verify the picture provided with respect to quality and the leadership of the board. We deploy various verification activities in a proportional manner, and we apply tailored supervision. This is described in the inspection plan. For example, we verify the picture of quality provided by observing classes and by speaking to pupils, parents or school leaders. School-level inspections (see section 7.4.2) can also help to verify the picture of quality. In order to form a picture of financial or other developments in relation to the ambitions, objectives and quality assurance of the school governing board, we may also request management information. We may also hold discussions about this with the school governing board or, for example, the controller.

These verification activities help to achieve the objectives of the inspection – namely, to ascertain administrative quality based on the assessment framework for school governing boards. In contrast to inspections that focus on risks and 'Good' appraisals, in verification activities we make no judgement of the level of the standards or the school. The verification contributes to the judgement at the board level. We do share our findings regarding the extent to which administrative quality is evident at the school, with the school. If we identify risks at a school, we will discuss these with the school governing board. Where necessary, we will conduct a quality inspection focusing on risk assessment.

### **7.4.2 School-level inspections**

At the school level, we apply various types of inspection, both as part of the four-yearly inspection (see section 7.4.1) and beyond. When a school-level inspection takes place as part of the four-yearly inspection, the activities are included in the research plan. This plan always includes verification activities, as described in the previous section.

#### *Risk-based inspection*

Inspections relating to risk assessment are carried out as part of the four-yearly inspection. But they can also take place outside it, based on the annual performance analysis and other reports or signals received. This enables us to keep track of potential risks, even though we expect school governing boards to keep this in mind as part of their quality cycle. When a school governing board is fulfilling its responsibility for quality properly, in cases where we detect potential risks, we would expect the school governing board to look into the causes of those itself, to take appropriate measures and to report back to the Inspectorate. However, in cases where a school governing board is unable to guarantee quality in its schools, we will carry out (part of) the risk-based inspection ourselves (depending on the nature of the risks). That means that we examine and assess one or more standards in the assessment framework at the school level (see chapter 5) and make arrangements about reporting and accountability regarding the findings.

#### *Thematic school visits*

More information on thematic school visits can be found in section 7.2, but we also describe these here for the sake of completeness. As part of our activities relating to system-level supervision, there are certain themes that we explore in greater depth. We visit schools and/or school governing boards in order to do this. These thematic school visits may coincide with the four-yearly inspection, but they may also be conducted separately. During thematic visits, we provide judgments in a thematic report at the system level (not at an institutional level). This does not involve judgments and remedial actions regarding individual boards. In specific cases, however, judgments and remedial actions can be issued to individual boards. In those cases, this is done in a report at the institutional level. The school governing board is informed of this when the inspection is announced.

### **7.4.3 Inspections specifically concerning financial administration**

#### *Supervision of financial continuity*

Every year, school governing boards submit their annual accounts to the Education Executive Agency (DUO), along with a management report containing a multi-annual budget. On the basis of this information, we analyse the current and future key financial figures for each school governing board every year. If there are any risks to the continuity of education, we will carry out an inspection at the school governing board level focusing on financial continuity. This may also be done during the four-yearly inspection. If key financial figures or signals received provide grounds to do so, we will start an inspection of financial continuity at any time.

We move to special financial supervision if it appears that the continuity of education may be at risk in the near future or if there is inadequate compliance with legislation and regulations in this area. In the report, we will explain which remedial actions have been ordered and which agreements have been made with the school governing board, such as what information the school governing board needs to provide and when. This form of intervention is designed to ensure that risks and shortcomings are eliminated rapidly. If the school governing board is unable to remedy the situation, our supervision will be intensified (see section 7.5).

#### *Supervision of financial compliance*

The school governing board is accountable for the acquisition and expenditure of government funding. This accounting is assessed by an accountant appointed by the internal supervisory board. The accountant must work according to the professional standards of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Chartered Accountants (NBA) and according to the Education-Sector Accountants Protocol drawn up by the Inspectorate in consultation with stakeholders<sup>21</sup>. Every year, we carry out checks on a number of accountants to see whether their auditing activities comply with the rules. Any points for attention arising from these supervisory activities are discussed annually with the NBA and may constitute grounds to amend the Education-Sector Accountants Protocol.

When there are signals of the possible unlawful acquisition or use of funds, we will carry out an inspection of the school governing board. If we conclude that unlawful acquisition or expenditure of funds has taken place, this will generally be followed by a change to the funding provided and the recovery of funding.

In addition to supervising education legislation in its four-yearly inspection, the Inspectorate is also charged with supervising and enforcing the Standards for Remuneration Act (WNT) in the education sector. The WNT does not apply only to the education sector, but extends to the entire public and semi-public sector. The supervision of education-specific legislation through an inspection every four years and the supervision of the WNT are therefore carried out separately by the Inspectorate.

### **7.4.4 Other supervisory activities**

#### *Targeted inspection*

If the Inspectorate receives serious signals or other information, this may lead to an inspection of a school governing board or school focusing on a specific subject. This may be done as part of or outside the four-yearly inspection. In the event of urgent signals or serious incidents, we naturally intervene immediately in an appropriate manner.

If a targeted inspection is required, we consider specific aspects of governance, financial administration or education (Article 15, WOT). As with other forms of inspection, we adapt the intensity of our inspection to the quality of the school governing board.

#### *Meetings with the school governing board*

School governing boards and the Inspectorate have the option of holding periodical meetings. A specific inspector is assigned to each school governing board, who keeps in touch with the board. This includes inspections and follow-up supervision (including remedial actions, see section 7.5). The designated inspector also speaks to the school governing board regarding risks, signals received and incidents. The school governing board can inform the contact inspector about these. The designated inspector may also ask the school governing board about potential risks, or (depending on the quality of the board) request the school governing board to look into potential risks in more detail itself. Meetings may also be about

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<sup>21</sup> Such as the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Education Executive Agency (DUO), educational umbrella organizations, the Royal Netherlands Institute of Chartered Accountants (NBA) and accountants firms.

relevant developments inside or outside the educational institution. We also touch on issues at the level of the education system as a whole.

Initiating communication is a joint responsibility. The governing board can choose to keep the designated inspector updated on relevant developments throughout the year and to inform them if any urgent matters arise, such as (serious) specific signals. The designated inspector may also communicate with the school governing board regularly in order to stay 'in the loop' or to discuss urgent matters. The information gained through these contacts is also discussed as part of the monitoring process mentioned previously.

## **7.5 Follow-up supervision, intensification and sanctions**

Follow-up supervision is necessary when shortcomings are discovered in the school governing board or schools as the result of a four-yearly inspection or when other inspections or supervisory activities provide grounds for this.

### **7.5.1 Follow-up supervision during a remedial period**

Of course, follow-up supervision is not always required. When shortcomings are identified during an inspection, agreements on follow-up supervision will be made. The intensity of this supervision depends on the quality of the school governing board. We may identify shortcomings at the level of the school governing board and/or the school.

#### *No shortcomings*

If an inspection shows that the school governing board is assuring the basic quality requirements and therefore meets the statutory requirements and financial requirements applicable to the school governing board and the school, no follow-up supervision is required. The school governing board and the schools then fall under regular supervision, which means that we monitor performance and risks annually and assess the school governing board every four years. There may also be interim contact where appropriate.

#### *Shortcomings in the school governing board*

If there are shortcomings at the school governing board level, such as inadequate basic (financial) quality resulting in non-compliance with legislation and regulations, we agree a deadline for those shortcomings to be rectified with the school governing board. Depending on the seriousness and extent of the shortcoming, the school governing board will report on this process to the Inspectorate and we will verify whether the shortcoming has indeed been rectified. The intensity with which we do this is determined in proportion to the quality standards achieved by the school governing board.

#### *Shortcomings at schools*

In the event of shortcomings in the basic standard of quality at a school, we make agreements with the school governing board regarding the period within which quality must be rectified. If the seriousness and extent of the shortcomings provide grounds to do so, as in the case of the judgement of 'Very Weak', we will draw up a supervision plan to monitor progress in relation to the remedial action order and conduct a follow-up inspection. In the case of a minor shortcoming and if the governance of the school governing boards is otherwise satisfactory, the school governing board will report to us on the remedial action. Depending on the quality of the school governing board, we will make agreements regarding the follow-up inspection.



### **Proportionality and tailored supervision in relation to remedial action**

Proportionality and tailored supervision also influence the way in which we carry out supervision during a remedial period. For example, we may hold progress meetings or draw up a plan including agreements on the steps the school will take to achieve the required progress.

For a school governing board that is already providing adequate governance, we will make the school governing board responsible for assuring quality and rectifying any shortcomings at a school. That means that we do not always conduct a comprehensive follow-up inspection ourselves, but leave this up to the school governing board. Then we ask the school governing board to report on how the school has made the required progress and what the results of its actions have been.

If a school governing board is unable to guarantee good governance of (aspects of) quality in its schools, we conduct (part of) the follow-up inspection ourselves.

#### *Consequences of the results of the follow-up inspection*

If the remedial action taken or the quality of the reporting requested is inadequate, this has implications regarding which supervisory interventions we select and how we assess the quality of the school governing board. If we conclude that the school governing board is not able to assure quality adequately, the intensity of our follow-up supervision will increase. This is done proportionally.

The above is illustrated in table 7.5.1a. A tailored approach is determined for each inspection.

**Table 7.5.1a Structure of follow-up supervision**

<b>Results of inspection</b>	<b>Structure of follow-up supervision</b>
Meets or surpasses basic quality requirements	No follow-up supervision; regular supervision
Shortcomings at the level of school governing board	Progress monitored by Inspectorate <i>and/or</i> school governing board responsible for remedial action <i>and:</i> follow-up inspection by the Inspectorate
Shortcomings at the school level	Progress monitored by Inspectorate <i>and/or</i> school governing board responsible for remedial action <i>and/or</i> follow-up inspection by the Inspectorate

### **7.5.2 Escalation**

Escalation refers to interventions encouraging school governing boards to implement the improvements we deem necessary. Escalation is a gradual process in which we constantly observe which instruments are required in order to ensure improvements actually occur. If a school governing board or school is unable to successfully take required measures, we will intensify our supervision. This may entail further and more detailed inspection, such as a specific investigation into administrative conduct. In extreme cases, when we see no improvement, we may apply various sanctions or take measures. If there is no improvement and an increased risk of deterioration for an extended period, the next phase of escalation will come into effect. This escalation will be proportionate to the powers of the Inspectorate and subsequently those of the minister. The minister has the power to immediately withhold all (or part) of the funding in the event of a failure to comply with a statutory requirement. The minister can only do so after the school governing board has been given a reasonable period of time to remedy the

shortcomings. The escalation process is different in each supervisory situation, and the sequence of steps in intervention and escalation is determined based on the situation.

Intervention may range from remedial action orders to address shortcomings at the school level to much more drastic measures involving school funding and action at the level of the school governing board.

Naturally, in all cases we evaluate the severity and duration of the associated risks and whether the school governing board can realistically be expected to bring about an improvement.

## 8. Communication and reporting

### 8.1 Introduction

The Inspectorate has a public duty to inform parents and society about our findings and our judgements concerning the quality of governance and education. For this reason, we actively ensure that the results of our inspections and judgements are accessible in various ways. As such, we contribute to the information that is available on schools, school governing boards and the education system as a whole. In addition to the information provided by the Inspectorate, school governing boards, schools and others also contribute to the information that is available about schools and education, each based on their respective role and public responsibilities.

In addition to signals received via the Inspectorate's helpline, the website and *The State of Education*, reports on thematic school visits and inspections of school governing boards and schools are also available. In principle, all our reports are in the public domain.<sup>22</sup> This means that we are transparent in our working methods, appraisals and judgements. Our reports can be found primarily on our website. In this chapter, we describe the way in which we communicate and we explain the different forms of reporting.

### 8.2 Communication

We communicate the results of our inspection activities in several ways. First, we consider which target groups will find information on our supervisory activities the most useful. We decide who may be involved in improving the quality of education or in resolving problems. Then we modify the form of our communication accordingly. In addition to the various more formal methods of reporting described below, we also use other means of communication. For example of infographics or animations. The use of social media, contributions to relevant conferences, giving lectures and organizing conferences or round table discussions are also part of our communication repertoire. Another important communication channel is our annual conference, at which we present *The State of Education*.

We not only communicate the results of our inspections, but we also provide more general information. Using the Inspectorate's helpline, parents, school governing boards and schools can, for example, ask questions about education or our supervision in general, or about specific schools. They can also express their concerns regarding education. Confidential matters can be reported to our confidential inspectors. Signals that we receive regarding education have a whistle-blowing function for us, and we take them into account when we conduct our annual performance analysis and expert analysis in preparation for the four-yearly inspection. Sometimes the information provided is so serious in nature that we carry out an inspection immediately.

### 8.3 Reporting

We report on the system level as well as at the levels of school governing boards and schools. We generally publish our reports on school governing boards and schools five weeks after they have been approved (Article 21, section 1, WOT).<sup>23</sup>

#### 8.3.1 System level

We report on our system-level inspection activities in the following ways.

##### *The State of Education*

Every year, we report on the education system as a whole in *The State of Education*. We publish this report every spring. In it, we describe whether the education system is achieving its core functions. We also provide a picture of the quality of school governing boards and institutions, positive developments and possible concerns. When writing *The State of Education* report, we use inspection data from our four-yearly inspections, thematic school visits and data from (international) academic research. This

<sup>22</sup> Article 15, section 2 of the Education Regulation Act specifies that reports on a specific inspection are to be published unless the nature or scope of the inspection make this impossible.

<sup>23</sup> Article 15, section 2 of the Education Regulation Act specifies that reports on a specific inspection are to be published unless the nature or scope of the inspection make this impossible.

enables us to provide an up-to-date picture of performance across the system as a whole (see chapter 7).

We also report annually on the financial situation of educational institutions and the education system. To do this, we use financial data from the institutions themselves, as well as the supervisory activities and inspections that we conduct on the financial administration of institutions. We indicate what is going well and point out potential risks.

#### *Thematic reports*

We report on our thematic school visits in various ways. For example, this forms one component of *The State of Education* report. Often, we also publish a separate themed report.

### **8.3.2 School governing board level**

The four-yearly inspection report includes our findings at the level of the school governing board. This report focuses on the school governing board and provides a complete picture of our findings and judgements at the level of governance and of the inspection activities that have taken place at the schools as part of this. We also report briefly on our verification activities and – where applicable – quality inspections focusing on risk assessment and/or inspections relating to financial risks. We provide no judgements or appraisals with respect to school-level verification activities. The report on this is therefore summarized.

In the report, we differentiate between assessments that relate to compliance with statutory requirements on the one hand (whether the schools and the school governing board meet the basic standard of quality) and our appraisal of the school governing board's ambitions on the other hand. Finally, the report describes any remedial action required and any follow-up inspections that relate to addressing non-compliance with the statutory requirements. The deadlines for rectifying shortcomings are also specified, where applicable (see paragraph 7.5).

Judgements at the level of the school governing board are presented together with the relevant inspection report on our website. The purpose of this is to inform stakeholders about the results of our supervisory activities. If a follow-up inspection confirms that a school governing board has taken the measures necessary to rectify the shortcomings identified, the revised judgement will be published on our website.

#### *Targeted inspections*

If previous inspections have shown that a school governing board is unable to carry out the necessary remedial measures, or if signals received indicate problems that require the immediate investigation of a specific bottleneck, the Inspectorate will carry out a targeted inspection. These inspections are carried out in the context of Article 15, WOT. A report is drafted regarding the findings and conclusions, and in principle this is published on the website of the Inspectorate.

#### *Inspections focusing on financial administration*

We report separately at the school governing board level regarding inspections that fall outside the four-yearly inspection and specifically relate to financial risks.

### **8.3.3 School level**

We often report our findings from the inspection of schools as part of other reports on school governing boards or on the education system as a whole. Our thematic school visits, for instance, provide a general picture, and findings relating to a specific individual school cannot be recognized as such in the report. The report on the four-yearly inspection of school governing boards and schools includes sections on inspection and verification activities that took place in schools as part of the inspection of the school governing board. We report separately on inspections that we conduct in schools outside the auspices of thematic school visits and school governing board inspections. This enables parents and other interested parties to consult the results of our supervisory activities as well as the information made available by the school governing board. We do this in the instances listed below.

#### *Report on risk-based quality inspection*

In cases where we have conducted a quality inspection focusing on risk assessment, we report on the results in a report that is addressed to the school governing board. In the case of a 'Very Weak' judgement, we also send the school governing board a report that is intended for parents. As well as a description of our findings, our judgements for each standard are also provided. The overall judgement is also presented. We publish the school report on our website.

When the school governing board itself carries out a (follow-up) inspection on behalf of the Inspectorate, the results should in principle be mentioned on the Inspectorate's website by means of a link to the website of the school governing board after the remedial action has been taken.

#### *Targeted inspections*

As with school governing boards, we can also carry out a specific inspection at the school level. This may relate to the inspection at the school governing board level, but it may also be carried out separately. These inspections are carried out in the context of Article 15, WOT. A report is written on the findings and conclusions, and this is published on the website of the Inspectorate.

### **8.4 Publication, formal response and objections**

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, in principle we publish all our reports.<sup>24</sup> Once we have invited the school governing board to prepare their (policy) response to the draft version of the report, we add this and finalize the report.

If no agreement is reached with the school governing board regarding amendments that it wishes to make to the draft report, the school governing board may add a formal response to the Inspectorate's judgements and appraisals. That formal response is appended to the final report.

A school governing board may make an objection to the publication of a report if the inspection was carried out on the basis of Article 15, WOT (specific inspection, section 5.3), and in addition, a school governing board may object to the overall judgement of 'Very Weak'.

In certain cases it is possible to submit a complaint regarding the conduct of the Inspectorate. For this, we refer readers to our website ([www.onderwijsinspectie.nl](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl)) for the complaints procedure.

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<sup>24</sup> Article 15, section 2 of the Education Regulation Act specifies that reports on a specific inspection are to be published unless the nature or scope of the inspection make this impossible.



## 9. Specific applications of the inspection framework

### 9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we describe a number of specific applications of and exceptions to the regular inspection framework. These relate to inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education, and certain types of education or educational facilities

that are subject to specific legislation and regulations, which means that certain changes to the assessment framework or the working methods are required.

There are also certain types of education and facilities that we supervise, but not on the basis of the Education Regulation Act (WOT) (such as Dutch educational institutions abroad) and non-publicly funded institutions (B3 schools in primary and secondary education). Separate assessment frameworks have been created for this purpose. The supervisory procedures that are applied to these types of education can be found on our website.<sup>25</sup>

There are also certain types of education or educational facilities that are trial programmes. The Inspectorate is involved in those trials, but the legislation and regulations have not yet been finalized. Due to the temporary nature of trials and pilots, these are not described in this inspection framework.

In recent years, the education system has tended towards greater variation in educational routes, certification and hybrid programmes, for example. School governing boards remain responsible for every type of education that they offer. In principle, quality is assessed within the scope of the four-yearly inspection. We base this on the applicable legislation and regulations with respect to these routes.

Below we describe the supervision of the governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education and orthopedagogic-didactic centres. The sections provide an overview of the standards in the assessment framework (chapter 4 and/or 5) that do or do not apply to the educational facilities mentioned above, in some cases subject to specific amendments. The additional statutory requirements (section 5.4) also apply to the appendix. Amendments to the benchmarks (chapter 6) and the working methods (chapter 7) are also included.

### 9.2 Governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education

#### 9.2.1 Introduction

All school governing boards are required to affiliate with one or more inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education. The governing board of the inter-institutional partnership and the affiliated school governing boards are both jointly responsible for the provision of inclusive education. The inter-institutional partnership has its own statutory duties and these are designed to ensure a comprehensive network of facilities, so that affiliated school governing boards can fulfil their duty of care with respect to inclusive education. The inter-institutional partnership must make agreements regarding how the best possible inclusive education is provided for all pupils. The inter-institutional partnership keeps a record of these agreements in the special needs support programme. Where these agreements involve the policy of school governing boards and schools, the school governing boards are responsible for their implementation.

The law leaves plenty of scope for inter-institutional partnerships and school governing boards to provide for inclusive education according to the characteristics of the region and of their own vision. This freedom is intended in part to allow scope for more customization and for choices that suit the additional learning needs of pupils in the relevant region. This requires good coordination with municipal partners, with the aim being to ensure the optimum fit between education and the youth policy of the relevant municipality, including youth welfare support. The inter-institutional partnership will also reach agreements on this in its special needs support programme, and will consult the municipality and other partnerships in the region about this.

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<sup>25</sup> See [www.onderwijsinspectie.nl](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl).

Another important responsibility of the inter-institutional partnership is to provide advice on additional support and pathways to special schools and facilities. The inter-institutional partnership thus plays a central role in the allocation of additional support.

Supervision should provide an insight into the extent to which inter-institutional partnerships are successfully fulfilling their duties.

#### *Orthopedagogic-didactic support centres*

An inter-institutional partnership may choose to include an orthopedagogic -didactic centre in the partnership in order to ensure that a comprehensive network of facilities is provided. An orthopedagogic-didactic centre is an educational facility for pupils who require a specific pedagogical and didactic approach. This means that they are temporarily unable to take part in education at a regular school, even with extra support. The facility thus provides school governing boards with the opportunity to fulfil their duty of care to specific pupils. Because the pupils concerned remain registered at their regular school and the school governing board therefore remains responsible for the pupils' progress, the school governing board also benefits when facilities of adequate quality are being provided.

The quality of education at an orthopedagogic-didactic centre is the responsibility of the governing board of the inter-institutional partnership that the centre is part of. The special needs support programme specifies the position and function of the orthopedagogic-didactic centre within the comprehensive facilities network of the inter-institutional partnership, as well as which pupils may be eligible to receive (part of) their education at an orthopedagogic-didactic support centre.

Supervision focuses on assessing the quality of education provided by the orthopedagogic-didactic centre and the extent to which the governing board of the inter-institutional partnership has sufficient oversight on quality and is able to achieve improvements. It is important for school governing boards that the education provided is of adequate quality because they are responsible for their pupils' progress. After all, those pupils remain enrolled at their regular schools.

### **9.2.2 Amendments to the assessment framework and decision criteria**

#### *Assessment framework and decision criteria for governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships*

The assessment framework for the governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education consists of two quality areas, each of which is subdivided into three standards.

The quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition (GQA) is subdivided into three standards that include direction, implementation and evaluation. These standards are interrelated and they focus on the system of quality assurance and governance. This means that we consider these standards in conjunction with one another. If an inter-institutional partnership has partnered with an orthopedagogic-didactic centre, when assessing these standards we also consider whether the school governing board is fulfilling its duty of care for the quality of education at that centre.

The quality area of Realization of Inclusive Education (RIE) focuses on the statutory tasks relating to inclusive education that are specifically reserved for the inter-institutional partnerships and that are related to fulfilling the societal duty of providing education that is inclusive. These statutory tasks are encapsulated in the three standards in the quality area of Realization of Inclusive Education.

Judging the standards in these two quality areas indicates whether the school governing board is capable of achieving, safeguarding and continuing to improve the basic standard of quality in the inter-institutional partnership through its governance activities. Using this information on results and the quality of governance, we are able to make decisions regarding (follow-up) supervision in a manner that is proportionate (see chapter 7).

The figure below shows this assessment and the decision criteria concerned.



Judgement/appraisal at school governing board level	Benchmark
Good	Two standards from the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition are 'Good' and the third is 'Satisfactory' or higher and two standards from the quality area of Realization of Inclusive Education, including the standard for Comprehensive Network, are 'Good' and the third is 'Satisfactory' or higher.
Satisfactory	All three standards from the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition are 'Satisfactory' or higher and in the quality area of Realization of Inclusive Education, at least the standard for Comprehensive Network and one other standard are 'Satisfactory'.
Unsatisfactory	One (or more) standard(s) from the quality area of Governance, Quality Assurance and Ambition is/are 'Unsatisfactory'. Or the standard for Comprehensive Network from the quality area of Realization of Inclusive Education is 'Unsatisfactory'.

#### *Assessment framework and decision criteria for orthopedagogic-didactic centres*

To assess the quality of education provided by the orthopedagogic-didactic centre, we apply the assessment frameworks for primary education (for centres that provide primary education) or secondary education (for centres that provide secondary education), as described in chapter 5 of the relevant frameworks. Because the pupils at the centre continue to be registered at a regular school, the results that they achieve count towards those schools. This means we issue no judgement of the standard LO1 (Results) at the centre. For this reason, for the judgement and appraisal of the quality of the orthopedagogic-didactic centre, the decision criteria for schools where the results cannot be assessed apply (see section 6.5.2 of the relevant frameworks).

### **9.2.3 Procedure**

#### *Working methods for the supervision of governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education*

The working method for supervising the boards of inter-institutional partnerships largely corresponds to that for school governing boards. The difference is that during the expert analysis (section 7.4.1, part 1. Analysis), we consult stakeholders in the inter-institutional partnership when supervising an inter-institutional partnership. We do this by means of round table meetings. These meetings help to determine how the inspection activities are designed.

During an inspection, we may also consult regional partners, such as the municipality, youth welfare support and school attendance officers.

When supervising an inter-institutional partnership, we also consider whether the affiliated schools are implementing the partnership's policy in practice. This policy is described in the special needs support programme of the inter-institutional partnership. We also assess the implementation of the inter-institutional partnership's policy and the results achieved by schools by means of verification activities. Such activities are part of our review of the effectiveness of quality assurance within the inter-institutional partnership. We verify whether schools are complying with the agreements in the special needs support programme. We expect the school governing board of the inter-institutional partnership to have information on the implementation of those agreements in practice, and to respond accordingly. In addition, this gives us an insight into certain aspects of inclusive education at the schools visited. The results of the verification activities do not lead to a judgement concerning the schools, but provide an indication of whether they are complying with the agreements in the special needs support programme and regarding the implementation of the policy of the inter-institutional partnership.

#### *Working method for supervision of orthopedagogic-didactic centres*

The working method described in chapter 7 applies to the supervision of the quality of education at orthopedagogic-didactic centres.



# Appendix 1 Assessment framework for governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education

This appendix includes the assessment framework for the supervision of the school governing boards of inter-institutional partnerships for inclusive education. Further explanatory notes can be found in section 9.2.

## QUALITY AREA OF REALIZATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (RIE)

### RIE1 Comprehensive Network of facilities

The inter-institutional partnership provides a suitable place in education for all pupils who need extra support.

#### Basic standard of quality

The inter-institutional partnership carries out the tasks assigned to it and provides a coherent set of support facilities within and between the schools, in such a way that all pupils who require extra support are provided with the most suitable place within the education system. The inter-institutional partnership does everything possible to arrange suitable support facilities for pupils who need extra support and uses the provisions of the law to do this. To this end, the inter-institutional partnership can opt to establish an orthopedagogic-didactic centre (OPDC).

#### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to providing a comprehensive network of facilities, and if so how are these achieved?

#### Statutory requirements

- Article 18a, section 2, WPO / Article 17a, section 2, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership aims to provide a coherent set of support facilities within and between the schools, in such a way that pupils can enjoy an uninterrupted process of development and those pupils who require extra support are provided with the most suitable place possible.
- Article 18a, section 6, WPO / Article 17a, section 6, WVO: One of the tasks of the inter-institutional partnership is to distribute resources and facilities among the schools and to allocate these in order to achieve a comprehensive network.
- Article 18a, section 10a, WPO / Article 17a, section 10a, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership may establish an orthopedagogic-didactic centre with the aim of achieving a comprehensive network. There are requirements associated with this (Article 34.10, WPO Funding Decree / Article 26, WVO Implementation Decree).

### RIE2. Regional partnership

The partnership works across the region to ensure a continuous learning pathway, and achieves a connection between education and youth welfare support in the region.

#### Basic standard of quality

The inter-institutional partnership and the municipality or municipalities are jointly responsible for coordinating youth policy. To this end, the inter-institutional partnership works together with the municipality and other partners to coordinate its support with the youth welfare support<sup>26</sup> provided by the municipality. The aim is that all pupils who require extra support are provided with the most appropriate place in education and that no pupils are at home instead of in school.

<sup>26</sup> Youth welfare support and other domains from Article 2.2 of the Youth Care Act, as described in the municipality's youth plan.

## QUALITY AREA OF REALIZATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (RIE)

The inter-institutional partnership keeps a record of these agreements in the special needs support programme. The inter-institutional partnership conducts agreement-oriented consultations on this subject with the municipal executive of the relevant municipality or municipalities.

With a view to ensuring a continuous learning pathway from primary education (including special (primary) education) to secondary education (including practical education (PRO) and secondary special education (VSO)), the partnership coordinates its policy with the inter-institutional partnership that is active within (part of) its region. The inter-institutional partnership keeps a record of these agreements in the special needs support programme.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to regional cooperation, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 18a, sections 2 and 8, WPO / Article 17a, sections 2 and 8, WVO: The special needs support programme includes, among other things, the way in which a coherent set of support facilities is provided within and between the schools.
- Article 18a, section 9, WPO / Article 17a, section 9, WVO: After consulting on the draft special needs support programme with the municipality/municipalities and the inter-institutional partnership that the region coincides with (and the board of institution(s) for MBO in this region), the governing board adopts the special needs support programme once an agreement has been reached.

### RIE3 Advice and assessment of eligibility

The inter-institutional partnership provides careful advice and reaches appropriate decisions with respect to assessing applications for admissibility to special educational facilities.

### Basic standard of quality

At the request of the governing board of a school, the inter-institutional partnership provides advice regarding the support needs of pupils enrolled at that school.

For pupils for whom a special form of education (for primary education: special primary education and special education; for secondary education: learning pathway support education, practical education and special secondary education) is the most suitable place, a statement of admissibility from the inter-institutional partnership is required (a referral is required for learning pathway support education). Determining admissibility to these schools is a statutory duty of the inter-institutional partnership and this is subject to certain requirements. When a statement of admissibility is requested for a pupil, the inter-institutional partnership processes the application according to an appropriate procedure and within a reasonable period of time, so that the pupil's development is not interrupted.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to granting advice and assessing admissibility, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 18a, section 6, subsection d, WPO / Article 17a, section 6, subsection d, WVO: One of the tasks of the inter-institutional partnership is to provide advice on the support needs of pupils at the request of the governing board of a school in which the pupil is enrolled and that is affiliated to the inter-institutional partnership.
- Article 18a, section 6, subsection c, WPO / Article 17a, section 6, subsection c, WVO: One of the duties of the inter-institutional partnership is to assess whether a pupil is admissible to special primary education and special education, or to practical education and special secondary education, respectively, or to learning pathway support education.
- Article 18a, section 10a, WPO / Article 17a, section 10a, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership may establish an orthopedagogic-didactic centre with the aim of achieving a

## QUALITY AREA OF REALIZATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (RIE)

comprehensive network. Certain requirements are associated with this (Article 34.10, WPO Funding Decree / Article 26, WVO Implementation Decree).

- Article 18a, section 11, WPO and Article 34.8, WPO Funding Decree / Article 17a, section 12, WVO and Article 15a, WVO Implementation Decree: The partnership hears the advice of legally required experts and takes this into account when assessing whether a pupil is admissible to special primary education and special education, or practical education and special secondary education, or whether the pupil should attend learning pathway support education.
- Article 18a, section 12, WPO / Article 17a, section 13, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership establishes an advisory committee that provides advice on appeals against decisions of the inter-institutional partnership regarding the admissibility of pupils to the relevant forms of education.
- Article 18a, section 14, WPO / Article 17a, section 15, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership must provide the parents with a copy of any advice regarding the support needs of a pupil.

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

### GQA1. Vision, ambitions and goals

The school governing board has a vision of quality, has identified ambitions and goals in relation to that vision, and seeks to achieve those.

### Basic standard of quality

The school governing board has a vision for the implementation of the statutory duties and the associated governance. That vision has been interpreted appropriately and in concrete terms in the form of ambitions, goals and the associated policy. These make it possible to monitor quality, the results of the policy of the inter-institutional partnership and the associated requirements. To this end, a system of quality assurance has been established that enables the school governing board to guarantee the basic quality requirements for the execution of its duties. If the inter-institutional partnership has an orthopedagogic-didactic centre, this must also ensure the quality of education at the centre.

The goals must include compliance with the statutory requirements, including ensuring the provision of services to affiliates, achieving a coherent set of facilities and the intended qualitative and quantitative results of education for pupils who require additional support and the associated funding. The vision, ambitions and goals also address the implications of previous results of evaluation and the results of internal and external dialogue. The goals, policy and agreements are set out in the special needs support programme. The special needs support programme is adopted by the school governing board once every four years and forms the basis for managing the execution of duties and the improvement of quality.

The school governing board defines the requirements that must be met in order to achieve these goals, including the allocation and administration of (financial) resources, in order to carry out the statutory responsibilities of the inter-institutional partnership and fulfil the board's duty of care with respect to inclusive education. To this end, the school governing board sets a multi-annual budget that clarifies the relationship with policy, goals and the choices made with respect to allocating funds. In order to achieve (financial) quality, an effective division of responsibilities between the internal supervisory board and the governing board has been agreed upon, based on the applicable legislation and regulations.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to the vision and goals, and if so how are these achieved?

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

### Statutory requirements

- Article 14a, WMS: The inter-institutional partnership requires the prior consent of the special needs support programme committee for any decision to be taken by the inter-institutional partnership with regard to the adoption of the special needs support programme.
- Article 17a, sections 1 and 3, WPO, in conjunction with Article 10, WPO / Article 24d, sections 1 and 3, in conjunction with Article 23a, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership must assume responsibility for the quality of the service provided to affiliates. That responsibility with respect to quality means ensuring that the school complies with the statutory requirements, including the implementation of a system of quality assurance for the education provided at the orthopedagogic-didactic centre, where applicable.
- Article 17a, sections 1 and 3, WPO, in conjunction with Article 10, WPO, in conjunction with Article 12, section 4, WPO / Article 24d, sections 1 and 3, WVO, in conjunction with Article 23a, WVO, in conjunction with Article 24, section 4, WVO: In all cases, the system of quality assurance includes ensuring that pupils can undergo uninterrupted development and determining which measures are necessary for improvement.
- Article 17a, sections 1 and 3, WPO / Article 24d, sections 1 and 3, WVO: The governing board is responsible for ensuring a well-managed inter-institutional partnership, including separation between management and supervision, based on lawful arrangements for management and governance.
- Article 17b, sections 1 and 3, WPO / Article 24e, sections 1 and 3, WVO: There must be a functional or organic separation between the executive section of the school board and the internal supervisory board.
- Article 17c, section 1, subsection c, and section 5, WPO / Article 24e1, section 1, subsection c, and section 5, WVO: The internal supervisory board ensures that the school governing board acquires its funds lawfully and spends and uses its funds efficiently and lawfully.
- Article 18a, section 2, WPO / Article 17a, section 2, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership aims to provide a coherent set of support facilities within and between the schools, in such a way that pupils can enjoy an uninterrupted process of development and those pupils who require extra support are provided with the most suitable place possible in the education system.
- Article 18a, sections 7 and 8, WPO / Article 17a, sections 7 and 8, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership draws up a special needs support programme at least once every four years. The special needs support programme includes certain components, including the intended qualitative and quantitative results of education for pupils who require extra support and the associated funding.
- Article 69, article 122, article 124 and article 169, WPO / Article 5.1, article 5.13, article 5.15 and article 5.49, WVO 2020 and article 6.21 WVO Implementation Decree 2020: The school governing board must use the government funding lawfully.
- Article 165 WPO, in conjunction with Article 4, section 4, RJO / Article 103, WVO in conjunction with Article 18, sections 1, 2 and 5, WVO Funding Decree, in conjunction with Article 4, section 4, RJO: Every year, the school governing board prepares an annual report which includes the results of the financial policy and a section on financial continuity.

### GQA2. Implementation and quality culture

The governing board, together with the school governing boards of the affiliated schools, achieves the goals relating to quality, promotes a quality culture, sets parameters and makes interim adjustments where necessary.

### Basic standard of quality

As part of its system of quality assurance, the school governing board implements the vision and goals pertaining to the fulfilment of statutory responsibilities (including, where applicable, the quality of education at the orthopedagogic-didactic centre).

There is an honest and transparent quality culture which contributes to the goals that have been set. The school governing board promotes a quality culture that focuses on cooperation, learning and improvement, so that the goals and ambitions can be achieved and the affiliated school governing boards can fulfil the agreements in the special needs support programme. The governing board holds

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

the school governing boards to account with respect to their compliance with the agreements set out in the special needs support programme. The affiliated school governing boards can also hold each other to account with respect to compliance with the agreements in the special needs support programme.

Within that quality culture, the school governing board engages in quality assurance that focuses on the fulfilment of the statutory responsibilities, the agreements in the special needs support programme and compliance with statutory regulations. The school governing board encourages and ensures that implementation is consistent with policy and the agreements in the special needs support programme, so that the goals are achieved. The school governing board monitors the implementation of the policy, the agreements, and the intended improvements and makes interim adjustments where necessary.

The (financial) resources available are used efficiently and lawfully in accordance with the choices made in the special needs support programme, and thus contribute to the achievement of the objectives set by the governing board. The governing board focuses on effective financial administration, such that the continuity of the inter-institutional partnership and the services provided to affiliates is assured and funding is acquired lawfully.

The internal supervisory board carries out its duties independently and correctly, and is facilitated in this by the governing board. The governing board also ensures that the special needs support programme committee is properly facilitated, involves it in a timely manner and submits decisions in accordance with the statutory requirements. The governing board operates according to a Good Governance Code, and explains any deviations from this code in its annual report<sup>27</sup>.

### Additional ambitions

- Are there additional ambitions with respect to implementation and quality culture, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Article 4, section 4, RJO: The school governing board includes a continuity section in the annual report.
- Article 4a, WMS: The inter-institutional partnership establishes a special needs support programme committee in a manner compliant with the statutory regulations.
- Article 8, WMS (in conjunction with Article 9, WMS): The special needs support programme committee and the (Joint) Participation Council are provided with all the information reasonably required from the inter-institutional partnership in a timely manner, so that they can fulfil their duties; it is in all cases provided with the information that is prescribed by law.
- Article 14a, WMS: The inter-institutional partnership requires the prior consent of the special needs support programme committee for any decision to be taken by the inter-institutional partnership with regard to the adoption or amendment of the support plan.
- Article 17a, sections 1 and 3, WPO, in conjunction with Article 10 WPO, in conjunction with Article 12, section 4, WPO / Article 24d, sections 1 and 3, WVO, in conjunction with Article 23a, WVO, in conjunction with Article 24, section 4, WVO: In all cases, the system of quality assurance includes ensuring that pupils can undergo uninterrupted development and determining which measures are necessary for improvement.
- Article 17a, sections 1 and 3, WPO / Article 24d, sections 1 and 3, WVO: The governing board is responsible for ensuring a well-managed inter-institutional partnership, including separation between management and supervision, based on lawful arrangements for management and governance.
- Article 17a, section 2, WPO / Article 24d, section 2, WVO: Appointments to the governing board and positions involving internal supervision are made on the basis of profiles that are published in

<sup>27</sup> According to Article 1, subsection c, RJO: the entirety of the reporting documents consisting of the annual accounts, the management report and the other information referred to in Article 392, Title 9, Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code.



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advance. The special needs support programme committee (and, where applicable, employee representatives) takes the final decision when it comes to appointing members of the supervisory board.

- Article 17b, sections 1 and 3, WPO / Article 24e, sections 1 and 3, WVO: There must be a functional or organic separation between the executive section of the governing board and the internal supervisory board.
- Article 17b, sections 2 and 3, WPO / Article 24e, sections 2 and 3, WVO: The internal supervisory board (or its members) functions independently of the school governing board.
- Article 17c, section 1, WPO, in conjunction with Article 171, section 1, WPO / Article 24e1, section 1, WVO, in conjunction with Article 103, section 1, WVO: The internal supervisory board supervises the execution of the duties by the school governing board and the exercise of its powers, assists the school governing board by providing advice and has a certain number of tasks at the least.
- Article 17c, sections 2, 4 and 5, WPO / Article 24e1, sections 2, 4 and 5, WVO: The duties and powers of the internal supervisor or internal supervisory body are such that it can exercise internal supervision properly and independently. If an inter-institutional partnership has a supervisory board, this is tasked with appointing, suspending and dismissing members of the governing board. The internal supervisor or internal supervisory body of the inter-institutional partnership consults with the special needs support programme committee at least twice a year.
- Article 69, article 122, article 124 and article 169, WPO / Article 5.1, article 5.13, article 5.15 and article 5.49, WVO 2020 and article 6.21 WVO Implementation Decree 2020: The school governing board must use the government funding lawfully.
- Article 165, section 1, WPO / Article 103, section 1, WVO: The governing board of the inter-institutional partnership must apply a Good Governance Code, and provide an account of any deviations from this in the annual report.

### GQA3. Evaluation, Accountability and Dialogue

The school governing board systematically evaluates and analyses whether it is achieving the goals and reports on this. Where necessary, it adjusts policy and involves internal and external stakeholders through a proper process of dialogue.

#### Basic standard of quality

As part of its system of quality assurance, the school governing board evaluates and assesses the extent to which the ambitions, goals and policy are being achieved. In this way, the governing board gains an insight into the quality (including with respect to financial matters) and results being achieved. The governing board actively collects external information and uses this information in its evaluation and assessment of its policy, the fulfilment of agreements and, where relevant, the quality of education at the orthopedagogic-didactic centre. Based on its evaluation, the school governing board responds to potential opportunities and threats in a timely manner, sets policy (regarding improvements) where necessary, and takes appropriate measures to guarantee the quality of the execution of tasks in its schools.

The school governing board enables accountability by providing accurate, up-to-date and publicly accessible information about the quality achieved. At least once a year, it reports to its internal and external stakeholders regarding its goals and the fulfilment of statutory duties. The information provided through the annual report is reliable and (the content of) the annual report meets the statutory requirements.

The governing board must, in all cases, account for its provision of services to affiliates, its provision of a coherent set of facilities, the qualitative and quantitative results achieved in education for pupils who require additional support, and the associated funding and the choices made with respect to the allocation of that funding. The reflection on the results of the evaluation provides all levels of the organization, the internal supervisory board, the special needs support programme committee and the participation council, with an adequate insight into the effectiveness of governance and implementation. The school governing board analyses and assesses the results of evaluation and



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accountability, in part based on accountability by the affiliated school governing boards. The school governing board then takes account of these where necessary, in order to modify the ambitions, goals and improvement goals, agreements and policy or formulate new ambitions, so that the results of the dialogue contribute to the development and improvement of the way in which duties are fulfilled and the way in which this is managed.

The school governing board also ensures that there is a dialogue on this involving internal and external stakeholders from the region. Periodically, the inter-institutional partnership initiates a dialogue with the special needs support programme committee and holds consultations between internal supervisors and the special needs support programme committee. The governing board reports on the quantitative and qualitative results achieved in education for pupils who require extra support when the special needs support programme is adopted, at minimum.

### Additional ambitions

5. Are there additional ambitions with respect to evaluation, accountability and dialogue, and if so how are these achieved?

### Statutory requirements

- Articles 1 and 3, subsection f, RJO, in conjunction with Article 171, WPO / Articles 1 and 3, subsection f, RJO, in conjunction with Article 103, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership updates internal and external stakeholders every year regarding policy intentions, policy implementation and the results of the policy implemented.
- Article 4, section 4, RJO, / Article 171, WPO / Article 103, WVO and Article 18, section 5, WVO Funding Decree: The school governing board produces an annual report every year which includes the results of financial policy as well as a report on the future development of the inter-institutional partnership.
- Article 8, WMS (in conjunction with Article 9, WMS): The special needs support programme committee and the participation council are provided with all the information reasonably required from the inter-institutional partnership in a timely manner, so that they can fulfil their duties; in all cases, they are provided with the information that is prescribed by law.
- Article 11a, WMS: The inter-institutional partnership must give the special needs support programme committee the opportunity to advise in advance on decisions regarding certain matters.
- Article 14a, WMS: The inter-institutional partnership requires the prior consent of the special needs support programme committee for any decision to be taken by the inter-institutional partnership with regard to the adoption or amendment of the support plan.
- Article 17a, sections 1 and 3, WPO, in conjunction with Article 10, WPO, in conjunction with Article 12, section 4, WPO / Article 24d, sections 1 and 3, WVO, in conjunction with Article 23a, WVO, in conjunction with Article 24, section 4, WVO: In all cases, the system of quality assurance includes ensuring that pupils can undergo uninterrupted development and determining which measures are necessary for improvement.
- Article 17c, section 5, WPO / Article 24e1, section 5, WVO: The internal supervisory body consults the special needs support programme committee at least twice a year.
- Article 18a, section 2, WPO / Article 17a, section 2, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership aims to provide a coherent set of support facilities within and between the schools, in such a way that pupils can enjoy an uninterrupted process of development and those pupils who require extra support are provided with the most suitable place possible in the education system.
- Article 18a, sections 7 and 8, subsection e, WPO / Article 17a, sections 7 and 8, subsection e, WVO: The inter-institutional partnership draws up a special needs support programme at least once every four years. The special needs support programme includes certain components, including the qualitative and quantitative results achieved in education for pupils who require extra support and the associated funding.
- Article 17c, section 1 and section 1 subsection e, WPO in conjunction with article 165, section 1 WPO / article 3.3, section 1 and 2, subsection e, WVO 2020 in conjunction with article 5.46, section 1, WVO 2020: The internal supervisory board supervises the execution of the duties by the school governing board and the exercise of its powers, assists the school

## QUALITY AREA OF GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AMBITION (GQA)

governing board by providing advice and has a number of tasks at the least. The internal supervisory board accounts for the execution of these duties and the exercise of powers in the annual report.

- Article 17c, section 1, subsection c and e and section 5, WPO / article 3.3, section 1 and 2, subsection c and e, WVO 2020: The internal supervisory board ensures that the school governing board spends and uses funding lawfully and efficiently. The internal supervisory board accounts for this in the annual report.
- RJO, in conjunction with article 165, WPO / RJO in conjunction with article 5.46 WVO 2020: The manner in which the school governing board reports on its financial administration is consistent with the regulations set out in the RJO.
- Article 165, section 1, WPO / Article 3.2, section 1, WVO: The governing board of the inter-institutional partnership must apply a Good Governance Code, and provide an account of any deviations from this in the annual report.
- Article 165, sections 7 and 8, WPO / Article 103, sections 7 and 8, WVO: The governing board publishes the annual report. Further regulations regarding the manner and time of publication of the annual report may be specified by ministerial ruling.

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## **<sup>i</sup> Description of citizenship skills and fundamental values**

The standards relate to aspects of quality, including education aimed at promoting citizenship skills. Below we indicate which standards are involved with aspects of citizenship skills, and we add further details in (A) an overview of how the supervision of fundamental values is carried out (B).

The supervision of citizenship skills is an integral part of inspection supervision that, depending on the situation, may include a focus on one or more components; it may be handled as a separate theme or in conjunction with other aspects of quality.

### **A. Promoting citizenship**

The statutory duty to address citizenship skills specifies that education must promote active citizenship and societal cohesion. In its supervisory activities, the Inspectorate does not apply its own requirements; the law is the sole basis for this, and this specifies minimum requirements. This means that provided schools meet the statutory requirements, they may interpret these requirements in the way they see fit. The statutory requirements have been incorporated into the standards and are shown below.

School-level standards	TLP0	Basic skills
	TLP1	Curriculum
	TLP2	Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support
	TLP3	Teaching Strategies
	SEA1	Safety and Security
	SEA2	Atmosphere at the School
	LO2	Social and Civic Skills
	MQA1	Vision, Ambitions and Goals
	MQA2	Implementation and Quality Culture
Board-level standards	MQA3	Evaluation, Accountability and Dialogue
	GQA1	Vision, Ambitions and Goals
	GQA2	Implementation and Quality Culture
	GQA3	Evaluation, Accountability and Dialogue

The law requires:

- 1) The promotion of active citizenship and social cohesion in a targeted and coherent manner (standards TLP0, TLP2, LO2)

whereby the following elements are discernible in education:

- 2) the promotion of knowledge of and respect for the fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state (standards TLP0, SEA1, SEA2);
- 3) social and civic skills are developed (standards TLP1, SEA2);
- 4) the school culture is consistent with the fundamental values, pupils are encouraged to practise these and the school ensures a safe environment in which pupils and staff feel accepted (standards TLP3, SEA1, SEA2).

#### Guidance:

Re 1) The standards of Basic skills, Monitoring Pupils' Achievements and Support and Social and Societal Skills (TL01, TLP2, TLP2):

The Inspectorate determines whether the education is goal-oriented, coherent and recognizable, and whether the school keeps track of learning outcomes in a reliable and accessible manner. Whether the school's education is goal-oriented will be evident in the formulation of concrete learning objectives that the school wants to achieve in promoting fundamental values and social and societal skills. Whether the

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education is coherent will be evident from the extent to which the subject matter is structured logically and from the approach that the school takes to achieving the learning goals. Whether education that aims to promote citizenship is recognizable will be evident from the achievement of the teaching material planned and the approach taken. Whether the school keeps track of learning outcomes in a reliable and accessible manner will be evident from the fact that the school has data that provide an adequate picture of the results achieved, in such a way that it is possible to assess whether the school is achieving its learning objectives.

Re 2) and 3) Standards of basic skills, Safety and Security, Atmosphere at the School (TLP1, SEA1, SEA2):  
The Inspectorate determines whether education is designed to promote fundamental values and social and societal skills, and is based on the principle of equal treatment of equal cases. Whether education focuses on fundamental values will be evident from the focus on promoting knowledge of, respect for and acting on the basis of basic values (see B). Whether education focuses on the development of social and civic skills will be evident from the school's focus on skills that will enable pupils to take part in and contribute to the pluriform, democratic society of the Netherlands. The school can make its own choices in this regard. In addition, there are the attainment targets in the social and societal domain. When designing the curriculum and approach, schools demonstrate an insight into the pupil population that they serve and the circumstances in which they live.

Re 4) Standards of Teaching Strategies, Secure Environment and Atmosphere (TLP3, SEA1, SEA2):  
The Inspectorate determines whether the school governing board ensures a school climate that is consistent with these fundamental values, in which pupils are offered opportunities to practise and a safe, inclusive school atmosphere in which everyone feels accepted. Whether the intended school atmosphere is achieved will be evident from the implementation of policy, so that the school governing board has an insight into this and makes improvements when necessary. Whether the school atmosphere is consistent with fundamental values will be evident from the demonstration of fundamental values and the absence of conflict with fundamental values. Whether the school atmosphere offers students opportunities to practise will be evident from situations in which pupils are encouraged to practise with fundamental values. Whether there is a safe and inclusive atmosphere at the school will be evident from information on the extent to which pupils and staff feel accepted.

Finally, the Inspectorate applies the quality assurance standards for the school governing board and school (standards TLP1-3; GQA1-3) to assess whether education meets statutory requirements and whether the school governing board is fulfilling its duty of care in this regard (standards TLP1-3; GQA1-3).

## **B. The fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state**

The promotion of fundamental values is an important aspect of the education system's statutory duty with respect to citizenship. The fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state (or 'fundamental values') reflect the general, widely accepted essential values that our democratic society is based on. These values have broad legitimacy, are anchored in the national and international legal order and are set down in documents such as the Constitution of the Netherlands and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In short, fundamental values are the minimum, basic, broadly supported values that underpin the democratic constitutional state.

The fundamental values that play a role in education are identified and elaborated in the statutory framework in the revised mandate with respect to citizenship in the legislation on primary and secondary education (Amended bill of law, 17 November 2020. House of Representatives of the States General, 2020-2021 session, 35 352 no. 2; Explanatory Memorandum and Memorandum in response to the report, House of Representatives of the States General, 2019–2020 session, 35 352 No. 3 and No. 6). This mandate forms the (limited) starting point for the inspection regime for fundamental values. The following description and formulations are derived from that statutory framework.

### The fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state

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Respect for human dignity without distinction between persons forms the basis of the three fundamental values of the democratic, pluriform constitutional state of the Netherlands: freedom, equality and solidarity. The fundamental value of freedom is promoted by focusing on freedom of expression and autonomy. Equality is promoted through the principle of equality and the rejection of discrimination. Solidarity is promoted through tolerance, mutual understanding and responsibility and the rejection of intolerance.

This means that schools focus on freedom of expression, the principle of equality, mutual understanding, tolerance, the rejection of intolerance and discrimination, and autonomy and a sense of responsibility. In educational practice, these elements form the minimum core that a school must address in promoting knowledge of and respect for fundamental values.

The Citizenship Act does not create any new fundamental values. These fundamental values were already the focus of the previous legislation. However, more emphasis has been added. In line with these statutory frameworks and to promote continuity in educational practice and the supervisory activities of the Inspectorate, practice-oriented operationalization is based solely on the following descriptors. These descriptors are designed for concrete application in everyday practice in schools, and have been formulated in a way that is accessible to all those involved (including the pupils):

- Freedom of expression means that you can say or write what you think, and challenge the views of other people. It also means that everyone is free to practise his or her faith, or to present his or her views to other people. However, the law must always be respected.
- The principle of equality means that all humans are of equal value. It does not matter what ideas you hold or what you believe in. You do not need to attach value to other people's ideas or practices, but you do need to accept that people with different ideas and practices are worth no less than you or your own group.
- Understanding others means trying to understand why people or groups have certain ideas or practices: where do these come from and why are they important to those people?
- Tolerance means accepting another person's opinion or behaviour, even if you disagree with it. It also means allowing everybody the space to hold such opinions or engage in such behaviours. Of course, the law must always be respected by everybody.
- Rejecting intolerance: intolerance is the opposite of tolerance. It means that you feel that other people or groups should not think or do things that you disagree with; and that you believe that people should not have the right to hold such opinions or engage in such behaviours.
- Rejecting discrimination: discrimination means that some people or groups are disadvantaged in favour of others, or that you think that people with different ideas or customs should not be able to practise them, or even that those ideas or customs should be banned completely.
- Autonomy means that everyone can decide for themselves who they want to be and how they want to live their lives. Everyone is free to choose for himself or herself which ideas or beliefs are important to him or her. However, the law must always be respected.
- Having a sense of responsibility means that people are willing to take responsibility for what they say and do (or what they do not say and do), taking account of the implications for other people. It is especially important that you do not seek to cause harm to other people, and that you want to help society and democracy to function properly. Everybody is free to decide for themselves how they do this.

### Scope

Active promotion of the fundamental values of the democratic constitutional state occupies a central place within the statutory mandate. Schools are expected to play an active role in safeguarding and disseminating those fundamental values. Needless to say, this mandate also means that education or actions by the school should never conflict with fundamental values. Good education in citizenship should reflect the social environment of pupils and the interests, problems and risks associated with it. The principle for supervision is that schools should demonstrate an understanding of the pupils whom they serve, the world they live in, and, if necessary, reflect this in the education provided. It is also important that fundamental values are a structural part of school culture and that there is harmony between the two. The Inspectorate monitors compliance with this by assessing the school governing board's concern for a school culture in which all those involved apply and practise fundamental values as part of the ground rules, and for an environment in which pupils are actively encouraged to practise applying fundamental values.