An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools

Inspectorate
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Contents

1. What is *Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools?* 4

2. What are the key principles that inform the quality framework? 7

3. What is the structure of this quality framework? 11

4. How can the statements be used in the evaluation process? 10

5. In what other ways can the quality framework be used? 18

Quality Framework for Post-primary Schools – Overview 25

Statements of practice – Learning and teaching 26

Domain 1: Learner outcomes 26

Domain 2: Learner experiences 28

Domain 3: Teachers' individual practice 30

Domain 4: Teachers' collective / collaborative practice 33

Statements of practice – Leadership and management 35

Domain 1: Leading learning and teaching 35

Domain 2: Managing the organisation 37

Domain 3: Leading school development 40

Domain 4: Developing leadership capacity 42

APPENDIX A: Framework to support schools in reflecting on policy and practice in accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)* 44

1

What is *Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools?*

Introduction

Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools[1] is a framework that provides a shared understanding of what effective and highly effective learning, teaching, leadership and management practices look like in the Irish school system. It follows on from the 2016 publication of the same name and provides a unified and coherent set of standards for two dimensions of the work of schools:

- Learning and teaching
- Leadership and management

It is designed for teachers and for school leaders to use in implementing the most effective and engaging learning and teaching approaches and in enhancing the quality of leadership and management in their schools. It is intended to be used by schools to support their engagement with the six-step school self-evaluation (SSE) process.

The quality framework will be used to inform the work of inspectors as they monitor and report on quality in schools. Different types of inspection will draw on the elements of the framework that are most relevant to the focus of the inspection. In this way, while the framework will be used flexibly, it will ensure consistency in Inspectorate evaluations.

[1] In special schools, Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Famework for Primary Schools and Special Schools will be the main reference document to support their review of education provision in their school. In the context of students of post-primary age attending these schools, it may be relevant to refer to Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools to review aspects of provision such as curriculum.

The framework also informs Circular 003/2018. This circular on leadership and management in post-primary schools sets out the leadership model for post-primary schools. It emphasises that, in accordance with the principles of distributed leadership, systems of school leadership and management should build on and consolidate existing school leadership and management structures in schools in line with best practice as articulated in the *Looking at Our School* framework.

The framework is also used to facilitate reflective practice and to inform the design of continuing professional learning for teachers and school leaders.

While the structure and content of Looking at Our School 2022 remain substantially the same as in the 2016 publication, the framework has been updated to reflect recent educational reform, thinking and developments in areas such as child safeguarding,[2] anti-bullying,[3] inclusion, student participation,[4] parent participation,[5] creativity, education for sustainable development (ESD), support of student transitions, and Cosán, the national framework for teachers' learning. There are also strengthened references to aspects of learning and teaching that became all the more significant as schools responded to the needs of their students in the context of COVID-19. These aspects include digital competence, approaches to remote learning and teaching, the role of assessment and feedback in supporting progression in learning, and the development of students' independent learning skills.

[2] A framework to support schools in reviewing their practice in relation to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) is set out in Appendix One of the Guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections here.

[3] See Appendix A for a framework to support schools in reflecting on their policy and practice in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)

[4] In accordance with the Lundy model of child participation, student participation includes four aspects:
- Space: Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
- Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their view
- Audience: The view must be listened to
- Influence: The view must be acted on as appropriate.

For additional information, see pg. 22 of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015 - 2020.

[5] In this document, the term 'parent' is understood to include parents and guardians.

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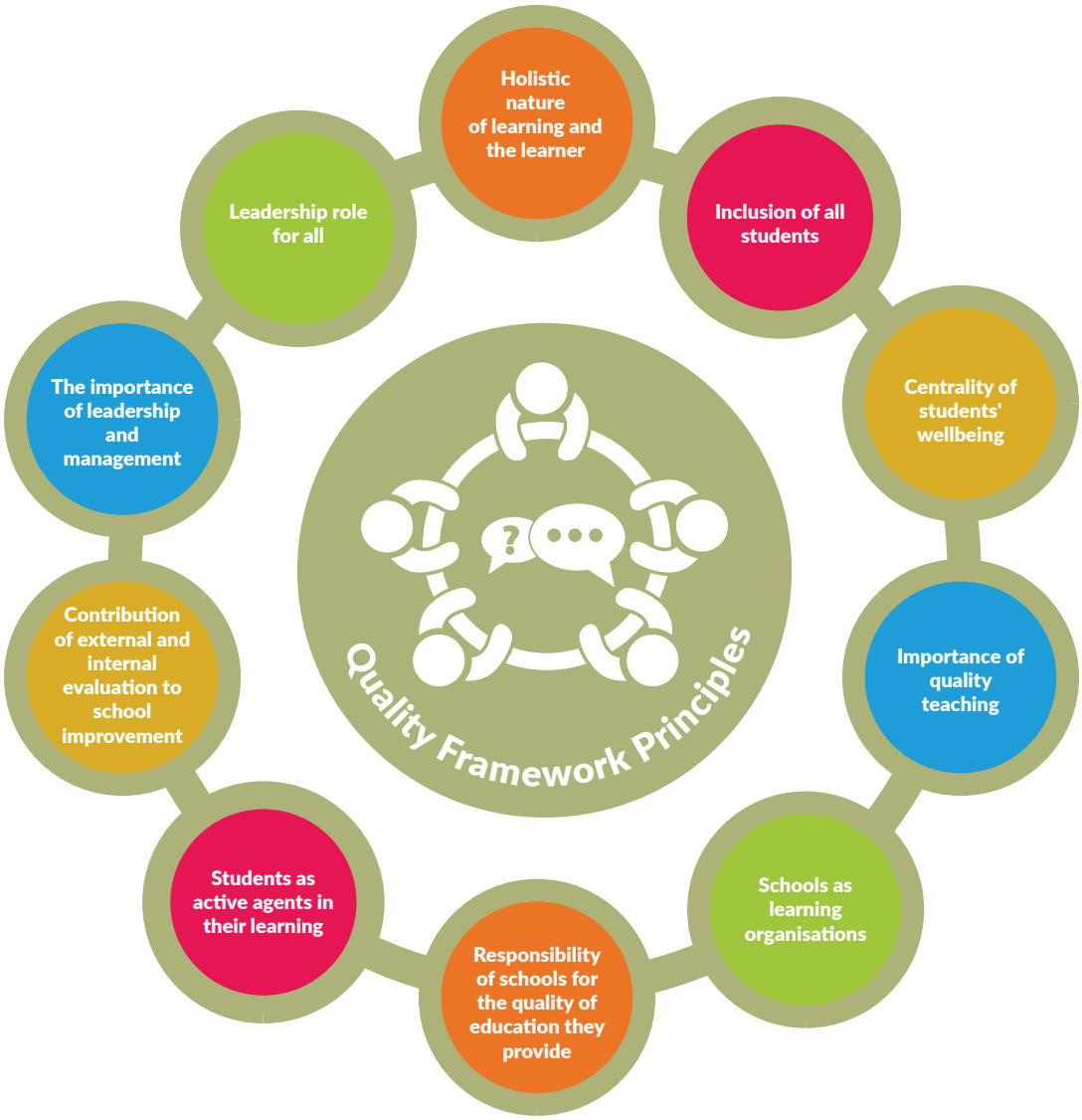
What are the key principles that inform the quality framework?

Ten key principles underpin *Looking at our School: A Quality Framework for Post-primary Schools 2022*.



- **Holistic nature of learning and the learner**: The quality framework takes a holistic view of learning and of the learner. It emphasises the need for students to develop knowledge and a broad range of skills, competences, dispositions and values that enable personal wellbeing, active citizenship and lifelong learning in accordance with the curriculum. Learning experiences for all students should therefore be broad, balanced, challenging and responsive to individual needs.

- **Inclusion of all students:** The quality framework emphasises the need for all students to be meaningfully included in their school community. It recognises the importance of high-quality learning and teaching that is inclusive, student-centred, informed and evidence-based, and that supports young people to participate in and make progress in all areas of their learning and development. It also recognises the need for high expectations to ensure that all young people are provided with opportunities to meet their full potential in accordance with their abilities, strengths, stages of development, and identified learning needs.

- **Centrality of students' wellbeing:** The quality framework sees students' wellbeing as intrinsic to this holistic view of learning, both as an enabler of learning and as an outcome of learning. It recognises the crucial role of schools in promoting and nurturing students' wellbeing through their practices in the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies, and partnerships. Support for students' wellbeing is therefore integrated into the two dimensions of this framework, and is explicitly referenced at key points. It is also understood that the wellbeing of school leaders and teachers contributes to a safe and healthy learning environment for students, the promotion of student wellbeing and positive student outcomes.

- **Importance of quality teaching:** The quality framework recognises the importance of quality teaching and sees excellence in teaching as the most powerful influence on student achievement. It acknowledges the pedagogical skills required to enable high-quality learner experiences and outcomes. It also acknowledges the agency of teachers in making informed and reflective professional decisions about learning and teaching in line with the curriculum and in response to the abilities and needs of all young people in a variety of contexts. It views career-long professional learning as central to the teacher's work and firmly situates reflection and collaboration at its heart. The framework holds that improving the quality of students' learning should be the main driver of teacher learning. Similarly, *Cosán*, the national framework for teachers' learning, positions students' learning as central.

- **Schools as learning organisations:** The quality framework views schools as dynamic learning organisations, where teachers are enabled to work and learn individually and collectively to build their professional capacity in order to support continuous improvement in learning and teaching.

- **Responsibility of schools for the quality of education they provide:** The quality framework holds that schools should assume responsibility for the quality of the education they provide to learners and should be explicitly learner-centred.

- **Students as active agents in their learning:** The quality framework views students as active agents in their learning who engage purposefully in a wide range of learning activities, who respond in a variety of ways to different learning opportunities and who are afforded the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions with teachers to inform learning and teaching.

- **Contribution of external and internal evaluation to school improvement**: The quality framework sees external and internal evaluation as complementary contributors to school improvement and capacity building. It maintains that the most powerful agent of improvement is a well-integrated system of evaluation that combines the external perspective with the reflective and collective insights of school leaders, teachers, parents and students.

- **The importance of leadership and management:** The quality framework sees leadership and management as inseparable. It is a fundamental principle of the framework that, for schools to be led effectively, they must be managed effectively. Therefore both leadership and management skillsets are considered at all times as serving the school's core work: learning and teaching. The framework defines school leadership by its impact on learning. It acknowledges that effective leadership is essential for schools to be places where successful learning happens.

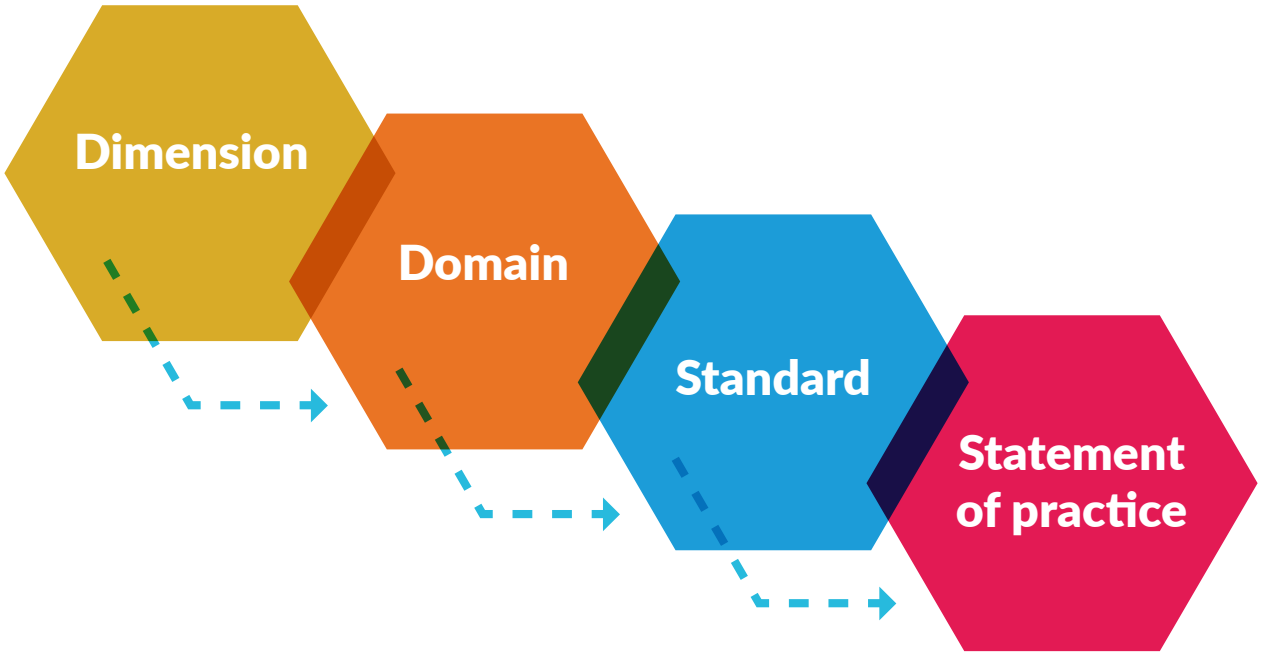
- **Leadership role for all:** The term 'school leaders' as used in the framework typically refers to the formal leadership roles held by school patrons/trustees, boards of management, principals and deputy principals. It also includes teachers with posts of responsibility and those who have undertaken roles related to the school's priorities. The framework also recognises that all teachers play a leadership role within the school and seeks to support teachers in recognising their leadership attributes and qualities. The leadership and management dimension is therefore intended to assist all teachers in gaining a perspective on their own leadership roles in the school and on how they can develop and expand their leadership skills over time.

3

What is the structure of this quality framework?

The quality framework consists of dimensions, domains, standards and statements of practice. The next section explores the meaning of these key words as used in the context of the framework.

Overview



Dimensions

The quality framework has two **dimensions**:

- Learning and teaching
- Leadership and management

These dimensions are the most important areas of the work of a school. Each dimension is structured using four **domains**.

Domains

The Framework presents four domains within the dimension of **learning and teaching**:

- Learner outcomes
- Learner experiences
- Teachers' individual practice
- Teachers' collective / collaborative practice

Learner outcomes relates to what the learner knows or can do, and what their attitude to learning is. **Learner experiences** relates to the kind of experiences the learner has when they are learning. **Teachers' individual practice** relates to teachers and how they teach. The term 'individual practice' is used because it focuses on the individual practices of the teacher in areas such as their preparation, their methods and how they respond to students' needs.

Teachers' collective / collaborative practice relates to the ways in which teachers work together to improve provision for students. It refers to how teachers learn from each other's expertise and how they interact with each other to reflect on their own practice. It also refers to the systems that are in place to enable them to discuss students' learning, and to share knowledge, ideas and resources.

These four domains are all interlinked and all four are required to ensure high quality learning and teaching.

Similarly, the other dimension, **leadership and management**, comprises four domains which are also interlinked:

- Leading learning and teaching
- Managing the organisation
- Leading school development
- Developing leadership capacity

Leading learning and teaching relates to how the principal and other leaders plan for learning and teaching for all students in the school and review the effectiveness of how this is done. **Managing the organisation** relates to the practical issues which are involved in running a school, such as establishing a safe and healthy learning environment. **Leading school development** relates to the need to ensure that the school is continually developing and improving, through self-evaluation, through responding to change and through the building of relationships with the school community. Finally, an important aspect of leadership and management is **developing leadership capacity** and ensuring that all members of the school can develop their leadership skills. School leaders do this by giving teachers responsibility for various aspects of school life and by promoting and facilitating the development of student participation, student leadership and parent participation.

Where practice within the dimension of **leadership and management** is effective or highly effective, all four of the individual domains outlined above are present. For example, a principal may manage the organisation of the school effectively, in that all aspects of the school's routines work well and the principal has effective systems in place to support student behaviour. However, in an effective or highly effective school, the principal also considers the importance of developing the leadership capacity of other teachers. Certain roles and responsibilities are devolved to staff, providing them with opportunities to develop their own leadership capacity. Similarly, student participation is actively promoted and facilitated within the school.

Standards

The domains are broad headings and each domain consists of four standards. Consideration of the standards will help schools to have a shared understanding of effective learning and teaching, and to reflect on the quality of learning and teaching in their own school. Similarly, the standards for leadership and management domains will support schools to reflect on the quality of leadership and management in their school.

A standard describes the behaviours and attributes related to the domain that are characteristic of good practice. For example, the standards in the domain of teachers' individual practice outline the key aspects of the work that a teacher does in their classroom each day:

The teacher:

- has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills
- selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning
- selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intentions and to students' learning needs
- responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary

Standards also support schools in reflecting on their provision and on how effective school leadership is in facilitating that provision. The standards within the domain of **leading learning and teaching** outline the key leadership actions necessary to promote effective learning and teaching:

School leaders:

- promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment
- foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student
- manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum
- foster teacher professional learning that enriches teachers' practice and students' learning

Statements of practice

Statements of practice are provided for each standard. Each statement of practice describes, in greater detail, what each standard represents. The statements of practice are presented at two levels: '**effective**' and '**highly effective**'. The statements of effective practice describe practices that are good or effective, while the statements of highly effective practice describe practices which are very good or very effective. The table below shows the statements of effective and highly effective practice associated with one of the standards from the **leading learning and teaching** domain.

Domain: Leading learning and teaching

Standard	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school foster a culture of reflection, learning and creativity. They have generally high expectations for students and lead staff in striving for improved outcomes. They support reflective practice and promote a culture of improvement.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school foster a culture in which reflection, learning and creativity **flourish**. They **lead the school community to continuously strive for excellence by setting high expectations for students**. They promote a culture of **continuous improvement by supporting colleagues to become reflective practitioners**.
	The principal, with those leading the process, uses SSE to encourage teaching that is engaging and challenging, to support the inclusion of student and parent participation in policy development around learning and teaching and to increase students' interest in learning.	The principal, with those leading the process, uses SSE **very effectively** to encourage teaching that is engaging and challenging, to support the inclusion of student and parent participation in policy development around learning and teaching and to **enable all students to become active and motivated learners**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school encourage teachers to develop their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and to share their practice.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **expect** and encourage teachers to develop and **extend** their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and to share and discuss **practices that have proven successful at improving students' learning**.
	The principal and other leaders in the school support teachers to use digital technologies in their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and evaluate the effectivess of the use of these technologies.	The principal and other leaders in the school **lead a process of empowering** teachers to **embed** digital technologies in their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and **regularly** evaluate the effectiveness of the use of these technologies.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders encourage innovation and creativity. They recognise the value of individual and collective contributions and achievements.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **actively promote** innovation and creativity. They **welcome and celebrate** individual and collective contributions and achievements.

In most cases, the statements of highly effective practice develop and extend the statements of effective practice. Schools can use these statements as a guide when seeking to build on and improve existing effective practices.

In a small number of cases, the statement of highly effective practice is the same as the statement of effective practice. This is because, for this particular aspect of a school's provision, there is no meaningful difference between effective and highly effective practice.

The key characteristics that distinguish highly effective practice from effective practice are written in bold type in the statements of highly effective practice.

All the domains and almost all of the standards are applicable to all schools, and their contexts. However at the level of statements of practice, specific school contexts will determine which statements of practice can be used meaningfully. For example, in the leadership and management dimension, it is not useful for school leaders in smaller schools to evaluate their practice using statements that refer to extensive leadership teams. Therefore, schools will use each of the domains and standards to reflect on key areas, but will have considerable flexibility in deciding which statements to focus on in evaluating and describing their practice. At all times, the emphasis should be on the relevance of the statement to the school and its usefulness in bringing about school improvement.

4

How can the statements be used in the evaluation process?

The quality framework is a comprehensive framework to be used selectively. It is designed to provide the widest possible scope to teachers, school leaders and others to identify and achieve excellence in learning and teaching and leadership and management. However, all aspects of the framework should not be included in any one self-reflective or evaluative activity.

The standards are written in a way that respects the professional agency and autonomy of the teacher and school leader in making judgements about the work of the school. School principals, in particular, should view the framework as an enabler of self-reflection and improvement and not as an inflexible checklist. Some of the most valuable aspects of evaluation and inspection deal with features of school life that are not amenable to checklist-like criteria.

Taken together, the statements of effective practice and highly effective practice should enable teachers, school leaders, and others involved in internal or external evaluation to consider the evidence available and arrive at judgements about the quality of aspects of a school's provision. The statements of practice should also enable teachers and school leaders to plan the next stage in the improvement journey for their own teaching or for their leadership or for their school's provision. In using these statements of practice to review aspects of educational provision, particularly those relating to learner outcomes and learner experiences, account should be taken of the abilities, the stage of development and the identified strengths and the needs of students.

The quality framework recognises that schools are at different stages of the school improvement journey for different aspects of their provision. Thus, a typical school might have some very effective practice, for example, in the area of learner experiences or relationships with parents. The same school might also have aspects, for example - learning outcomes in particular subjects or assessment practices, which require improvement.

An important function of these standards is to assist schools in identifying the areas of their practice that are effective or highly effective, to identify and prioritise the areas where improvement is needed, and to help them chart the improvement journey. For example, a school may decide to focus on the area of differentiation within the domain of teachers' individual practice. The relevant statements of effective practice and highly effective practice are:

Standard	Statement of effective practice	Statement of highly effective practice
The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intentions and to students' learning needs	Teachers select and use approaches to match the learning intentions of the lesson and meet the learning needs, interests and abilities of students.	Teachers select and use approaches to match the learning intentions of the lesson, meet the learning needs, interests and abilities of students, **and to open up further learning opportunities.**

Once the process of evidence-gathering is completed, the evidence, including examples of effective practice, should be carefully reviewed by the school. This is critical to ensuring that the statements of practice are used effectively. Questions should be asked such as, '*What does the evidence tell us about what is happening in our school*?' This review of evidence will support the school in making an informed decision to judge whether they are at the effective or highly effective level in a particular aspect of practice. For example, the statement of effective practice above can be used by the school to identify aspects of their practice in the area of differentiation that correspond to it. The school may also identify some aspects of practice that are more closely aligned to the highly effective practice and, perhaps, aspects where practice is less than effective. Both the statements of effective practice and the statements of highly effective practice will also help identify specific areas that teachers should focus on in order to bring about and sustain improvements.

Similarly, a school community that is reviewing its practices and gathering evidence regarding the quality of the relationship between the board, principal and parents' association, could use the following statement of effective practice and statement of highly effective practice to guide them in making judgements about this area of provision in their school:

Standard	Statement of effective practice	Statement of highly effective practice
Build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community	The board of management and the principal facilitate and support the parents' association to fulfil its partnership and advisory role.	The board of management and the principal facilitate and support the parents' association to fulfil its partnership and advisory role, **and to operate as an inclusive forum, supporting the involvement of all parents.**

The statement of effective practice above will assist the school in making a judgement about whether or not the board and principal have an effective relationship with the parents' association. If it decides, following an analysis of the evidence gathered, that its practice in this area is less than effective and prioritises it as an area for improvement, then the emphasis on the facilitation and support of the board and principal and on the partnership and advisory role of the parents' association will help the school to identify areas on which they should focus in order to bring about improvements. For schools that judge their practice in this area to be effective, the statement of highly effective practice, with its emphasis on an inclusive forum for all parents, will assist them in bringing about and sustaining further improvements.

5

In what other ways can the quality framework be used?

Some of the key uses of the framework are indicated below:

Reflection: Effective teachers and leaders reflect on practice and on their learning, either individually or collectively, and improve as a result. The framework can be used:

- as a tool for teachers' and leaders' self-reflection and as a support in the development of their own teaching and leadership capacity
- to provide a structure for peer-reflection within schools, among teachers and leaders in different schools and in communities of professional practice
- as a talking point to generate discussion and analysis of learning and teaching and leadership within the school community
- as a planning tool for teachers, for leaders and those aspiring to leadership positions for their own professional development

Cosán, the national framework for teachers' learning, complements the framework by providing a means through which teachers can plan, engage in, and reflect on their learning, so as to ensure impact both on their practice and on their professional growth.

Recruitment: The recruitment of teachers, principals and other school leaders is one of the most important and challenging tasks that patrons/trustees, boards of management and school principals face. Circular 003/2018 emphasises that any system of school leadership and management should build on and consolidate existing school leadership and management structures in schools in line with best practice as set out in the *Looking at Our School* framework. Decisions around recruitment have the potential for long-term impact on learning and teaching in their schools. The framework provides support in this endeavour by:

- highlighting the skillsets and elements of effective practice which are central to effective learning and teaching and effective leadership
- facilitating clarity and consistency in any consideration of candidates across sectors, patron/trustee bodies and boards of management
- ensuring potential teaching and leadership candidates, and those recruiting candidates, have a clear understanding of the responsibilities of teachers and school leaders

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Transparency, accountability and improvement: Throughout the system, there is a need for a shared understanding of what effective and highly effective teaching, learning and leadership look like in practice. This framework provides:

- clarity regarding the characteristics of effective learning and teaching and effective leadership and management
- consistency in appraising strengths and a means of identifying areas for development and improvement
- a guide to support teachers and leaders in being professionally responsible, responsive and accountable to their communities

Professional learning across the system: It is important that teachers and leaders have access to rich and varied learning opportunities. As set out in *Cosán*, teachers' learning has several dimensions including formal and informal learning opportunities. It is important that the wide range of bodies that provide support for teachers' professional learning across the system have a common understanding of high-quality learning and teaching and of leadership and management. The framework will support these bodies in:

- developing professional learning opportunities, including programmes and courses, with a consistent view of the characteristics of high-quality learning and teaching and leadership and management
- evaluating the strengths of current professional learning opportunities, including programmes and courses, and exploring areas for further development
- considering the needs of teachers and of current and aspiring school leaders in the context of current challenges

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Developing and sustaining teachers and school leaders: Individual schools, and the wider education system, have a considerable interest in developing and sustaining teachers and school leaders. The framework, together with *Cosán*, provides a structure through which:

- key stages in the development of teachers and leaders can be mapped out at school and system level
- schools and the system can gauge the appropriate supports and experiences needed in advancing the skillsets of teachers, leaders and potential leaders
- experienced teachers and leaders can provide advice and guidance for new and emerging teachers and leaders within schools and in the wider education system
- professional collaboration can take place between leaders and teachers in schools and throughout the education system

Quality Framework for Post-primary Schools – Overview

	Domains	Standards
Learning and Teaching	Learner outcomes	Students:
		enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn, and expect to achieve as learners
		have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand themselves and their relationships
		demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum
		attain the stated learning outcomes for each subject, course and programme
	Learner experiences	Students:
		engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities
		grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive
		reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning
		experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning
	Teachers' individual practice	The teacher:
		has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills
		selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning
		selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intentions and to students' learning needs
		responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary
	Teachers' collective / collaborative practice	Teachers:
		value and engage in professional learning and professional collaboration
		work together to devise learning opportunities for students across and beyond the curriculum
		collectively develop and implement consistent and dependable formative and summative assessment practices
		contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise
Leadership and Management	Leading learning and teaching	School leaders:
		promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment
		foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student
		manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum
		foster teacher professional learning that enriches teachers' practice and students' learning
	Managing the organisation	School leaders:
		create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment and sustain it through effective communication
		manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation
		manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice
		develop and implement a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability
	Leading school development	School leaders:
		communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation
		lead the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation
		build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community
		manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education
	Developing leadership capacity	School leaders:
		critique their practice as leaders and develop their understanding of effective and sustainable leadership
		empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles
		promote and facilitate the development of student participation, student leadership and parent participation
		build professional networks with other school leaders

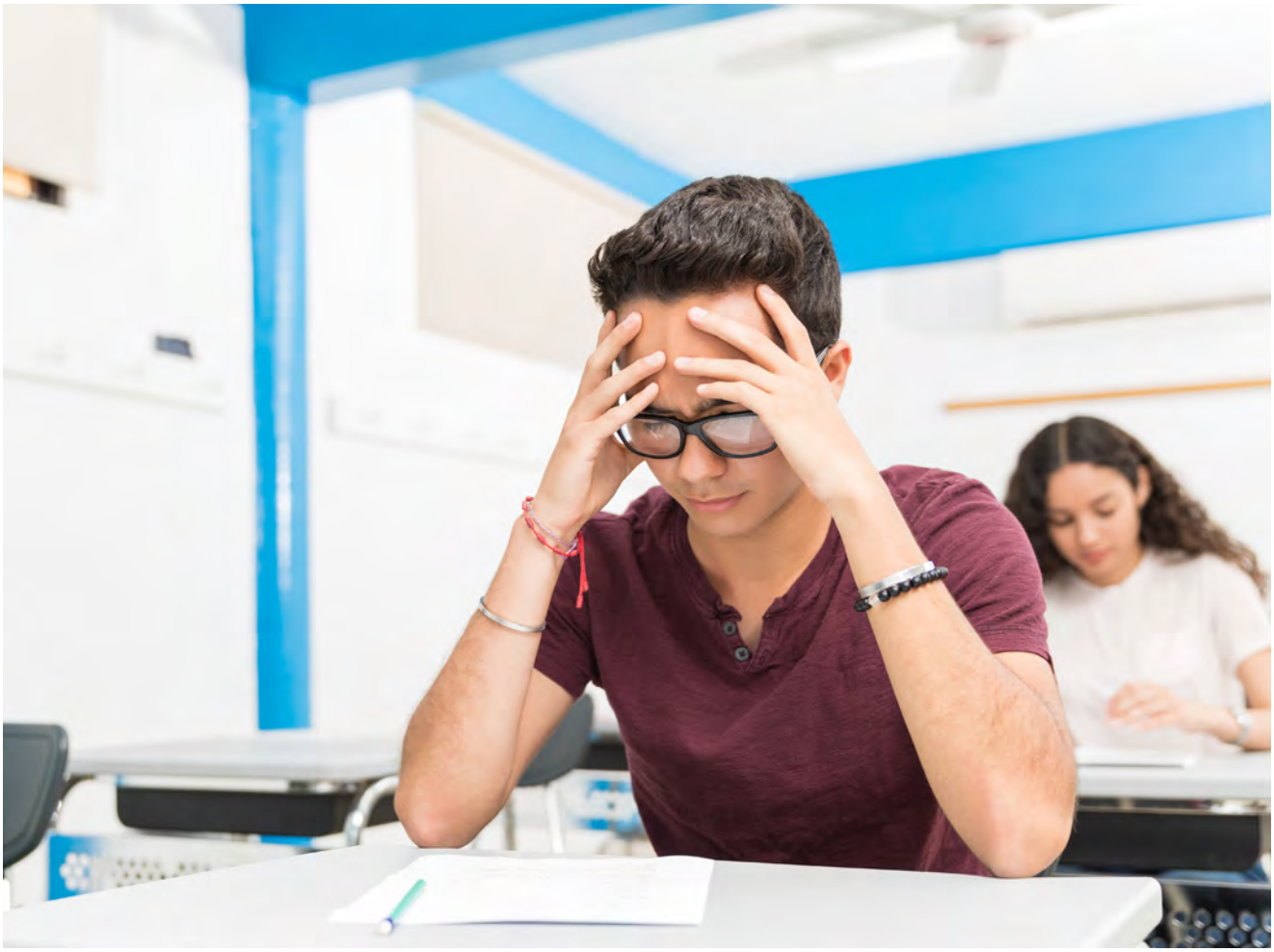
Statements of practice – Learning and teaching

Domain 1: Learner outcomes[6]

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners	Students' enjoyment in learning is evident and is often linked to a sense of making progress and of achievement. Their engagement with learning contributes to their sense of wellbeing.	Students' enjoyment in learning is evident and **arises from** a sense of making progress and of achievement. Their engagement with learning contributes to their sense of wellbeing.
	Students are motivated to learn, and this is often linked to having a clear sense of attainable learning outcomes.	Students are motivated to learn **through having** a clear sense of attainable **and challenging** learning outcomes.
	Students have a positive image of themselves as learners and demonstrate this in their approach to their learning.	Students have a positive image of themselves as **confident and capable** learners and demonstrate this in their approach to their learning.
Students have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships	Students demonstrate a knowledge, appropriate to their stage of development, of their own behaviour as individuals and as members of a group. They can apply this knowledge to manage situations, and to support their wellbeing.	Students demonstrate a knowledge, appropriate to their stage of development, of their own behaviour as individuals and as members of a group. **They apply this knowledge thoughtfully** to manage situations and support their wellbeing.
	Students have the skills to modify and adapt their behaviour when required.	Students have the skills to modify and adapt their behaviour when required, **and recognise the need to do so themselves**.
	Students apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their approach to their learning.	Students apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their approach to their learning **and develop as autonomous learners**.
	Students demonstrate an enquiring attitude towards themselves and those around them.	Students demonstrate an enquiring **and open-minded** attitude towards themselves and those around them.
Students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum	Students' subject-specific skills are developed to a high standard in accordance with the relevant learning outcomes for the syllabus, specification or course.	Students' subject-specific skills are developed to a **very high standard** in accordance with the relevant learning outcomes for the syllabus, specification or course.
	Students demonstrate good subject knowledge, skills and understanding at an appropriate level, and demonstrate this at the relevant assessment points in the year or cycle.	Students demonstrate **very good** subject knowledge, skills and understanding at an appropriate level, and demonstrate this at the relevant assessment points in the year or cycle.
	Junior cycle students have generally attained proficiency in the prescribed key skills appropriate to their stage in the cycle.	Junior cycle students **have attained** proficiency in the prescribed key skills appropriate to their stage in the cycle.
	Senior cycle students have generally attained proficiency in the skills required for successful learning in the programmes they are following.	Senior cycle students **have attained** proficiency in the skills required for successful learning in the programmes they are following.
	Students can engage in creative processes individually and collaboratively that develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and result in new and innovative ideas and solutions.	Students can engage in creative processes individually and collaboratively that **transform** their knowledge, skills and understanding resulting in new and innovative ideas and solutions **that have value in real world applications.**

[6] In considering the statements of practice within this domain, account should be taken of students' abilities, stage of development, identified strengths and learning needs.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	Students are recognised as key contributors to our sustainable future. In line with the curriculum, their understanding of environmental, social and economic issues and of active citizenship, with the associated rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts is being developed. They are enabled to act responsibly for a more sustainable world.	Students are recognised as key contributors to our sustainable future. In line with the curriculum, their understanding of environmental, social and economic issues and of active citizenship, with the associated rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts is being developed. **Students are enabled to contribute positively, actively and compassionately towards the creation of a more sustainable and just world.**
Students attain the stated learning outcomes for each subject, course and programme	Students achieve the intended learning of the lesson or sequence of lessons, which has been appropriately differentiated where necessary.	Students achieve, **and at times surpass**, the intended learning outcomes for the lesson or sequence of lessons, which has been appropriately differentiated where necessary.
	Students demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the term and year, which has been appropriately differentiated where necessary.	Students demonstrate that they have achieved, **and at times surpassed**, the intended learning outcomes for the term and year, which has been appropriately differentiated where necessary.
	Students' attainment in summative assessments, including certificate examinations, is in line with or above expectations.	Students' attainment in summative assessments, including certificate examinations, is in line with or above expectations.



Domain 2: Learner experiences[7]

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Students engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities	Students demonstrate high levels of interest and participation in learning.	Students demonstrate **very high** levels of interest and participation in learning.
	Students are able to learn both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful and creative manner.	Students are able to learn both independently and collaboratively in a **very purposeful, creative and productive** manner.
	Students understand and can explain the purpose of their learning tasks.	Students understand and can explain the purpose of their learning tasks, **and can extend and develop the activity meaningfully**.
	Students are able to report on, present, and explain the process and outcome of learning activities to a competent level.	Students are able to report on, present, and explain the process and outcome of learning activities to a **highly competent** level.
	Students display initiative, self-reliance, positive self-esteem and self-confidence. They demonstrate positive learning dispositions such as creativity, problem-solving, time management, critical thinking, resilience, resourcefulness and persistence.	Students display initiative, self-reliance, positive self-esteem and self-confidence. They **ably and actively** demonstrate positive learning dispositions such as creativity, problem-solving, time management, critical thinking, resilience, resourcefulness and persistence.
Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive	Interactions among students and between students and teachers are respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing.	Interactions among students and between students and teachers are respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing.
	Relationships and interactions in classrooms and learning areas support a positive, co-operative and productive learning environment.	Relationships and interactions in classrooms and learning areas **create and sustain** a **very positive**, co-operative, **affirming** and productive learning environment.
	Students' experiences as learners generally reflect well on how the code of behaviour is understood and implemented.	Students' experiences as learners reflect **consistently well** on how the code of behaviour is understood and implemented.
	Students feel able to contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion. They listen respectfully to the opinions and experiences of their classmates and others in the school community.	Students **regularly** contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion **with confidence**. They **are respectful of and interested in** the opinions and experiences of their classmates and others in the school community.
	Students ask questions and suggest possible solutions confidently. They are willing to risk incorrect responses, and accept that mistakes are part of the learning process.	Students ask questions and suggest possible solutions confidently. They are willing to risk incorrect responses, and **understand the value of making mistakes, using them as learning opportunities**.
	Students demonstrate a sufficient level of motivation to engage in and persist with increasingly challenging tasks.	Students demonstrate a **high level** of motivation, and **enjoy engaging in and persisting with** increasingly challenging tasks.
Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning	Students assess their progress and are aware of their strengths and areas for development as learners.	Students assess their progress **realistically** and **can describe** their strengths and areas for development as learners.

[7] In considering the statements of practice within this domain, account should be taken of students' abilities, stage of development, identified strengths and learning needs.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	Students take pride in their learning and follow the guidance they receive to improve it.	Students **have a sense of ownership of their learning**, take pride in it, and **take responsibility for improving it**.
	Students reflect on their behaviour and attitude to learning, and are able to contribute to setting meaningful goals for themselves.	Students reflect on their behaviour and attitude to learning, and **are able to set meaningful personal goals as a result of their reflection.**
	Where the school curriculum provides opportunities to do so, students are able to negotiate their learning, thereby increasing their autonomy as learners.	Where the school curriculum provides opportunities to do so, **students** are able to negotiate and **reflect on their learning**, thereby increasing their autonomy **and effectiveness** as learners.
	Students take responsibility for their own learning and use the learning resources, including digital technologies, provided to them to develop their skills, apply their understanding and extend their knowledge.	Students take responsibility for their own learning and use the learning resources, including digital technologies, provided to them **and sourced by themselves**, to develop their skills, apply their understanding and extend their knowledge.
Students experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning	Students make meaningful connections between learning in different subjects and areas of the curriculum.	Students make meaningful **and authentic** connections between learning in different subjects and areas of the curriculum **and use these connections to guide their learning**.
	Students make meaningful connections between school-based learning and learning that takes place in other contexts.	Students make meaningful **and authentic** connections between school-based learning and learning that takes place in other contexts.
	Students can, with some guidance, transfer and apply skills learned in one context to another context.	Students can, **of their own initiative**, transfer and apply skills learned in one context to another context.
	Students are aware of the key skills underpinning the curriculum and of their relevance to present and future learning.	Students **can explain** the key skills underpinning the curriculum and **understand** their relevance to present and future learning.
	Students take the opportunities provided by curriculum and other learning experiences to apply and develop these key skills.	Students take the opportunities provided by curriculum and other learning experiences to apply and develop these key skills **consciously and deliberately**.
	Students are confident in using technology individually and with peers to enhance the learning experience and develop appropriate skills. They are responsible and aware of the impact of technology use for themselves and others.	Students are **innovative**, confident **and creative** in using technology individually and with peers to enhance the learning experience and develop appropriate skills. They are responsible in their use of technology and **actively mitigate risk to ensure technology has a positive impact on themselves and others**.
	Students have an age-appropriate understanding of the concept of lifelong learning, and are well disposed to continuing education and training.	Students have an age-appropriate understanding of the concept of lifelong learning, and **see themselves engaging in** continuing education and training.

Domain 3: Teachers' individual practice

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
The teacher has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills	Teachers have the required professional qualifications. They engage in a range of personal and professional learning opportunities, and in ongoing reflection on their learning and their practice.	Teachers have the required professional qualifications and **actively seek out further learning opportunities. They reflect critically on their own learning and practice**. They engage in a range of personal and professional learning opportunities that **develops their capacity as professionals to meet the learning needs of their students and contributes to school improvement**.
	Teachers create an inclusive, purposeful, student-centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust.	Teachers create an inclusive, purposeful, student-centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust, **in which students regulate and monitor their own behaviour**.
	Teachers have high expectations of students' learning and behaviour, and communicate these expectations effectively to students.	Teachers have high expectations of students' learning and behaviour, communicate these expectations effectively to students, and **facilitate students in internalising them**.
	Teachers demonstrate competence and proficiency in the skills and knowledge of their subject areas.	Teachers demonstrate competence and proficiency in the skills and knowledge of their subject areas, **and can link these to other areas across and beyond the curriculum**.
	Teachers, through their own enthusiasm for and enjoyment of their subject area, motivate students to engage in and enjoy their learning.	Teachers **model** enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning, and **thereby create a learning environment where students are self-motivated** to engage in, **extend** and enjoy their learning.
The teacher selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning	Teachers' preparation identifies relevant learning intentions that are contextualised to students' learning needs, interests and abilities.	Teachers' preparation identifies relevant learning intentions that are contextualised to students' learning needs, interests and abilities. **Learning intentions reflect a developmental and incremental approach to progressing students' learning**.
	Teachers design and prepare in advance a sequence of learning tasks and activities suitable for the specific learning intentions of the lesson or series of lessons and use real-life, authentic situations, where appropriate.	Teachers design and prepare in advance a sequence of learning tasks and activities suitable for the specific learning intentions of the lesson or series of lessons and use real-life, authentic situations, where appropriate. **Lesson design and delivery is flexible to allow for emerging learning opportunities and to provide elements of choice for students.**
	Teachers identify and prepare in advance resources, including digital resources, where relevant, suitable for the specific learning intentions of each lesson, or series of lessons, and the learning needs of the class.	Teachers identify and **thoroughly** prepare in advance resources, including digital resources, where relevant, **tailored to match** the specific learning intentions of each lesson, or series of lessons, and **individual students' learning needs, interests and abilities**.
	Teachers' preparation is informed by their knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of pedagogy. It includes preparation for the differentiation of learning intentions and learning activities, and is informed by meaningful analysis of and use of data as well as teachers' professional judgement and decision-making.	Teachers' preparation is informed by their knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of pedagogy. It includes preparation for the differentiation of learning intentions and learning activities, **including personalised learning opportunities**, and is informed by meaningful analysis of and use of data as well as teachers' professional judgement and decision-making.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	Teachers plan for assessing students' attainment of the learning intentions of the lesson, or series of lessons, using both formative assessment and summative assessment.	Teachers plan for assessing **all relevant aspects of students' learning** in the lesson, or series of lessons, using both formative assessment and summative assessment.
	Teachers' assessment practices include not only assessment of knowledge but also assessment of skills and dispositions.	Teachers' assessment practices include not only assessment of knowledge but also assessment of skills and dispositions. **Teachers tailor assessment strategies to meet individual learning needs**.
	Teachers regularly provide students with constructive, developmental oral and written feedback on their learning.	Teachers regularly provide students with constructive, developmental oral and written feedback. **Teachers use feedback to work with students on clear strategies for improvement**.
	Teachers share success criteria with students so that they can assess their own learning through self-assessment and peer assessment.	Teachers share **and co-create** success criteria with students so that they can assess their own learning through self-assessment and peer assessment, and **identify areas for improvement and strategies to achieve improvement**.
	Teachers maintain assessment records that are clear, useful and easy to interpret and share.	Teachers maintain assessment records that are clear, useful, easy to interpret and share, **and are tailored to students' individual learning needs**.
The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intentions and to students' learning needs	Teachers select and use approaches to match the learning intentions of the lesson and meet the learning needs, interests and abilities of students.	Teachers select and use approaches to match the learning intentions of the lesson, meet the learning needs, interests and abilities of students, **and to open up further learning opportunities**.
	Teachers deliver good-quality instruction which elicits student engagement and supports autonomous learning opportunities. Teachers maintain a balance between their own input and productive student participation and response.	Teachers deliver **highly effective** instruction which elicits **deep** student engagement and supports autonomous learning opportunities. Teachers **optimise** student engagement, response **and reflection by skilfully managing their own input**.
	Teachers use a range of questioning techniques effectively for a variety of purposes including the stimulation of substantial student responses and the facilitation of deeper engagement with lesson content.	Teachers use a range of questioning techniques effectively for a variety of purposes including the stimulation of substantial student responses, the facilitation of deeper engagement with lesson content **and the extension of learning beyond the lesson**.
	Teachers meaningfully differentiate content and activities to cater for the varying needs, interests and abilities of students.	Teachers meaningfully differentiate content and activities **to ensure that all students are challenged by the learning activities and experience success as learners**.
	Teachers purposefully develop relevant literacy and numeracy skills during lessons.	Teachers **integrate** relevant literacy and numeracy skills **into the lesson**.
	Teachers enable students to make meaningful links between lesson material and their learning in other subjects and elsewhere.	Teachers enable students to make meaningful links between lesson material and their learning in other subjects, **and to transfer their learning to new experiences.**

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
The teacher responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary	Teachers are aware of students' individual learning needs, interests and abilities, and adapt learning and teaching practices accordingly.	Teachers are aware of students' individual learning needs, interests and abilities, **and design and implement personalised interventions** accordingly.
	Teachers engage with students' opinions, dispositions, interests and contexts, and modify their teaching practice to build on opportunities and address any limitations that they present.	Teachers engage with students' opinions, dispositions, interests and contexts, and modify their teaching practice to build on opportunities and address any limitations that they present. **Teachers empower students to exploit these opportunities and experience success.**

Domain 4: Teachers' collective / collaborative practice

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Teachers value and engage in professional learning and professional collaboration	Teachers recognise that professional learning and collaboration are intrinsic to their work.	Teachers recognise **and affirm** professional learning and collaboration as intrinsic to their work.
	Teachers use formal meetings and planning time to reflect together on their work.	Teachers use formal meeting and planning time to reflect together on their work.
	Teachers engage actively and productively with a variety of professional learning opportunities, including organised school-based professional learning.	**The school is a key context in which teachers' professional learning occurs**. Teachers engage actively and productively with, **and devise**, a variety of professional learning opportunities **that involve critical reflection on learning and on practice.**
	Teachers identify and engage in professional learning that develops their own practice and meets the needs of students and the school.	Teachers identify and engage in professional learning that develops their own practice, meets the needs of students and the school, and **enhances collective practice**.
	Teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and also to enhance their own professional learning. They engage in constructive collaborative practice.	Teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and also to enhance their own professional learning. They engage in constructive collaborative practice, **and in collaborative review of their practice.**
	Teachers work to maintain positive and respectful relationships with colleagues and school management for the benefit of students' learning, and for the wellbeing of staff and students. Teachers are also mindful of and take responsibility for their own wellbeing.	Teachers work **proactively** to maintain **and further develop** positive and respectful relationships with colleagues and school management for the benefit of students' learning, and for the wellbeing of staff and students. Teachers are also mindful of, **actively attend to** and take responsibility for their own wellbeing.
	Teachers implement whole-school approaches to learning and teaching that include the use of online platforms and other digital technologies to improve students' experiences and outcomes.	Teachers **collectively agree** and implement whole-school approaches to learning and teaching that include the use of online platforms and other digital technologies to improve students' experiences and outcomes.
Teachers work together to devise learning opportunities for students across and beyond the curriculum	Students' reflection and feedback on their learning are reviewed and acted upon during teachers' individual and collaborative planning activities.	Students' reflection and feedback on their learning are **systematically** reviewed and acted upon during teachers' individual and collaborative planning activities.
	Teachers plan collaboratively for learning activities that enable students to make meaningful connections between learning in different subjects.	Teachers plan collaboratively for learning activities that enable students to make meaningful **and progressively more challenging** connections between learning in different subjects.
	Teachers collaboratively plan learning experiences that help students to see learning as a holistic and lifelong endeavour.	Teachers collaboratively plan learning experiences that **enable and empower** students to see learning as a holistic and lifelong endeavour.
	Teachers work effectively with each other and with parents to support students with identified learning needs.	Teachers work **very effectively** with each other and with parents to support students with identified learning needs.
	Teachers use parent-teacher meetings and other communication with parents constructively to support parents' meaningful involvement in their children's education.	Teachers use parent-teacher meetings and other communication with parents **very constructively** to support parents' meaningful involvement in their children's education and **development as learners.**

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	Teachers collaborate with relevant and appropriate outside personnel to provide meaningful learning experiences for students.	Teachers collaborate with relevant and appropriate outside personnel to provide meaningful learning experiences for students, and **work together to ensure that the learning is integrated**.
Teachers collectively develop and implement consistent and dependable formative and summative assessment practices	Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. Teachers approach assessment as a collaborative endeavour to support students' learning and to measure their attainment.	Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. Teachers approach assessment as a collaborative endeavour to support students' learning and to measure their attainment.
	Teachers have collectively developed a whole-school policy on assessment that is appropriate to the curriculum and to their students. The policy includes formative and summative assessment practices. It is implemented consistently.	Teachers, **in consultation with students**, have collectively developed a whole-school policy on assessment that is appropriate to the curriculum and to their students. The policy includes formative and summative assessment practices. It is implemented consistently **and reviewed collectively**.
	Teachers have collectively developed a whole-school approach to providing developmental oral and written feedback to students. This approach is implemented consistently, and includes the collective review of students' work.	Teachers, **in consultation with students**, have collectively developed a whole-school approach to providing developmental oral and written feedback to students. This approach is implemented consistently, and **is underpinned by** the collective review of students' work.
	Teachers have collectively developed assessment records that are clear, useful and easy to interpret and share. These records provide a comprehensive picture of each student's learning attainment and needs.	Teachers have collectively developed assessment records that are clear, useful and easy to interpret and share. These records provide a comprehensive picture of each student's learning attainment and needs **and are built on progressively as the student moves through the school.**
	Teachers work together to interpret assessement information so that it can be used to enhance learning and teaching.	Teachers work together to interpret assessement information so that it can be used **in the most optimal way** to enhance learning and teaching.
Teachers contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise	Teachers recognise the value of building whole-staff capacity and are willing to share their expertise with other teachers in the school.	Teachers **value their role within a professional learning organisation** and, **as a matter of course**, share their expertise with other teachers in the school.
	Teachers are willing to share their expertise with teachers from other schools, for example through education centres, online forums, and school visits.	Teachers **share** their expertise with teachers from other schools, for example through education centres, online forums, and school visits.
	Teachers engage regularly in professional collaborative review of learning and teaching practices and use it to identify approaches.	Teachers engage regularly in professional collaborative review of learning and teaching practices, and **use it to identify and build on effective approaches**.
	Teachers respond positively to change and are open to building collective expertise in the skills and approaches, including those relating to digital competence, that are necessary to facilitate current and future student learning.	Teachers respond positively to change and are **proactive** in building collective expertise in the skills and approaches necessary, including those relating to digital competence, to facilitate current and future student learning.

Statements of practice – Leadership and management

Domain 1: Leading learning and teaching

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school foster a culture of reflection, learning and creativity. They have generally high expectations for students and lead staff in striving for improved outcomes. They support reflective practice and promote a culture of improvement.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school foster a culture in which reflection, learning and creativity **flourish**. They **lead the school community to continuously strive for excellence by setting high expectations for students**. They promote a culture of **continuous improvement by supporting colleagues to become reflective practitioners**.
	The principal, with those leading the process, uses SSE to encourage teaching that is engaging and challenging, to support the inclusion of student and parent participation in policy development around learning and teaching and to increase students' interest in learning.	The principal, with those leading the process, uses SSE **very effectively** to encourage teaching that is engaging and challenging, to support the inclusion of student and parent participation in policy development around learning and teaching and to **enable all students to become active and motivated learners**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school encourage teachers to develop their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and to share their practice.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **expect** and encourage teachers to develop and **extend** their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and to share and discuss **practices that have proven successful at improving students' learning**.
	The principal and other leaders in the school support teachers to use digital technologies in their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and evaluate the effectivess of the use of these technologies.	The principal and other leaders in the school **lead a process of empowering** teachers to **embed** digital technologies in their learning, teaching and assessment practices, and **regularly** evaluate the effectiveness of the use of these technologies.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders encourage innovation and creativity. They recognise the value of individual and collective contributions and achievements.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **actively promote** innovation and creativity. They **welcome and celebrate** individual and collective contributions and achievements.
Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student	The board of management and principal ensure the provision of a broad curriculum and a variety of learning opportunities.	The board of management and principal **foster students' holistic development by providing a very broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities.**
	Those with leadership and management roles promote an inclusive school community.	Those with leadership and management roles promote an inclusive school community which **demonstrably values diversity and challenges discrimination**.
	Those with leadership and management roles are committed to ensuring that all relevant school policies are inclusive, and are implemented accordingly.	Those with leadership and management roles **ensure** that all relevant school policies are inclusive and are implemented accordingly.
	Those with leadership and management roles adhere to principles of inclusion and social justice to promote equality of opportunity for students. They strive to ensure that all members of staff support this ethos.	Those with leadership and management roles **establish clear** principles of inclusion and social justice to **deliver** equality of opportunity for students **throughout all aspects of school life**. **They do so in collaboration with all staff**.
	School leaders demonstrate an awareness of and actively promote the culture, ethos and context of the school.	School leaders **ensure** that the culture, ethos and context of their school **is reflected in all aspects of policy and practice**.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	Those with leadership and management roles develop and implement effective policies and practices that are reflective of all stakeholders' inputs to support students' educational, social and personal wellbeing.	Those with leadership and management roles develop and implement **highly effective** policies and practices that are reflective of all stakeholders' inputs to support students' educational, social and personal wellbeing.
	Those with leadership and management roles, in collaboration with teachers, develop and implement effective policies, procedures and practices to facilitate the sensitive management of transitions as students transfer within, between and across learning settings. They liaise with parents, young people, relevant teachers/ school leaders and other relevant professionals to ensure continuity and coherence in students' learning and experiences.	Those with leadership and management roles, in collaboration with teachers, develop and implement **highly effective** policies, procedures and practices to facilitate **and promote** the sensitive management of transitions as students transfer within, between and across learning settings. They liaise with parents, young people and relevant professionals to ensure continuity and coherence in students' learning and experiences. **Structures are in place to enable ongoing collaboration with parents, teachers / school leaders, support staff and other relevant professionals, to support successful transitions**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school have effective systems for monitoring students' progress and development. They recognise the importance of systematic monitoring to help students reach their full potential.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school have **highly effective** systems for monitoring students' progress and development. **They ensure that these systems are used to help students reach their full potential**.
Manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum	The board of management and the principal provide a broad and balanced curriculum.	The board of management and the principal provide a broad and balanced curriculum, **making deliberate and informed efforts to meet the needs of the students**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school efficiently manage curriculum-related planning.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **strategically** and efficiently manage curriculum-related planning.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school are committed to ensuring that the school curriculum is implemented in a way that provides valuable learning experiences, and are working to that end.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **work purposefully to ensure that all aspects** of the school curriculum are implemented in a way that provides **all students with valuable learning experiences**.
	For the most part, the principal ensures that the timetable allocation for each subject is in line with syllabus/subject specification guidelines.	The principal ensures the allocation of appropriate time for each subject on the school timetable, in line with syllabus/subject specification guidelines and **the identified needs of students**.
Foster teacher professional learning that enriches teachers' and students' learning	Those in leadership and management roles support teachers' continuing professional learning in a range of areas.	Those in leadership and management roles support **and promote** teachers' continuing professional learning in a range of areas, **to support high-quality teaching.**
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school seek to identify relevant and purposeful professional learning opportunities for teachers. They encourage participation as a means of improving learning and teaching.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **promote professional learning that is evidence-based and adapted to the identified needs of the school**. They **maximise opportunities to develop teachers' capacity and competence** to improve learning and teaching.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school support teachers' participation in professional networks.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school support and **encourage** the active participation of teachers in professional networks **to improve students' learning**.

Domain 2: Managing the organisation

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful, learning environment, and sustain it through effective communication	The board of management and the principal are aware of their statutory obligations, and work to ensure that all legislative and policy requirements are met.	The board of management and the principal are **fully aware** of their statutory obligations, and **ensure timely compliance** with all legislative and policy requirements.
	The board of management and the principal fulfil their responsibility to create and maintain an environment of security and wellbeing in the school, including one in which bullying behaviour is prevented and addressed.[8] They develop and implement clear policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff.	The board of management and the principal fulfil their responsibility to create and maintain an environment of security and wellbeing in the school, including one in which bullying behaviour is prevented and addressed. Clear policies are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff. **The development, implementation and review of these policies involve the meaningful participation of all relevant parties, including parents and students**.
	The board of management and the principal understand the school's responsibilities for child protection and health and safety matters and communicate these effectively. They liaise appropriately with the relevant statutory bodies.	The board of management and the principal **fully understand** the school's responsibilities for child protection and health and safety matters and communicate these **very effectively to the whole school community**. They **work constructively** with the relevant statutory bodies.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school foster a positive school culture that supports learning and teaching and they encourage respectful interactions at all levels within the school community. They take the actions necessary to safeguard young people and prevent and tackle bullying.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **model and develop** a strong culture of mutual trust, respect, responsibility and **shared accountability**. They foster a **very positive** school culture that supports learning and teaching and they encourage respectful interactions at all levels within the school community. This includes a **systematic approach and whole-school commitment** to the creation of a school culture and environment that safeguards young people and prevents and tackles bullying.[9]
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school manage and oversee the smooth day-to-day running of the school. To this end, they develop and implement effective systems for communicating information.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school manage and oversee the smooth day-to-day running of the school. To this end, they develop and implement systems of communication **that enable all members of the school community to contribute to the work and culture of their school**.
Manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation	The principal works well with the board of management to create and maintain a learning organisation that delivers good learning experiences for all students and staff.	The principal works **very effectively** with the board of management to create and maintain a learning organisation that delivers **high-quality** learning experiences for all students and staff.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school lead and manage the organisational structures of the school effectively.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **very effectively** lead and manage the organisational structures of the school.
	The principal and the board of management constantly monitor the use of budgets, personnel, and other resources, and direct them towards identified learning priorities.	The principal and the board of management constantly monitor the use of budgets, personnel, and other resources, **to ensure that they are closely aligned with identified learning priorities and the school's plan**.

[8] Also see Appendix A.
[9] Also see Appendix A.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school manage human resources well, seeking to maximise students' learning opportunities. The principal deploys teachers with a view to making good use of their specific strengths and skills.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school manage human resources **very effectively to ensure** the maximum impact on student learning. The principal deploys teachers strategically to make the best use of their specific strengths and skills.
	The board of management ensures that the necessary systems and procedures are in place so that school resources are managed appropriately and efficiently and in a manner that provides for appropriate accountability to the relevant parties.	The board of management ensures that the necessary systems and procedures are in place so that **optimal use** is made of school resources in a manner that provides for appropriate accountability to the relevant parties.
	The board of management maintains the building and grounds to a good standard. It ensures the provision and maintenance of teaching aids and equipment, including those relating to digital learning, to a good standard. The board strives to ensure that students have equitable access to the resources provided.	The board of management maintains the building and grounds to a **very high** standard. It ensures the provision and maintenance of teaching aids and equipment, including those relating to digital learning, to a **very high standard to enable their optimal use**. The board strives to ensure that students have equitable access to the resources provided.
Manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice	The board of management and the principal ensure that school policies are reflective of all stakeholders' inputs and are based on principles of justice and fairness.	The board of management and the principal ensure that **the values of the school enshrine equality, fairness and justice for all students and staff, and are clearly enunciated in policies which are reflective of all stakeholders' inputs and enacted in practice**.
	The board of management, the principal and other leaders in the school communicate and work together in a collegial and collaborative manner to create and sustain positive, professional and productive working relationships for the benefit of students and all members of the school community.	The board of management, the principal and other leaders in the school communicate **very effectively** and work together in a **strongly** collegial and collaborative manner to create, sustain **and further develop** positive, professional and productive working relationships for the benefit of students and all members of the school community.
	When required, the board of management, the principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school are prepared to challenge actions, behaviours and practices that do not accord with the school's ethical standards.	The board of management, the principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **challenge and respond appropriately** to actions, behaviours and practices that do not accord with the school's ethical standards.
	The school values and promotes a commitment to sustainable development and implements practices and policies that embed the principles of sustainability in the daily routines of the school.	The school **prioritises and promotes, as a core value**, a commitment to sustainable development; **the school community collectively develops** and implements practices and policies to embed principles of sustainability in the school's daily routines.
	The board of management and the principal recognise challenging situations when they arise, and sometimes anticipate them. They look for solutions and generally resolve matters satisfactorily.	The board of management and the principal **are alert to** potentially challenging situations. They work **pre-emptively and effectively** to manage them, **and adopt a solution-focused approach**.
	The board of management and the principal establish procedures for dealing with conflict and, for the most part, are able to follow them through successfully.	The board of management and the principal establish **and communicate very clearly** the procedures for dealing with conflict and **follow them as necessary**. **They successfully implement and monitor agreed solutions**.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Develop and implement a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school encourage staff to evaluate their own practice.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **expect and facilitate** teachers to **critically analyse** and evaluate their own practice.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school encourage teachers to engage in collaborative review of their practice and its outcomes, in the interests of professional accountability.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **promote a culture** of collaborative review of learning and teaching practices and outcomes, as part of an effective professional accountability process. **They do so in an affirming and developmental manner**.
	The principal meets teachers annually to discuss their work.	**Within this culture of collaborative review**, the principal meets teachers annually to discuss their work **and their professional learning**.
	The principal identifies teachers in difficulty and offers appropriate support. The principal understands their responsibility and endeavours to ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with agreed procedures.	The principal, **with the board of management**, ensures that teachers who are experiencing difficulties are supported effectively, **recommends appropriate action where necessary, and ensures that action is taken** in accordance with agreed procedures.

Domain 3: Leading school development

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation	The patron / trustees, board of management and principal are proactive in establishing and maintaining a guiding vision for the school.	The patron / trustees, board of management and principal are proactive in establishing and maintaining a guiding vision for the school.
	The school's guiding vision sets out goals and expectations for the school as a learning community. The principal takes responsibility for communicating this guiding vision, supported by the patron / trustees and board of management.	The school's guiding vision sets out goals and expectations for the school as a learning community. The principal takes responsibility for communicating this guiding vision, **and does so very effectively, working with** the patron / trustees and board of management.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school communicate the guiding vision to teachers in a way that encourages them to see their responsibilities towards its realisation.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **clearly communicate** the guiding vision to teachers, **parents and students** in a way that **empowers the whole school community to translate the vision into action**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school take positive steps to support and motivate staff, and to set high expectations for learners.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **inspire and motivate students, staff and the whole school community. They set high expectations for every learner**.
Lead the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation	Those leading school self-evaluation engage with it as a structured process with a focus on improving learning, teaching and assessment.	Those leading school self-evaluation engage with it as a structured process with a focus on improving learning, teaching and assessment.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school recognise that a crucial part of their role is to lead and manage action planning for improvement. They are working to ensure that improvement plans are put into action on a whole-school basis and are monitored systematically.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **very competently exercise their role** in leading and managing action planning for improvement. **They ensure** that improvement plans are put into action on a whole-school basis and are monitored systematically.
	Those leading school self-evaluation endeavour to establish high expectations through the school improvement plan.	Those leading school self-evaluation **ensure that the school's improvement planning is underpinned by a culture of high aspirations for staff and students**.
	Those leading school self-evaluation are focused on the effective implementation of agreed actions and are committed to measuring their impact.	Those leading school self-evaluation **purposefully and very effectively to ensure that actions implemented lead to measurable and identifiable improvements in learner outcomes**.
Build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school value and support partnership with parents as a means of supporting students' learning and wellbeing. They build and maintain positive relationships with parents.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school value and support partnership with parents as a means of supporting students' learning and wellbeing. They build and maintain **very constructive** relationships with parents **which impact positively on their children's learning**.
	The board of management and the principal facilitate and support the parents' association to fulfil its partnership and advisory role.	The board of management and the principal facilitate and support the parents' association to fulfil its partnership and advisory role, **and to operate as an inclusive forum, supporting the involvement of all parents**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school have good links with other schools and education providers, and make effective use of external supports to extend learning opportunities for students.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **build and maintain very productive relationships** with other schools and education providers, **and make highly effective use of external supports** to extend learning opportunities for students.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school build good relationships with the wider community.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school build **and maintain mutually beneficial** relationships between the school and the wider community.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school communicate with parents and other partners through various means. Two-way communication occurs, and there are structures that enable dialogue with partners.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **build and maintain constructive relationships through effective and regular communication with all school partners using a range of media. The principal seeks and listens to the opinions of others and formally engages in very effective dialogue with partners**.
Manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school adapt to changes in context or the policy environment and manages the implementation of the changes well.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **demonstrate a clear understanding of change processes and approach the management of change in a collaborative, flexible and sensitive manner**.
	Those in leadership and management roles are aware of the school's changing needs, and seek to respond to them.	Those in leadership and management roles are **alert and responsive to** the changing needs of the school.
	Those in leadership and management roles are aware of educational developments, including areas of national priority, and see their relevance to the school. They seek to use this information constructively.	Those in leadership and management roles **keep abreast of thinking, developments and changes in the broader educational environment**, including areas of national priority, **and use this information positively for the benefit of the school**.
	The principal and those leading SSE use the SSE process with increasing effectiveness as a means of managing change.	The principal and those leading SSE use the SSE process **very effectively to manage the school's response** to changing needs.

Domain 4: Developing leadership capacity

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
Critique their practice as leaders and develop their understanding of effective and sustainable leadership	School leaders engage consistently in personal self-evaluation against relevant professional standards.	**The board of management, principal and other school leaders regularly review their own and each other's professional practice and development through the school's rigorous self-evaluation processes**.
	School leaders question their practice through processes of personal reflection. They are willing to work on areas of their practice that require improvement.	**The board of management, the principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school develop self-awareness** by regularly questioning their own practice through personal **and collaborative** reflection. They **identify and work on** areas of their practice that require improvement.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school are mindful of their own wellbeing as well as that of others. They respond well to pressing responsibilities and demands. They recognise the importance of emotional intelligence as a necessary aspect of their leadership practice.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **attend successfully to their own wellbeing**, as well as that of others. They respond **proportionately and constructively** to pressing responsibilities and demands. The value they place on emotional intelligence is evident in their day-to-day actions and interactions.
	The principal prioritises and delegates responsibilities well for the most part.	The principal prioritises and delegates responsibilities **appropriately and strategically**.
	The principal is establishing systems and structures to meet the priority needs of the school.	The principal **ensures that systems and structures are in place** to meet the priority needs of the school.
Empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles	The principal understands the importance of the quality of leadership and management for the school as a learning organisation.	The principal **recognises and affirms the defining role** of the quality of leadership and management for the school as a learning organisation.
	The principal encourages teachers to take on leadership roles and to lead learning, and is willing to distribute significant leadership responsibilities.	The principal **empowers** teachers to take on leadership roles and to lead learning, **through the effective use of distributed leadership models**.
	The principal encourages the formation of teams to address school priorities. The principal understands the potential for building leadership capacity, and seeks to develop this.	The principal encourages **teamwork in all aspects of school life**. The principal **creates and motivates staff teams and working groups to lead developments in key areas**, thus building leadership capacity.
	The principal and deputy principal(s) provide a mentoring programme to support teachers in new roles.	The principal and deputy principal(s) provide **and manage** an effective mentoring programme both to support teachers in new roles and **to develop the leadership capacity of mentors**.
Promote and facilitate the development of student participation, student leadership and parent participation	Those in leadership and management roles value students' and parents' views, and support their involvement in the operation of the school.	Those in leadership and management roles **recognise students and parents as stakeholders**, value their views, and **ensure** their involvement in the operation of the school.
	Those in leadership and management roles ensure that the student council is democratically elected, that it is a visible, meaningful and inclusive presence in the school and that it is included in decision-making.	Those in leadership and management roles ensure that the student council is democratically elected, inclusive **and representative**, and is **a catalyst for change**, with **an active role in decision-making and policy development**.

Standards	Statements of effective practice	Statements of highly effective practice
	Those in leadership and management roles offer students opportunities to take leadership roles.	Those in leadership and management roles **support students in taking leadership roles by facilitating relevant training and providing opportunities to lead school initiatives**.
	Those leading the SSE process recognise the need to listen to students and parents and are increasingly consulting with students about how they learn and getting feedback on the effectiveness of their learning.	Those leading the SSE process **meaningfully consult and engage with** students and parents **to review and improve learning, teaching and assessment practices**.
Build professional networks with other school leaders	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school engage in professional dialogue with their peers at various levels on an ongoing basis. They seek to apply what they learn to their practice.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other school leaders **actively involve themselves in professional associations for school leaders and managers at all levels, up to and including international level. They demonstrate learning from these associations in their practice**.
	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school contribute to the professional learning community of their peers.	The principal, the deputy principal(s) and other leaders in the school **support the professional learning** of their peers, and contribute **purposefully** to the professional learning community.
	Those with leadership and management roles avail of the support of national bodies that support the development of effective leadership and management practices.	Those with leadership and management roles **engage purposefully with** the national bodies that support the development of effective leadership and management practices.

APPENDIX A: Framework to support schools in reflecting on policy and practice in accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)*

Areas	Characteristics of a school with a positive school culture and environment
Inclusion	• Is welcoming of difference and diversity and fosters inclusivity • Encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others • Takes particular care of its 'at risk' students • Uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individuals in a sensitive manner • Has the capacity to change in response to students' needs
Attitudes and values	• Promotes social responsibility, tolerance and understanding amongst all its members both in school and out of school • Acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment • Raises awareness amongst the entire school community (including school management, teachers and other staff members, students, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and encourages students to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment, and responds appropriately • Is open, supportive and encourages students to disclose and communicate bullying behaviour • Identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values
Education and prevention strategies	• Implements a range of education and prevention strategies to raise awareness of and address bullying • Ensures comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of school activity are kept under observation • Has a range of education and prevention strategies in place to explicitly deal with the issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs • Ensures that parents and students have a clearly defined role and responsibility in helping to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere • Works with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour • Monitors the effectiveness of the education and prevention strategies in place
Relationships and interactions	• Promotes respectful relationships across the school community • Builds empathy and respect in students • Encourages positive relationships that build empathy amongst peers – student / student and teacher / teacher and between and among groups • Encourages its staff, under the leadership of the principal, to act in preventing bullying / aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community