



Norwegian Directorate  
for Education and Training

# **OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes**

## **Country Background Report for Norway**

**January 2011**

This report was prepared by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training as an input to the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. The document was prepared in response to guidelines the OECD provided to all countries. Further information about the OECD Review is available at [www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy).

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## SUMMARY

### *Primary and secondary education and training*

Compulsory school and upper secondary education and training comprise all basic and compulsory education provided in Norway. The ten-year primary and lower secondary schools comprise the compulsory schooling in Norway. The primary level consists of years 1–7, and lower secondary covers years 8–10. Students begin primary school in the year of their sixth birthday. Upper secondary education comprises all teaching and training providing competence between primary and secondary education and higher education. Upper secondary education is organised into 12 education programmes, three programmes for general studies and nine vocational education programmes.

Objectives and principles for primary and secondary education and training are embedded in *Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet* (LK06)<sup>1</sup> which is a comprehensive plan for all primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. Primary and lower secondary education are compulsory. Upper secondary education and training are optional, but all pupils have the right to such education and training.

Private schools are privately-owned schools which have been certified for teaching pursuant to the Norwegian Private School Act. Currently, 2.6% of students in Norway study in private compulsory schools, and 5% of all pupils study in private upper secondary schools. Private schools receive economic support from the state amounting to 85% of what operating expenses would cost at state schools.

### *Distribution of responsibilities within the public school system*

The administrative levels are: the central authorities (the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training), the regional authorities (the County Governor), the local authorities (municipal and county school owners) and the schools.

The public school system in Norway is governed according to a decentralised model. The Storting (Norwegian Parliament) and the Government formulate the objectives for education, adopt legal frameworks (the Education Act and its regulations) and evaluate the status and condition of the day-care and education sectors. The local and county authorities have the overriding responsibility for financing primary and lower secondary education. Costs are financed in part through block appropriations from the state and in part through municipal and county revenues. The education budget is adopted annually by the Norwegian Parliament and then transferred to the municipalities without being earmarked for education.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for formulating national education policy. National guidelines are ensured through Acts, regulations, the curricula and framework plans. The Directorate for Education and Training is an administrative agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. The regional level (the offices of the County Governors) is the link between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training on the one side, and the education sector in the municipalities and counties on the other. The school owners of primary and lower secondary schools are the local authorities, and the owners of upper secondary schools are the counties. The school owner of private schools is the school's board.

### *The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion*

The curriculum is developed by the central authorities and must be followed by the schools. Pursuant to the latest curriculum reform, Knowledge Promotion 2006, the

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<sup>1</sup> [The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion](#)

curricula have goals for pupil competence on the various levels. Much emphasis is put on local work with the subject curricula. Generally, there is great freedom to choose how to work, how to teach the material and how to structure the teaching and training.

#### *Evaluation and assessment framework*

Evaluation and assessment are undertaken on all levels of the Norwegian education system, from the pupil level to the national level. Various mechanisms for system evaluation, school assessment and individual assessment have been developed over time, but no comprehensive evaluation and assessment framework has been created that describes the objectives and contexts, and that sets responsibilities.

A national quality assessment system (NKVS) was established in 2004 with national tests and a web-based portal (*Skoleporten* – the School Portal) for presentation of data relating to the fields learning outcome, learning environment, resources, completion rates in upper secondary school and training and school facts. The system was later extended with user surveys about learning and well-being and is continually being developed. NKVS as a *system* has not been adequately profiled.

#### *The context for evaluation and assessment policies*

Work on establishing national systems to measure the quality of Norwegian schools dates back to an OECD report from 1988 on the situation in Norwegian schools (OECD 1988) which concluded that there was a definite need to develop a model for evaluating the Norwegian school that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the various levels. There was broad agreement to establish NKVS. This may be seen in connection with a general administrative trend from the late 1980s and early 1990s that emphasises decentralisation, management by objectives and performance review. The focus on setting objectives, goal attainment and measuring performance can be seen in light of this. The results from PISA and other international studies have also had a great influence on the decision to implement evaluation and assessment strategies. A change of government in 2005 led to some change in direction as the central government's control and support functions through inspection and guidance were strengthened. Greater demands were placed on school owners to establish good quality assessment systems.

#### *National system evaluation*

Research, statistics and analyses are an important part of system evaluation in Norway. Goal attainment for basic education is evaluated according to results from research and analyses. The elements in NKVS provide valuable data on which many research and analysis projects are based. Participation in international studies is an important part of the system evaluation in Norway.

#### *Local system evaluation*

The state authorities monitor school owners. The objective of this inspection is to ensure that children and young persons are given the right to equal education and training in accordance with the aims of the legislation.

The inspection in Norway focuses on control through the Act and regulations. What is controlled is the school owners' compliance with statutory obligations and duties. Inspection in Norway is not designed as full-scale control of the full set of rules and regulations, rather only parts of it.

There are a number of types of inspection. The Directorate of Education coordinates an annual inspection carried out by the county governor offices. A main focus of the national inspections has so far been to inspect school owners' systems for following up their own activities. In addition to national inspections, the county governor offices also conduct their own inspections.

School owners are also under the obligation to have an internal control system, which must assess whether the requirements in the Education Act are complied with and must ensure that the results of these assessments are followed up. School owners must also draw up an annual report on the state of primary and lower secondary education. For many municipalities an internal control system and the follow-up of school evaluation, understood as the school's assessment of itself, will be embedded in a comprehensive quality assessment system.

#### *School evaluation*

Norway has a tradition for what is called school self-evaluation. This school evaluation is an assessment process anchored in the school itself and directly related to the school's own development. There are no national guidelines for the methods schools must use for school evaluation.

The school owners have great responsibility for assessing and following up the quality of their schools, and therefore play a crucial role in the work relating to school evaluation. School owners and schools will use other experts if they want an external review of their activities.

School evaluation in Norway is statutory. Schools must regularly evaluate the extent to which organising, adapting and implementing teaching contributes to reaching the objectives established in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion. The school owner is responsible for ensuring that the assessments are undertaken according to the instructions and expectations. The school owner is also obliged to arrange Pupil Surveys and national tests.

National tools have been developed which school can use in their assessments. These include an organisational analysis and a local point-of-view analysis as well as user surveys. State-initiated efforts are being made with a view to strengthening the sector's ability to assess its own results and carry out comprehensive change processes.

#### *Teacher appraisal*

Teacher appraisal is not an explicit part of the national quality assessment system (NKVS), and there are no requirements that school owners and schools conduct such appraisals. Teacher appraisal has been a hotly debated topic during the last 20 years, and it has been stated that the school owners must be the ones to decide how such appraisal should be carried out. Systematic teacher appraisal or assessment of teaching is undertaken in some counties. The national authorities are now preparing a guide on principles and guidelines for assessment of teaching in subjects, to be ready for use in 2011.

#### *Student assessment*

There are two objectives of the student assessment in subjects: To promote learning and to express each student's competence on a continuous basis and at the conclusion of the teaching in the subject. The students must receive assessment in their subjects and in order and conduct. There must also be a dialogue between the teacher and the student as to whether the student is developing in a positive direction in relation to other aims and objectives for the teaching and training than the academic ones, and whether the teacher needs to adjust the teaching.

The basis for assessment is how far a student has reached in relation to the total competence objectives in the curriculum for each subject.

Assessment given on a continuous basis is an important part of the Norwegian system. A statutory requirement is that continuous assessment must include information on the student's competence with grounds for the assessment, and these assessments must be given as feedback where the aim is progress in the subject. National tests are held each

year in year 5, year 8 and year 9, and are compulsory for all schools. There are also obligatory mapping tests in primary school and in upper secondary education and training, and there are also mapping tests that schools may use on a voluntary basis. National tests and mapping tests have different objectives.

Final assessment comprises an overall achievement assessment and final examinations and aims to give information about the student's level at the end of year 10 and the end of subject teaching and training in upper secondary education. Subject teachers determine the overall assessment mark in subjects. Students sit for subject examinations when finishing compulsory education and in all years of upper secondary education. Each student completes a limited number of examinations, but the examination system is comprehensive in the sense that examinations are carried out in most subjects each year. Centrally set written examinations are prepared by the Directorate for Education and Training. Local examinations are set locally. Overall achievement marks and examination marks are entered on the students' school leaving certificates.

It is well documented that the Norwegian school needs to develop its assessment practice and assessment culture, both in relation to overall achievement assessment and assessment to promote student learning. Another challenge is to achieve a better common understanding on all levels of the system as to what the differences are between the various tests, what type of information the tests can provide about the students and what the results can be used for.

## **INTEREST GROUPS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### *Important interest groups mentioned in the report*

Statped: Statlig pedagogisk støttesystem (National Support System for Special Needs Education)

PPT: Pedagogisk-psykologisk tjeneste (Pedagogical-psychological services)

SSB: Statistisk sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway)

NELVU: Nettverk for elev- og lærlingvurdering (Network for Student and Apprentice Assessment)

KS: Kommunesektorens interesse- og arbeidsgiverorganisasjon (Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities)

NSLF: Norsk Skolelederforbund (Norwegian Association of School Leaders)

Utdanningsforbundet (The Union of Education Norway)

Norsk Lektorlag (Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers)

Steinerskoleforbundet (Waldorf School Association)

Norsk Montessoriforbund (Norwegian Montessori Association)

EO: Elevorganisasjonen (Norwegian Student Organization)

FUG: Foreldreutvalget for grunnopplæringen (National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education)

FAU: Foreldrenes arbeidsutvalg (Parents' Working Committee)

### *Other important abbreviations in the report*

LK06: Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2006 (The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion 2006)

Vg1: Videregående opplæring årstrinn 1 (Upper secondary education level 1)

Vg2: Videregående opplæring årstrinn 2 (Upper secondary education level 2)

Vg3: Videregående opplæring årstrinn 3 (Upper secondary education level 3)

NKVS: Nasjonalt kvalitetsvurderingssystem (National Quality Assessment System)



# INTRODUCTION

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has requested that member countries review their school evaluation and assessment framework, emphasising that the main components of such a framework may include a system evaluation (Chapter 3), school assessment (Chapter 4), teacher appraisal (Chapter 5), student assessment (Chapter 6) and/or other forms of evaluation and assessment. Norway has chosen to emphasise the main components in this report in varying degrees. Teacher appraisal has been given the least amount of focus.

This report is a review of Norway's evaluation and assessment system for basic education. The scope of the *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes* includes primary and secondary education. It does not include early childhood education and care, apprenticeships within vocational education and training and adult education.

Norway has been working to implement and develop its National Quality Assessment System (NKVS) since 2004. It is essentially this system that we will be reviewing in the national report on our evaluation and assessment framework. NKVS is constantly being improved upon.

Below is a discussion of fundamental terms used in this report. It is important to understand their use to follow our description of Norway's approach to evaluation and assessment work in this report.

## **Evaluation and assessment**

The term *evaluation* in this report is used to designate how measures and efforts are assessed as to how they function in accordance with the objectives and intentions of the evaluation. The term also refers to system evaluation and school evaluation. An evaluation is based on quantitative and qualitative data that has been collected and analysed.

The term *assessment* is used to designate how students are assessed and graded at schools based on external and internal assessments schemes (student assessment). Student assessment has two branches: formative assessment and final assessment.

## **Effectiveness and quality**

The terms *effectiveness* and *quality* are related to the Acts, regulations and curricula governing basic education and cover all the objectives, principles and provisions laid down in these documents.

The idea of effectiveness or quality is a very broad concept. Within the sphere of learning for children and adolescents, Norway currently identifies three types of quality – structural, procedural and results. The properties of these three quality areas amount to the comprehensive effectiveness of a learning institution's activities according to the Norwegian Committee for Quality in Primary and Secondary Education in Norway (Kvalitetsutvalget)<sup>2</sup>.

Structural quality describes a learning institution's external conditions, meaning organizational aspects and resources understood in their widest sense, for example the

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<sup>2</sup>On 5 October 2001 and by Royal Decree, the Government appointed a committee to evaluate the content, effectiveness and organisation of basic education in Norway. This committee was asked to prepare a sub-report in 2002. In the mandate for this report, the committee was asked to recommend a framework for a comprehensive approach to quality assessment for primary and lower secondary education, including reporting functions and follow-ups.

formal qualification of the institution's teachers, the size of student groups and its buildings, grounds and facilities. Process quality generally refers to an institution's internal activities, meaning the work of teaching. Result quality is hopefully achieved through educational work, which boils down to what the students have learned and which skills and competences they have acquired throughout their education (Official Norwegian Report 2002: 10 *First Class from First Grade*).

### **Quality assessment**

The concept of *quality assessment* in the Norwegian education system is understood as collecting information and data to evaluate a school's internal conditions, or to evaluate the status of a large part of or the entire education sector. School evaluation and inspections of municipalities and counties are both examples of how Norway understands the concept of quality assessment.

### **Learning outcome**

This report addresses *student outcomes*. When the national quality assessment system evaluates student learning outcomes, this is often limited to studying measurable results such as the overall achievement marks and examination marks, results from national tests, and mapping tests and results from international studies or surveys. However, the scope of learning outcome is broader than this, covering any and all goals that are considered essential for student learning and development as described in the Acts, regulations and curricula.

### **Accountability**

One important theme throughout this report is the extent to which different forms of assessment and evaluation have an objective for *accountability* or *improvement*, respectively.

Accountability is directed at operators who have been delegated tasks within a system and who are held accountable for specific results or actions. This term is often understood as being synonymous with control and supervision – through such actions as measuring of results or undertaking inspections (Gregory 2003). In the context of quality assessment, this term also covers the goal of promoting learning so operators in the system can achieve continuous improvement (Aucoin and Heintzman 2000). This implies that there is no clear distinction between accountability, school development and improvement efforts. Teaching and improvement efforts are essential if accountability mechanisms are to be effective.

# CHAPTER 1: THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

## 1.1 The main structural features of the education system

Basic education in Norway comprises the primary and secondary levels (years 1-10) and upper secondary education and training. Upper secondary education and training covers education at schools and apprenticeship on-the-job training. Learning takes place within various arenas, thus "school" is not a suitable term for all the possibilities of a basic education in Norway. This is why we will be using the term *education system*.

### 1.1.1 Day care

The day-care system was included in *the Knowledge Promotion Reform* in the fall of 2005 to ensure a comprehensive and coherent education programme for all children and adolescents. The Norwegian Act relating to Day-care Institutions regulates day-care centres and their activities in Norway. Day-care centres are educational institutions that provide children below compulsory school age with good early development opportunities and varied activities. While day care is an instrument that is used to provide children with good early-development conditions, it is also a service provided for families. Day care centres are both an education service and a service providing supervision and childcare. The centres' tasks and working methods are described in the *Framework Plan for Content and Tasks of Day Care*, which provides a set of regulations under the Norwegian Act relating to Day-care Institutions. *Day-care Promotion* is the name of one of the guiding documents in the Government's policy to create good and safe early-development and learning environments for children. The primary objective of Day-care Promotion is: to provide an option available to all families in Norway of the highest quality at a low price.

The state is the final authority for developing quality and managing and financing the day-care sector and for this reason provides earmarked funds for operating day-care centres up to 2011. The county governor is the link between the Ministry of Education and Research and the day-care sector. The county governor is the implementer of the Government's day-care policy through development work, administrative tasks, inspections and guidance to the local authorities. The local authorities are responsible for building and operating municipal day-care centres, and for accreditation and inspection of municipal and private day-care centres in the municipality. The local authority shall also monitor the institutions to ensure compliance with the accreditation requirements, and ensure that the content of activities is in accordance with the Acts, regulations and the Framework Plan. The local authority is also responsible for providing information and guidance, and must also ensure that all accredited day-care centres in the municipality receive public subsidies that are distributed equally among all them. The owner of the day-care centre is responsible for the educational programme at each centre.

### 1.1.2 Primary and secondary education and training

The 10-year compulsory school and upper secondary education and training comprise all the basic and compulsory education provided in Norway. National objectives have been set for the quality of primary and secondary education and training (Report to the Storting No. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School*). These objectives apply to all levels in the sector and are meant to be significant for the learning at each school and for each student. Three objectives provide clear signals for the entire sector as to which aspects of the basic education are to be prioritised:

1. All students leaving compulsory school should be able to master the basic skills that will enable them to participate in further education and working life

2. All students and apprentices who are able to do so should complete upper secondary education with a certificate of competence that permits further studies or entry into working life
3. All students and apprentices should be included in and experience a sense of mastering

#### *Primary and lower secondary education*

Facts 2009:

- 2997 ordinary primary and lower secondary schools in Norway
- 615 927 students
- 66 522 teachers

The ten years of primary and secondary education are the compulsory schooling in Norway. The primary level consists of years 1–7, and lower secondary school is years 8–10. Students begin primary school in the year of their sixth birthday.

Norway has a widely distributed population with settlement patterns in 430 municipalities, where many have few inhabitants. This is why Norway has many primary/lower secondary schools with few students. Nevertheless, we are now seeing a trend where there are fewer schools with less than 100 students, while the number schools with more than 300 students is growing. By the autumn of 2008, 33% of schools had less than 100 students, while 27% had more than 300 students.

Primary and lower secondary schooling is built on the values of equality in learning and adapted education for all students in the school system, and all schools now base their teaching on the National Curriculum. All children and adolescents shall be provided with common values for knowledge, culture and ethical principles. Schooling for all children has existed in Norway since 1739. From 1889, compulsory schooling lasted seven years, and in 1969 this was expanded to nine-years. By 1997, this was extended to ten years for all children born in 1991 or later.

#### *School subjects in primary and lower secondary education*

The subjects taught at primary and lower secondary levels are: Norwegian, Mathematics, Social Studies, Religion, Life Stances and Ethics (RLE), Arts and Crafts, Natural Sciences, English, Foreign Language/Language In-depth Study, Food and Health, Music, Physical Education, Student Council Work and Educational Choices.

English is an obligatory foreign language starting at year 1 (first graders). At the lower secondary level, students can also choose between a different foreign language and in-depth study in Norwegian, English or Sami. Lower secondary school also set aside teaching hours for student council work. Subject curricula have been designed for deaf students based on sign language as the first language, sign language in-depth study, and adapted curricula in Norwegian, English, Drama and Rhythmics.

#### *Upper secondary education*

Facts 2009:

- 439 upper secondary schools in Norway
- 190 828 students
- 90.5% of all 16-18-year-olds exercise their right to participate in upper secondary education (2008)
- 46% of students began in the Programme for General Studies
- 24 820 teachers

Upper secondary education is voluntary and all students have the right to such an education/training. Upper secondary education comprises all education and training that confers competence between compulsory education and higher education.

Young people who have completed compulsory education or similar schooling have the right to three years of upper secondary education that should lead to university admission certification or vocational competence. This right must normally be exercised within one continuous period of five years, or six years if training is given through a company. This right must also be exercised by the end of the year the student reaches 24 years of age (see Section 3-1 of the Norwegian Education Act). Every student has the right to be admitted to one of the three educational programmes they applied for.

According to the Education Act, students who are eligible for special education have the right to upper secondary education for two extra years beyond the normal limit of six, if needed. This right also applies to students who have the right to an education in (and using) sign language, or the right to study using Braille.

#### *College preparatory education and vocational education and training*

Upper secondary education is available across the entire country in compliance with the principle of equal access to education for all. In the past, there were a number of different types of schools offering upper secondary education of different durations, but since 1976, Norway has had a comprehensive upper secondary system that coordinates college preparatory education and vocational training.

Upper secondary education normally lasts three years, divided into the levels called Vg1, Vg2 and Vg3. Vocational education and training in principle leads to a craft or journeyman's certificate, normally after two years of schooling and one year as an apprentice at an in-service training establishment. In-service training at a training establishment is normally combined with one year of value creation so the apprenticeship period amounts to a total of two whole years.

The Programme for General Studies is a three-year course granting admission to higher education. Students who take a vocational education can also gain competence for admission to a university or university college (university admission certification) by taking a special supplementary programme for general university admissions certification.

#### *The structure of available choices*

Upper secondary education is organised into 12 education programmes (three programmes for general studies and nine vocational education programmes).

*The Programme for General Studies:* Specialisation in General Studies, Sports & Physical Education, Music, Dance and Drama.

*The Vocational Education and Training Programme:* Building and Construction, Design, Arts and Crafts, Electricity and Electronics, Health and Social Care, Media and Communication, Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry, Restaurant and Food Processing, Service and Transport, and Technical and Industrial Production.

#### *Private schools*

Facts 2009-2010:

- 157 ordinary private compulsory schools and six private special schools
- 5% of compulsory schools in Norway are private
- 2.6% of students study in private compulsory schools
- 82 private upper secondary schools in Norway
- Approximately 5% of all students study in private upper secondary schools

Private schools are privately-owned schools which have been certified for teaching pursuant to the Norwegian Private School Act.

The number of private compulsory schools has risen from 2000-2001 (89 private schools) to 2009-2010 (157 private schools). There are fewer students on average at a private school than in the state schools.

Private schools obtain economic support from the state amounting to 85% of what operating expenses would cost at state schools. Schools must be run pursuant to the Private School Act, the Regulations to this Act and the provisions for accreditation. When the state considers applications for accreditation of private schools, the decision shall be based on the school being able to provide equally good schooling as offered by the state.

Schools that apply for accreditation and government funding must as a rule operate their school based on religious affiliation or based on acknowledged pedagogical philosophies. Certified international schools and private Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools abroad may also be accredited. The Act also permits the accreditation and opening of upper secondary schools with specialised and adapted programmes that combine education with top-level sports, and special schools for people with disabilities.

In addition to private schools that are certified according to the Private School Act, there are also private primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools that do not receive funds from the state. At the compulsory level, these schools must still be accredited pursuant to the Norwegian Education Act, but upper secondary schools may be opened as fully-private institutions not bound by the provisions of the Act. There are very few private schools in Norway that fall within these two categories.

#### *The National Curriculum*

*The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion* is a comprehensive plan for all primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, and comprises:

- The core curriculum (the overriding objectives for all basic education)
- The Quality Framework (summarises and elaborates on the provisions that lay down the school owner's educational responsibilities)
- Subject curricula
- The framework regulating the distribution of teaching hours and subjects

The subject curricula provide goals for student competence after years 2, 4, 7 and 10, and at the three upper secondary years (Vg1), (Vg2) and (Vg3). The subject curricula contain five basic skills integrated into the competence aims for each subject's own premises. These are: being able to read, being able to express oneself verbally, being able to express oneself in writing, numeracy, and digital and computer literacy.

The competence goals for the subject curricula are designed so they are measurable so the students' and apprentices' goal attainment can be assessed. The subject curricula do not contain assessment criteria for the subjects. This thus requires that assessment standards or criteria are developed at the local level.

#### *Education for the Sami people based on the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion<sup>3</sup>*

In co-operation with the Sami Parliament, a special national curriculum has been developed for basic education and training of Sami children in Sami school districts. The curricula are partly specialised for the region – such as with Sami language studies and Duodji (traditional Sami handicrafts), and partly adapted to local needs to learn agriculture, fishing and forestry, music and so on. In addition to providing Sami students in these districts with the opportunity to learn in their own language as stated in this

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<sup>3</sup>[\*Education for the Sami people based on the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion\*](#)

special national curriculum, Sami students have a specific right to an education in the Sami language, regardless of where they live in Norway.

## 1.2 Distribution of responsibilities within the public school system

The administrative levels are: the central authorities (the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training), the regional authorities (the County Governor), the local authorities (municipal and county school owners) and the schools.

The public school system in Norway is governed according to a decentralised model. The Storting and the Government formulate the objectives for education, adopt legal frameworks (the Education Act and its regulations) and evaluate the status and condition of the day-care and education sectors. The local and county authorities have the overriding responsibility for financing primary and lower secondary education. This expenditure is partially financed through block grants from the state and partially through their own revenues. The transfers from the state are adopted annually by the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) and are not earmarked for education.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for formulating national education policy. National guidelines are ensured through Acts, regulations, the curricula and framework plans.

The Directorate for Education and Training is an administrative agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. The Directorate acts as the administrative agency and is responsible for overseeing primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education and training. The tasks and roles of the Directorate are extensive, from governance and jurisdiction to development and guidance. The Directorate, a professional administrative agency for the education sector and part of the Ministry's academic structure, will assist employees at all levels in the education sector in their efforts to comply with the school's social mandate as this is defined in the Directorate's mission statement and other Acts, regulations and rules. The Directorate shall also help ensure the implementation of national education policy, ensuring that this is complied with and developed so that children, adolescents and adults across the entire country may receive fair, equal and adapted education in an inclusive society.<sup>4</sup>

Governance at the regional level is undertaken through the County Governors' offices as the link between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training on the one side, and the education sector in the municipalities and counties on the other. The County Governor is responsible for implementation and administration of the state's education policy, and is also responsible for inspecting public schools, processing complaints and appeals relating to the Acts and regulations, assisting in improving quality and effectiveness, providing information and guidance and dealing with various administrative matters. The focus of the national inspections and other selective inspections is decided by national authorities, while the focus of other types of inspection is established by the County Governors' offices themselves. The County Governors' offices are also responsible for selecting the objective of an inspection and undertaking inspections at public schools. The County Governor's tasks in recent years have primarily been focused on supervision and inspection, and to a lesser degree on development and improvement efforts.

The school owners of primary and lower secondary schools are the local authorities, and the owners of upper secondary schools are the counties. The *school owner* of private

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<sup>4</sup>The Directorate for Education and Training - Strategy for 2009-2012

schools is the school's board. There are 19 counties and 430 municipalities in Norway. The school owners in Norway have full responsibility for all aspects of the school system within the framework for education established by the Storting and the Government. The school owners in the municipalities and counties are the political and elected administrators. The local political level of each municipality and county is responsible for quality improvement and development of their schools within the national frameworks.

A school owner's responsibilities are established and regulated by the Acts, regulations and other central steering documents, as well as by local by-laws. The school owner's administration prepares the steering documents, information and relevant reports and studies for politicians, implements political decisions and controls and supports the school leaders and schools. Section 13-10 of the Education Act lays down that school owners must evaluate their own activities by preparing a status report that forms the basis for quality improvement and development at the school owners' own schools (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4).

Each school is led by a principal and has a number of councils and committees.

#### *Management by objectives, performance management and the decentralisation of responsibilities*

Management by objectives has been the overriding principle for the Norwegian education sector since the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>5</sup> Changes to this control system in recent years make it possible to describe this system as an objective and performance management system that includes elements of accountability.

The school owner (the local authority, county or private school owner) is responsible for ensuring that learning is organised in compliance with national legislation. Decentralisation of the educational system is achieved by giving school owners greater responsibility and freedom to organise their own activities, and must be seen in part as a consequence of the changes to the revenues system in 1986 and amendments in the Local Government Act in 1992.<sup>6</sup> The Report to the Storting No. 30 (2003-2004) *Culture for learning* describes a change in the system for how the education sector is administered, involving a greater distribution of roles between state and school owner that illustrates the school owner's responsibility for quality development. Several changes have given school owners more powerful tools for addressing their responsibilities for primary and lower secondary education: new curricula that provide greater flexibility, amendments in the Education Act that rescind rules for class distribution and the transfer of negotiations rights for teachers' salaries and employment contracts from the state to the local and country authorities.

#### *Local responsibility for curricula development work*

The National Curriculum was developed by the central authorities and all schools must comply with it. Just how detailed the National Curriculum has been in structuring the learning has varied. The last curriculum reform (Knowledge Promotion 2006) placed great emphasis on local work on the subject curricula. Knowledge Promotion was both an organisational reform and content reform. Upper secondary education was given a new programme structure and more freedom was permitted on a local level for choice of teaching methods and materials and organisation of the education.

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<sup>5</sup>This is underlined in Report to the Storting No. 33 (1990-1991). *On organization and administration in the education sector Revenue*

<sup>6</sup>*The New Revenue System* for municipalities was introduced in 1986. It established a scheme with block appropriations that gave the local authorities greater freedom to prioritize how the money could be used. The intention of the Local Government Act of 1992 was to strengthen the local authority's role and independence in relation to the state, for example through a requirement that the local administration should be collected under the municipal council and chief administrative officer's governance.



The national subject curricula contain objectives for student competence at different year levels. This means that the school owner is responsible for ensuring that each school organises the local work on the subject curricula so that the teaching complies with the national curricula. The subject curricula are based on the assumption that the choice of learning content, how learning is organised and what working methods should be used will be decided at the local level. The local level may be defined as the school owner or each school. A school owner may create local curricula for courses and subjects that affect the school's further work with teaching plans. Schools must still decide what kind of organisation and which working methods are best suited to help each student achieve the competence aims established in the subject curricula.

#### *Follow-ups and adjustments of the national subject curricula*

In 2008, a new mission statement was adopted for primary and lower secondary school. The new mission statement would express to a greater extent than its predecessor how Norwegian society has valuable cultural traditions and cultural diversity. As this statement is normative for the other sections of the Education Act and steering documents, amendments to the statement can be of great significance to the content of the core curriculum.

The national authorities have stated that adjustments should only be made to the subject curricula when necessary. Minor and frequent adjustments are preferable to major changes every ten years. Some of the subject curricula have already been changed and the Directorate is working to establish a monitoring system as the basis for a systematic follow-up of the National Curriculum.

#### *Children and young persons with special needs – Special-needs teaching*

In Norway, the teaching must be organised and adapted so that it will be inclusive for all the students and so that the need for individual adaptation is addressed within the framework of teaching in the classroom/basic group.

Students who do not have satisfactory learning outcome from the ordinary teaching programme have the right to special teaching. School owners (municipal authorities/county authorities/private schools) are responsible for giving all students an equal and adapted teaching, and organise special teaching in different ways on the individual and group levels. Based on individual decisions, opportunities are provided for using alternative teaching arenas where consideration must be given to individual development opportunities.

The pedagogical-psychological service is part (PPT) of the municipal/county support apparatus tasked with assisting with the adaptation of the teaching given to children, young persons and adults with special needs. PPT is an expert agency which examines needs for/ the right to special education assistance in day-care centres and special teaching in school.

The National Support System for Special Needs Education, Statped, is a national network consisting of 13 special pedagogical competence centres led by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Statped supplements and assists the municipal PPT when it comes to children, young persons and adults with large and complex needs. There are few state special schools in Norway. There are four state special schools for the deaf in compulsory education and one for the deaf in upper secondary school. In 2009, a government committee submitted a report proposing changes to the system for special-needs teaching.<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Education will be submitting a white paper on this topic in 2011.

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<sup>7</sup>Norwegian Official Report 2009: 18 Right to Learning

# CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 Current Framework

Evaluation and assessment are undertaken on all levels in the Norwegian education system, from the student level to the national level. Various mechanisms for system evaluation, school evaluation and student assessment have been developed over time, but no comprehensive evaluation and assessment framework has been created that describes the objectives and contexts, and that sets responsibilities.

Norway has different mechanisms for gathering, analysing, assessing and conveying data and information on the status of the education sector. Some of these mechanisms have been developed to provide information for all levels of the education sector, while others were only developed to inform stakeholders working on quality development at the local level. "*Mechanisms*" is used as an overriding term in this report to refer to all the approaches the authorities employ in their evaluation and assessment efforts, while the term *tools* is understood here to refer to instruments that have been developed for this purpose (such as the national tests). Many of the mechanisms have been integrated, including different types of tests which each separately have different objectives, but which when seen together reveal contexts and provide information on learning in a way that the individual tests cannot do on their own.

National and local stakeholders are provided with access to information on the status of the education sector through the data and information accumulated from inspections, research and evaluations, statistics, national and international analyses, international studies, the national tests, the students' overall achievement marks, student examinations, user surveys and general surveys and questionnaires. The Directorate for Education and Training uses a web-based tool called *Skoleporten* (the School Portal) together with an annual report on the status of the sector called *the Education Mirror* as its main communication channels.

### 2.1.1 Mechanisms for evaluation and assessment at all levels

Below are descriptions of the mechanisms used for evaluation and assessment that have been developed under the direction of the national authorities.

#### *Acts, regulations and the national curriculum*

The local and county authorities are legally responsible for the schooling offered to students. Norway has the Education Act and the Private School Act and regulations for both. Among other things, these Acts shall ensure that the local and county authorities and owners of private schools have suitable and adequate quality assurance systems to assess and follow-up on school performance, and that frequent evaluations are made of quality development in the education (see Chapters 3, 4 and 6).

The tasks, authority, responsibilities and restraints on the delegating authority of the local and county authorities are laid down in the Norwegian Local Government Act (see Chapter 1).

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion comprises regulations authorised in the provisions of the Education Act and is binding for basic education. Each subject curriculum lists the provisions for final assessment in the subject (see Chapter 6).

### *Inspection*

Government inspections aim to ensure that the right to equal education for children and adolescents is satisfied pursuant to the aims and objectives of the legislation. The Education Act and the Private School Act represent the minimum standards for quality in the Norwegian school as established by the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament).

Inspections at public and private schools comprise a basic mechanism to ensure that the provisions of the Education Act and the Private School Act are complied with at the local level (see Chapter 3).

### *Research and evaluation*

Extensive research is done on behalf of the Government. Norway does not have a specific state institute for evaluation, but rather has a national research council that gives advice on research policy, finances research and creates meeting places. Most assignments are delegated to research institutes, universities and university colleges under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research or the Directorate for Education and Training.

The Directorate for Education and Training's portfolio in the area of research consists of evaluating action plans, strategies, experimental programmes and measures, in addition to evaluating the effects of the Knowledge Promotion reform, with many evaluation sub-projects. Surveys are carried out in either individual schools or in connection with specific evaluation assignments (see Chapter 3).

### *Statistics*

The Directorate for Education and Training has the overall responsibility for national education statistics in the area of basic education. This involves the responsibility for the production and ordering of statistics, practical analyses of education statistics and conveying these to interested parties. Important collaborators in statistical work are: Statistics Norway (SSB), the county administrations and the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Directorate is constantly working on finding and developing new indicators for the education sector. The Directorate participates in international projects involving such indicators; among these is the OECD network NESLI (see Chapter 3).

### *Analyses*

A large part of Norwegian research on education revolves around analysing existing data on individuals gathered by Norway's national statistics bureau, SSB. Moreover, the SSB has the legal authority (pursuant to the Norwegian Statistics Act) to collect data from other private and public administrative systems. The various research communities order data from the different registers at SSB, which are integrated and sent as anonymised files when used for research purposes.

That the data sources are integrated and can be linked together – individual-level data on student background and school results, school-level data and data about the municipalities – provides great possibilities for multi-level analyses of primary and secondary education and training in Norway, and gives a good picture of how different conditions have significance for student goal attainment (see Chapter 3).

### *International studies*

Norway participates in many international comparative studies to obtain good assessments of Norwegian student competence in comparison with other countries. The most important operators in this area are: OECD (PISA, TALIS) and IEA (TIMSS, PIRLS, ICCS, TEDS-M and TIMSS Advanced) (see Chapter 3).

### *National tests*

National tests in reading, mathematics and English are given to all students at years 5 and 8.<sup>8</sup> Starting in 2010, students in year 9 also take the same tests in reading and mathematics that were taken by students in year 8. The tests shall provide students, teachers, school leaders, parents, school owners, and the regional and national authorities with information that will constitute the basis for improvement and development work. The primary aim is to give information that can assist in the setting of policy to the different levels.

The Ministry sets the framework for the tests, while the Directorate is responsible for making and organising the tests, and processes and presents the results. Research based analyses of these results are organised at the national level (see Chapter 3).

### *Overall achievement marks*

Overall achievement marks in subjects for the years when marks are awarded (starting at year 8) are set for the end of the teaching year for school subjects and are entered on the students' school leaving certificates. Students shall also receive overall achievement marks in *order and conduct*. Both the overall achievement marks and examination marks shall inform society, the working community and relevant educational institutions (receivers) about the competence each student has attained (see Chapter 6).

### *Examinations*

Norway has an extensive system for school examinations for the end of primary and secondary education and for upper secondary education. This system covers examinations given at both the central and local levels.

The curriculum for each subject establishes at which phase of the studies the student is to take or may be selected to take the examination in the subject, and stipulates the type of examination and whether it will be given locally or by the central authorities.

For centrally given examinations, the Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for making the examination questions and instructing examiners on correcting the papers. In addition to the central examinations, examinations are also given locally (see Chapter 6).

### *User surveys*

Various web-based user surveys are used as the main instruments for measuring the effectiveness of a learning environment. The user surveys are: the Pupil Survey, the Teacher Survey and the Parent Survey.<sup>9</sup> Only the Pupil Survey is obligatory. It is conducted for all students in the spring at years 7 and 10 and in the first year of upper secondary education (Vg1). It is also possible to conduct surveys in the autumn, but this is not obligatory.

The objective of the Directorate's user surveys is for students, teachers and parents to express their opinions on learning and well-being at school. The results from the user surveys are used by schools, school owners and the state's education administration to help analyse, develop and improve the learning environment. Data from the surveys can be used for research (see Chapter 4).

### *General questionnaires –data collection*

The need for data is addressed by the Directorate and the Ministry once or twice a year, with the aim of formulating a general questionnaire that is primarily sent to schools and

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<sup>8</sup>Section 2-4 of the regulations under the Education Act provides rules for exemptions.

<sup>9</sup>In addition to this, there is also an Apprentice Survey and an Instructor Survey. These are not discussed further here because vocational education and training (VET) based at companies are not a part of this report.

school owners. The Directorate has also established an internal system for coordinating surveys and questionnaires. The need for data is assessed against existing research and data registers to prevent any overlapping and to avoid the implementation of unnecessary enquiries (see Chapter 3).

#### *The School Portal*

*Skoleporten*<sup>10</sup> (the School Portal) is the Authorities' web-based portal for presenting data in the areas of learning outcome, learning environment, resources, completion rates in upper secondary education and school facts. The first four areas in this list, excluding school facts, are connected to indicators and guidance material; among these are guidelines for each individual set of indicators. These areas are called *assessment areas* because they contain relevant information for local assessment work. The objective of *Skoleporten* is that schools, school owners, parents, students and other stakeholders will have access to relevant and reliable key figures from basic education in Norway (see Chapter 3).

#### *The Education Mirror*

*Utdanningsspeilet*<sup>11</sup> (The Education Mirror) is the annual report that gives a general picture of the status of basic education in Norway. The Education Mirror is the Directorate's most important contribution to the provision of statistics and research on education. Many of the statistics are published in time sequences so development can be followed over time (see Chapter 3).

### **2.1.2 Mechanisms for evaluation and assessment exclusive to local levels**

The Directorate for Education and Training has developed mapping tests, along with the local Point-of-View Analysis, the Organisational Analysis and a template for a status report. These are tools that are used to support the quality assessment and quality development efforts of the schools and school owners, where only the local level is informed of the results. Thus the results are not reported to the national level, but are used for local assessment and development work.

#### *The mapping tests*

The Directorate for Education and Training develops mapping tests for some of the years in primary, lower secondary school and upper secondary education. Some of these tests are mandatory for the schools, while others are optional. The aim of the tests is to find which students have poor skills and therefore need extra attention and adapted teaching at a student and school level. The results of these tests will be used in local improvement and development efforts on a student and school level (see Chapter 6).

#### *The local Point-of-View Analysis*

The *Point-of-View Analysis (Ståstedsanalysen)* is a process and reflection tool used to make a general assessment of the school's teaching practice and the results of the work with the students' learning and learning environment. There are two versions of the local Point-of-View Analysis, one for primary/lower secondary and one for upper secondary school. This tool can be used for school evaluation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform and is based on the steering documents for the sector, such as the Education Act and the accompanying regulations (see Chapter 4).

#### *The Organisational Analysis*

The Organisational Analysis is a tool used to analyse the school as a knowledge workplace. The survey looks at organisational aspects that impact the employees' work situation and can affect the students' learning and learning environment. The tool is primarily intended for school development work (see Chapter 4).

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<sup>10</sup> [The School Portal](#)

<sup>11</sup> [The Education Mirror](#)

### *The status report*

In 2010 the Directorate for Education and Training provided a new tool through *Skoleporten* that will make it easier for school owners to write their annual mandatory report on the status of learning at their school. This service is available to all users who are logged on to *Skoleporten* as public school owners or private schools. The report should, as a minimum, discuss learning outcomes, drop-out rates and the learning environment, and must be discussed by the school owners, meaning the local municipal council, the county council or senior management of the private primary and lower secondary schools (see Chapter 3).

### **2.1.3 Establishing the national quality assessment system (NKVS)**

In 2003, a unanimous Storting decided to introduce a national quality assessment system for the school sector.

National tests and *Skoleporten* were developed as the first of these elements in the system in 2004. New elements have been added over time. The user surveys on learning and well-being were introduced quickly to develop knowledge on other aspects of learning than the students' academic results. Several other assessment tools have also been developed in recent years (see section 2.1.2). Constant changes make it difficult for everyone in the education system to have a common understanding of the system and what and whom it was designed for. There is no uniform interpretation in the sector as to which elements are incorporated in the NKVS. Researchers who recently evaluated NKVS corroborate this when they point to an apparent consensus that the key elements of the system are *Skoleporten*, the national tests, user surveys, inspections and international tests (Allerup et al. 2009).

The table below provides an overview of the objectives and responsibilities associated with what are understood to be the most important elements, cf. the NKVS evaluation. The description of responsibilities focuses on who is responsible for following up information obtained by the system and that the information is used in work concentrating on organisational development and educational efforts for the students' learning outcome.

#### *Overview of the objectives and responsibilities associated with the most important elements of NKVS*

Elements	Objective	Responsibility for focused use of information at NKVS			
		State level	School owner	School leader	Teacher
National tests	Ascertain the extent to which student skills are in accordance with the aims of the curriculum  Provide students, teachers, parents, school owners, school leaders, and regional and national authorities with information as the basis for improvement and development work	Use information from the tests to gain insight into, manage and improve on own and basic activities, and for focused use of means towards municipalities with special challenges	Use information from the tests to gain insight into, manage and improve basic activities	Use information from the tests to gain insight into, manage and improve on own activities	Use information from the tests as a support tool for better teaching in selected basic skills
International surveys	Evaluate Norwegian student competence compared to other	Use information from the tests to gain insight into, manage and	Use information to strengthen the knowledge platform		

	countries  Basis for indicator development and designing of education policy	improve on work in the education sector in a selection of subjects/subject areas at a selected year of school  Basis for research and analysis			
User surveys	Students, teachers and parents may express their opinions on learning and well-being at school	Use data from the surveys as a tool to analyse and develop the learning environment  Use data from the surveys for research purposes	Use data from the surveys as a tool to analyse and develop the learning environment  Use data from the surveys for research purposes	Use data from the surveys as a tool to analyse and develop the learning environment	Use data from the surveys as a tool to analyse and develop the learning environment
Inspection	Ascertain whether the actions of school owners comply with the statutory requirements that are the theme of the inspection	Use information from inspections to investigate whether school owners comply with legislation and the Government's education policy	Use information from the inspections to minimise deviations and rectify own practices, if necessary		
<i>Skoleporten</i>	So that schools, school owners, parents, students and other stakeholders have access to relevant and reliable key figures for basic education	Use data to compare information as the basis for and assessment and development of quality in the sector	Use data to compare information as the basis for assessment and development of quality in one's own region	Use data to compare information as the basis for assessment and development of quality at one's own school	

Varying degrees of attention are focused on different elements at NKVS, and some elements receive a great amount of attention at the expense of the whole. NKVS as a *system* has therefore been poorly communicated; this is probably one of the reasons why there is still a discussion on which elements of the quality assessment system are actually being covered, for what purpose and where responsibility rests.

Work on establishing national systems to measure the quality of Norwegian schools dates back to an OECD report from 1988 on the situation in Norwegian schools (OECD 1988). This report concluded that there was a definitive need to develop a model for evaluating the Norwegian school that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the various levels. Several Reports to the Storting looked into this in the following years<sup>12</sup>, but the system did not round into shape until 2002.

The reason for developing a national quality assessment system was the realisation that there was a need to build up a system from scratch. Norway lacked systematic data on learning performance in a form that was useful to educational institutions, school owners and the national level. It was also found that schools and school owners lacked the

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<sup>12</sup>No. 33 (1991-92) *Concerning Certain Aspects of Upper Secondary Education*, No. 37 (1990-91) *Concerning Organization and Management in the Education Sector*, No. 47 (1995-96) *Concerning Student Assessment, School self-evaluation and the National Quality Assessment System* and No. 28 (1998-99) *Toward Richer Goals: Concerning the Comprehensive School, Equal Opportunity in Education and a National Strategy for Assessment and Quality Development in Compulsory and Upper Secondary Education*.

necessary tools to evaluate learning outcome and processes. Furthermore, it was decided that a national quality assessment system would make school owners more accountable as the primary guarantor for good schools.

In its report, the committee referred to the well-known ISO definition of quality: "Quality is the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear on its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs". Three forms of quality were identified: *structural*, *procedural* and *quality of results*. Performance quality was seen to be the overriding criterion for a national quality assessment system. Student learning outcomes at primary and secondary education were the main focus. The committee also found that a national system should be characterised by information and openness in such ways as establishing a web-based internet portal (later renamed *Skoleporten*) where indicators for quality could be made public at the school, municipal, county and national levels.

As a stage in following up to the committee's findings, the Government initiated an extensive quality improvement project at the primary and secondary education level in 2003 under the name of *School Knows Best* (the Ministry of Education and Research 2002). This project found that the economic resources available to schools were far better in Norway than in most countries we compare ourselves to. The main explanation for this high use of resources is, according to the report, that there are more teachers per student working at Norwegian schools. On the other hand, international studies such as PISA (2000) and PIRLS showed that Norwegian students were not learning the essential basic skills to a satisfactory degree.

One main element in the new national assessment system was to introduce a national testing scheme to test basic skills, and that the results from each school would be made public. It was felt that making a school's results available to all would mobilise all levels to more accountability, internally at the schools and through external pressure (Ministry of Education and Research 2003). Accountability was thus an important principle that underpinned the development of the system. By introducing NKVS, the intention was to move attention from framework factors and processes (input) and towards student learning outcome (output).

#### **Establishing and developing the national tests**

The national tests were established pursuant to a unanimous decision by all the political parties in the Storting. Teachers and teacher associations expressed the expectation that the tests would function as good educational aids and tools for student assessment. The tests were introduced in the spring of 2004 with tests in reading and mathematics in years 4 and 10. In the spring of 2005, full-scale tests were given in reading, mathematics, English and writing in years 4, 7 and 10 at primary and lower secondary level, and in the first year of upper secondary education (Vg1).

In the spring of 2005, there was a shift in the public debate on the tests. The results from the 2004 tests were published just prior to the 2005 tests. The 2004 tests received a great deal of attention in the press and were the subject of massive criticism from many directions. Much of the criticism maintained that the national tests were understood as an instrument for inexpedient control of schools. Many critics felt that publication of the test results would lead to a ranking of schools and this would then lead to greater pressure on individual teachers. Others focused their criticism on how the tests represented a narrow understanding of competence, which could involve a constriction of the school's learning objectives. The tests were also criticised for adding to the teachers' workload and for being scheduled at a time of year when there was not enough time to act on the results in the work with the students. The tests were boycotted by many students at the upper secondary level, and the School Student Union of Norway supported this boycott. The Union of Education Norway recommended a time-out in the national implementation of the tests.



The national tests were evaluated in 2004 and 2005, and the evaluation report in its entirety was quite critical. The main conclusions were that the quality of the tests was not good enough, that the Directorate did not have a comprehensive and overriding administration of the tests and that due to the poor quality of many of the tests and the high boycott rate at the upper secondary level, the results from the 2005 tests should not have been published.

Members of the Storting from the Socialist Left Party submitted a proposition to the Storting in the spring of 2005, in Document no. 8: 51 (2004-2005). The proposition consisted of three points: The first point was a recommendation for a time-out in the implementation of the tests until 2007. The second proposal was that information from the national tests that was conveyed to the national level should be based on a statistical selection of students instead of a full-scale implementation. It was also suggested that the national tests should primarily be offered as an educational aid for all schools.

After the general elections in 2005, a change of government brought new political leadership to the Ministry of Education and Research. The new Government decided to implement a one-year time-out for the national tests, and that the results at the school level would not be published in *Skoleporten*, only the results at the municipal and county levels, would be made generally available. The reason for this was to avoid a ranking of schools. It was also decided that the tests would be carried out at the upper secondary and at year 10 in lower secondary school, and that writing tests would not be a part of the national tests. It was pointed out that the tests could be useful in following up individual students. The time for execution of the tests was moved to the autumn for years 5 and 8 to facilitate the tests' formative objectives.

During the time-out, the Directorate made extensive changes to the system behind the tests. First of all, a common framework was developed for the tests: guidelines were developed to define and delimit what should be tested and to establish what connection the tests had to the competence aims in the curricula. The guidelines also covered the implementation of the tests, the requirements for reliability/validity and the presentation and reporting of results to the various system levels. A common scale was developed for the tests to simplify the presentation of results for teachers and students. Guides were also developed with information about the tests and how the test results could be used later when working with students in the classroom. This material pointed out that the national tests were only *one* element of a comprehensive assessment system. The time allotted for the tests was shortened and much effort was put into improving the user-friendliness of the system and to simplify the system for correcting the tests and registering the results. Much work was also put into preparing pilot tests and providing professional quality assurance of the tests before the new round of tests in 2007. In this work, it was pointed out that the tests should primarily provide information about groups of students and not diagnostic information about individual students.

The new national tests were implemented for the first time in the autumn of 2007 for mathematics, Norwegian reading proficiency and English at years 5 and 8. The tests have still been the subject of much debate in the press the last few years, but discussions now generally revolve around test results and to a lesser degree on whether the tests should be carried out. There have also been fewer negative reports on schools' results and there is very little discussion on the professional quality of the tests.

After the new round of tests started in 2007, they have been more positively received by the teacher associations, the Norwegian Student Organization, the Norwegian Organisation of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), the county governors, school owners, school leaders and teachers. For example, the county governors and KS say that today, *Skoleporten* and the national tests are good tools for improvement and development work at the local level (Allerup et al. 2009). Nonetheless, many teachers would like the tests to provide more information about the students than they do today.

NKVS made an evaluation that recommended more work should be done to develop the tests as educational tools (Allerup et al. 2009). That the tests should provide guiding information for the stakeholders on all levels whilst also providing useful information for teachers as to the basic skills of their students is still a challenge, and the national authorities have put much time and effort into communicating and informing about the main objectives of the tests.

With all the commotion around the national tests and the intense focus these have been given by the many interested parties involved in the debate, other elements of the system have received less attention than they should, and it has therefore been a challenge to communicate how the results of the tests should be seen in connection with other parts of the NKVS.

The development of NKVS can be seen in connection with a general administrative trend from the late 80s and early 90s that emphasises decentralisation, management by objectives and performance management. The focus on setting objectives, goal attainment and measuring performance can be seen in light of this. The results from PISA and other international studies have also had a great influence on the decision to implement evaluation and assessment strategies.

When NKVS was introduced, it was also decided to develop new subject curricula for the entire basic education. The new subject curricula for the Knowledge Promotion Reform were introduced for the 2006 school year. The curricula were to provide clear aims for student competence after completing their education at different years, and the goals for the basic skills were to be integrated into the competence aims for all subjects. Great freedom was given at the local level within the framework of clear and binding competence aims with respect to organising and selecting means, methods and aids to be used to reach the goals.

The change of government in 2005 involved some change in direction as the central government's control and support functions through inspection and guidance were strengthened. Greater demands were placed on school owners to establish good quality assessment systems, on schools to report the status and conditions of the schools, and on school leaders to improve competence in more areas than previously. It was also decided to introduce more new tests to ascertain which students needed extra help at an earlier stage in their education. The new government thus wanted to continue using NKVS, but expanded the system by adding more elements.

#### **2.1.4 Distribution of responsibilities at NKVS**

Due to the recommendation of the Committee for Quality in Primary and Secondary Education in Norway and the increasing focus on quality in education, the Norwegian education administration was reorganised. The national functions of the Ministry of Education and Research were fortified by founding the Directorate for Education and Training, which, for example, was given responsibility for NKVS.

The proposal to establish the Directorate for Education and Training emphasised that quality assessment should primarily be a tool to be used by teachers, schools and school owners in their quality development work. But it was also pointed out that it was necessary for the central government to ensure that school owners comply with legislation, and that they implement adequate measures to deal with challenges. The reason for introducing inspection was that school owners had been given a freer hand (see Chapter 3).

The relationship between the state, school owners and schools at NKVS is characterised by accountability. This is evident from the fact that the central authorities are responsible for developing and informing about NKVS. The central government also has the regional responsibility to follow up work with the national quality assessment system and to

ensure that *Skoleporten* is used as a stage in local quality assessments at the primary and lower secondary level.<sup>13</sup> It is the responsibility of each local and county authority to organise quality assessment, discuss the results from NKVS at the political level and decide the specific measures to be implemented. However, the report entitled *Come Closer* pointed out that without parliamentary controlled local and county authorities, politicians do not exercise their role of school owner outside of the political arenas. Consequently, school ownership is practised to a large extent at the administrative level through delegated authority from the politicians (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009). Other reports also show that there is still no common understanding of who the school owners actually are, or what freedom they have to act on their own volition (Møller et al. 2009).

### **2.1.5 The objectives of NKVS**

NKVS will assist in quality development through access to knowledge on the status and condition of the education sector. School owners and schools should be encouraged to prepare specific goals for what they want to achieve, where their point of departure is the national objectives. Data from NKVS should make it possible for each municipality and school to evaluate whether or not they have satisfied their own goals.

The target group for NKVS is primarily schools and school owners at the local level, but the system will also cover the need for information at the national level. This means that NKVS will be useful for administrative functions nationally and locally to monitor whether the sector, organisation, classroom or student group is developing in the right direction, and NKVS should also be used in the teaching to improve student learning outcome. One consequence of this two-pronged objective is that it may be easy to confuse the roles when it comes to which role each element plays in the system.

The objective of the various elements may vary according to the level at which information from the quality assessments is used. The Directorate has developed tools designed to meet the need for having control information, and information that might have a direct effect on educational development at the school.

NKVS as a system obtains control information to a greater degree than information that can be used specifically for educational work. One important question is whether or not the obtained information is analysed and followed up with improvement measures. This is the decisive factor that determines whether NKVS is primarily an improvement system or a control system.

### **2.1.6 Use of results from NKVS**

There is a steadily growing understanding for the significance of knowledge-based policy formulation in Norway. At the national level, NKVS is a provider of control information which will form the basis of many research and analysis projects. Many measures implemented on the national level in recent years were based on knowledge on school results from the national tests (see Chapter 3). The authorities will be challenged in the future to guarantee that the results from the national tests are seen in connection with and supplemented by other control information, and to explain how the results alone only provide a limited value for understanding the quality of schools and what kind of support they need for quality improvement work.

The results from NKVS are also used to a certain extent for the work on materiality and risk assessment of inspection work.

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<sup>13</sup>Tasks and Instructions to the County Governor 2010

The results from the national tests, the Pupil Survey, as well as other indicators used by NKVS can also be analysed at the local level. Analyses taken at the local level are primarily used for evaluating local goal attainment, while the results can also be used for benchmarking. Some schools and local authorities have also given the task of analysing their local school systems to researchers and research institutes for their help in analysing their own local results.

Greater attention is being given to the quality of results. The results from assessments are being used locally to a greater extent now in the work on quality, and awareness is being raised as to the usefulness of the information and what it can be used for (Møller et al. 2009, Roald 2010).

A questionnaire the Directorate sent out to schools and school owners in the autumn of 2009 showed, however, that few schools or school owners have sufficient knowledge of the quality assessment system. School owners in general have better knowledge of the system than the schools, but also here we see the number of those who responded that they have "no knowledge" or "only some knowledge" is much higher than those who answered that they have "good" or "very good knowledge" of the system.

Evaluations show, however, that many municipalities lack the expertise to utilise the tools that are available in the national quality assessment system (e.g. Allerup et al. 2009). If constructive dialogues are to work, the administrative school owners must have the capacity and competence to do a professional job where the political school owners and the academic school level are concerned (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009).

The national and local authorities have already implemented measures to develop competence within certain areas of NKVS (see Chapters 4 and 6), but few measures have been implemented where the use of the entire system is concerned. Quality assessment is and never has been a priority area for the authorities' two national strategies for competence development.<sup>14</sup> Development of competence in quality assessment under the auspices of the national authorities is the responsibility of one of Norway's 16 university and university college networks for competence development – known as the Network for Quality Assessment.

Publishing results from the quality assessment system has been the subject of heated debates. Disagreements revolve around how open the publishing of the results should be, and at what level these results should be published. This is especially the case in connection with the national tests where the debate on which results should be published has become politicised. The results from the national tests for students and schools are currently not available on the open part of the *Skoleporten* website. However, the Norwegian Freedom of Information Act requires the Directorate to provide the press and others access to information about results at the individual school level, on request. The consequence of this is that the school results are published anyway by the press and news media on various websites on the same day that the Directorate publishes its results at the municipal and county levels (one exception to this is small schools where the results are not published at the school level due to privacy protection under the Norwegian Personal Data Act).

### **2.1.7 ICT's role in making the evaluation and assessment schemes**

NKVS is based mainly on the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Development of the *Skoleporten* website was an important step for NKVS as an information bank that provides access to school facts and data for the various

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<sup>14</sup> *Competence for Development – A Strategy for Competence-building in Basic Education 2005-2008*, Ministry for Education and Research 2005. *Competence for Quality – A Strategy for Continuing Education of Teachers*, Ministry of Education and Research 2008

assessment fields in compulsory schooling. The use of electronic communications for implementation and reporting is still growing in such areas as sitting for tests and examinations, reporting student results and status reporting. Reports from 2009 point out that as a tool for quality assessment, *Skoleporten* is felt to be more useful than before, and it appears to have higher utility value for the municipalities than for schools (Allerup et al. 2009, Vibe and Evensen 2009). This is logical because the school owners are the primary target group, and this was the group for which the website was a highly prioritised development, such as facilitating the reporting functionality for the school owners.

The national authorities have developed digital systems related to continuous and final assessments that consist of a combination of educational and administrative tools. In 2008, all of Norway's primary and secondary education was using an electronic test administration system and an electronic test execution system. It is now possible to give ICT-based examinations for anyone who wishes these. Starting in the autumn of 2009 the national tests in reading English and mathematics (years 5 and 8) will be taken electronically, and starting from 2010 in mathematics (year 9). A mandatory electronic mapping test in mathematics has now been introduced at Vg1, the first year of upper secondary education.

There is reason to believe that the extent of the examinations and tests that are taken electronically or that are based on the use of ICT will increase in the years to come. Thus, nearly all schools associated with compulsory education will use the electronic systems. There are many benefits from using ICT as a work tool on many levels. This is mainly due to the fact that the procedures for the development of the examinations have changed. The electronic systems

- guarantee security with respect to preparatory work, execution and correction etc. of examinations and tests
- rationalise the work with examinations and the national tests (time-saving and greater efficiency)
- "encourage" schools to think innovatively about their examinations and tests
- encourage the upgrading of computer resources which can contribute to better digital skills of students.

## **2.2 Implementation of NKVS – challenges**

The central authorities believe that the greatest challenges to implementing NKVS are related to communication, culture, competence and capacity. This understanding is based on a number of studies that as a whole provide us with this picture. A number of such reports are referred to below.

Unclear communication about what the system does – its objectives and how data from different quality assessments can be dealt with as a coherent whole –has meant that NKVS has yet to be fully accepted as a useful tool on the local level (Allerup et al. 2009). It is important that schools and school owners see NKVS as a tool they can use and not just a useful tool for the national authorities, and that they find the system has a stronger learning perspective than a control perspective. It is just as important that the authorities, school owners and school leaders, explain the relationship between the tools that are developed at the national level in the system and the work that is performed at the local level using school evaluation. Findings from the evaluation of the Knowledge Promotion reform show that connections between the various governing levels are not as good as they should be. Seen from the perspective of the schools, neither the school owners nor the national leaders communicate clearly enough as to how the elements of Knowledge Promotion should work together to strengthen quality in school.

It is a challenge to implement a system that is constantly being developed and where responsibilities and expectations are unclear. Why would anyone commit to a system if

they do not know if they have a responsibility for it and if they waive responsibility? Researchers point out that unclear lines of responsibility can lead to the schools and school owners themselves taking varying degrees of responsibility for their own results. Unclear lines of responsibility in the Knowledge Promotion Reform, both at the national and local levels, exacerbates the problem that NKVS "lacks a home" (Møller et al. 2009).

Implementing a quality assessment system depends on a good evaluation culture from the authorities and right into the classroom. The evaluation culture in Norway is poor both on the systematic and individual levels. National and international studies report that too little emphasis has been placed on feedback that promotes better learning as one way to improve practice and results. This is true in the classroom for the teacher-student relationship, in adult environments in relation to the school leader-teacher relationship and in some practices by school owners who do not supervise their school leaders well. The TALIS Survey pointed out that the school leader-teacher relationship seems to be poorly developed as an evaluation culture in Norway compared to many other countries, and that much can be learned by having a more competent and stronger school administration (Vibe et al. 2009).

Other studies point to a poor organisational culture and poor capacity on the part of school owners and school leaders. While new information is constantly pouring into the sector, there is not much of a system for processing the information in ways that provide greater insight and increase interest between the professional groups and politicians in each municipality. A lack of competent analysts appears to be one particular challenge. Research shows that information on the school is seldom turned into relevant knowledge that can be acted upon (Roald 2010).

The national authorities face similar challenges. A general survey study undertaken by the Directorate<sup>15</sup> has summarised that if the Directorate is to become a more knowledge-based organisation, the effects of the mechanisms used will have to be documented and then this knowledge must be used in future work (see Chapter 3). This survey recommends that the Directorate work in a more systematic manner with the many stakeholders, and also consider the perspective of the target group when planning and implementing the various mechanisms.

Norway has 430 municipalities (school owners). They are required to have education expertise in their administrations. The school owners are required to act on the results from the national and local quality assessments. There are significant differences between the levels of educational expertise in the municipalities because Norway has so many small municipalities with small school administration departments. Small municipalities are unable to be as active as the school owners in the larger municipalities. Many municipalities have also downsized their educational expertise in recent years. There are indications that the requirement under the Knowledge Promotion Reform that the local authorities work on curricula and assessment is too demanding for school owners and schools (Report to the Storting no. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School*). Studies of the differences between the municipalities when it comes to the results from the national tests for 2007 and 2008 show that the smallest municipalities are behind (Bonesrønning and Iversen 2010). The difference between small and large municipalities is reduced when the social background of the students is taken into consideration.

The national, regional and local levels face the challenge of improving their dialogue. Some Norwegian schools and administrators are sceptical and resistant to attempts at change; especially changes that come from outside their own networks. The sector also seems to feel that in many cases the authorities send unclear signals regarding the rules

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<sup>15</sup> *The Directorate's report on the use of policy instruments 2009*, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2009

and practical application of the assessments. How can we talk about new ideas and strategies in a way that can be translated into a context and language that give meaning both for the people who will implement the ideas and strategies and the people who are the subject of the implementation? Røvik speaks of *translation competence* as being decisive for new improved practices and that failed implementation can often be due to leaders choosing the wrong *translation rule* (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009).

NKVS sets the premises for an on-going dialogue between the various levels. Establishing a common language for quality, assessment and systems is of the utmost importance, as is avoiding that words and ideas associated with NKVS obscure the system's intentions and perhaps also create resistance. The evaluation of the NKVS shows that the current system mainly gives grounds for control. The possibility for learning, which the system also opens for, is given less emphasis.

The particular challenge for the school operators will be to connect knowledge on learning outcome with knowledge on the teachers' assessment practice, teaching practice and curriculum work in the dialogues on quality assessment. Achieving this in practice requires competence, time and arenas for such dialogues. These premises did not exist in the fall of 2007 (Møller et al. 2009). The evaluation of NKVS showed that it never supported the local processes or the needs of teachers and schools to master their own role in the process of improving quality. On the contrary, NKVS created negative pressure on teachers and schools in part because the system communicates its results through the media (Allerup et al. 2009). One task ahead seems to be to turn the focus from negative pressure to positive pressure.

### 2.3 The viewpoints of the special interest groups

Since the establishment of the NKVS, the Directorate for Education and Training has sought advice from a reference group consisting of members from the largest teacher unions for public and private schools, the Norwegian Association of School Leaders, the Norwegian Student Organization, the National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), and the City of Oslo which is the largest school owner in the country. All these have different opinions on what NKVS is.

#### *The viewpoints of the special interest groups*

<b>Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)</b>	<p>KS believes that it is important to have an overriding framework for quality assessment which covers the national, local (municipal and county) and institutional levels. NKVS should be developed in relation to this. The system must give those who are responsible for quality development the necessary fresh information at the right time. The framework must cover all three quality dimensions: result, process and structure, and cover the assessments that are mandatory pursuant to the Act and Regulations.</p> <p>The legitimacy of NKVS depends on data being made available immediately and that the data can be used on the local level. KS wants access to more of the members' data and needs access to the results so they can play a clearer role in with the efforts to develop and improve quality among municipal school owners.</p>
<b>The Union of Education Norway</b>	<p>The Union of Education Norway has been most concerned that the primary objective of the system must be to develop and improve teaching practices. The Union of Education Norway also maintains that the concept of quality in education cannot be so narrowly understood within the limited picture illustrated by so few result variables because this might have a negative influence on the classroom, moving it away from equality of education. The concept of what quality is must therefore be associated with a more comprehensive understanding based on the entire range of principles and guidelines established by the existing Acts and the National Curriculum.</p>
<b>Norwegian Association of School Leaders</b>	<p>The Norwegian Association of School Leaders is positive to a quality assessment system that provides leaders at the school/municipal/county level with necessary information about the status of the school. Leaders at all levels who are demanding the results, follow up measures and who are providing constructive</p>

	<p>support and feedback, are able to profit from the system. They also feel that NKVS must be developed even further to become a system that is even better at satisfying its intention of being a tool for mapping and systematic follow-up of each and every student, and that it is unfortunate if the system is experienced as a tool used only by the national authorities more than by teachers, school leaders and administrators and the students themselves on the local level.</p> <p>Openness, involvement and mutual trust on all levels are decisive for good implementation. One should never doubt that all sides are working toward the same goal; better learning outcome for all students and better quality in the school. Successful implementation challenges our knowledge and understanding of the goals and purpose of the system at all levels. The fact must also be considered that change processes can be very demanding and that there must be room at the local level for finding the most suitable path to the goal.</p>
<b>Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers</b>	<p>The Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers feels that NKVS as a system seems to be constructed from the perspective of the national authorities looking down on the other stakeholders, and that it is difficult to see that the purpose and logic in the system is actually student learning as the final goal. This organisation believes student assessment is the key to better learning outcome, and that establishing NKVS has contributed very little to solving problems related to this. They also believe that the system lacks national criteria or pointers for what students should be expected to accomplish at certain levels of their schooling, and that optional national tests for all subjects and in basic ICT skills for lower secondary school and upper secondary schools should be developed if the aim is to help improve knowledge on student academic achievements.</p>
<b>The Waldorf School Association</b>	<p>The Waldorf School Association is positive to a system that can promote the students' learning and the school's quality development in a systematic way. According to the Waldorf School's needs, NKVS is not such a system. NKVS is top-down controlled and based on far larger entities than the individual Waldorf Schools, which are also the school owners. NKVS is also based on a different view on learning, a different curriculum and a different organisation of activities. NKVS demands great administrative resources, and the results that are received through the system may be wrong or reflect the reality in the school in an erroneous way. The results may therefore be unsuitable as a control tool in the further development of the school. The degree to which detached result measures may be publicised, they can damage the Waldorf School's reputation. The Waldorf School Association claims here that many resources are expended on implementing NKVS at the expense of real development of quality in the schools.</p>
<b>Norwegian Montessori Association</b>	<p>The Norwegian Montessori Association is critical to being forced to participate in NKVS, and their reason is that their view of learning is not in accordance with what is emphasised in NKVS. They also feel that the national tests, for example, are a challenge because they are based on progression in the subject curricula for the general Norwegian school, while the Montessori school puts more emphasis on students working according to their own progression.</p>
<b>National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education</b>	<p>This Committee is concerned about ensuring that the parents' point of view is included in the implementation of assessment work from system evaluation to student assessment, and that it is important for parents to have access to the results and to be active stakeholders when development measures are implemented. This framework must ensure good practices and promote dialogue and common action for all the stakeholders at all levels.</p>

## 2.4 Policy initiatives

The authorities are evaluating and have in part begun to implement the following measures to improve and develop the national quality assessment system:

- Develop new tests that can provide more information on the basic skills of students and competence in subjects; see Chapter 6
- Strengthen the opportunity to compare developments in test results over time; see Chapter 3
- Develop the indicators, for example the Pupil Survey; see Chapter 3
- Improve inspection for primary and secondary education and training ; see Chapter 3



- Provide measures that strengthen the local level and give a greater opportunity to undertake good assessment and development work: The local Point-of-View Analysis, the Organisational Analysis, Status Report; see Chapters 3 and 4

In 2010, the Directorate has coordinated its web pages and internet site in a better way so the relationship between quality assessment and support and development measures can be conveyed more clearly.

The development of NKVS as a system seems to need clarification of what criteria should be the basis for a tool being defined as a part of NKVS. Norway risks having a system that will include all good intentions and measures for quality development in the sector, if it is not clear what are tools for the quality assessment system and what are mechanisms used to support the system.

Just as important as communicating that NKVS is a comprehensive system is the need to assess whether we have to improve current indicators or develop new indicators to provide a wider perspective of student learning outcome than we have today. There are also some dimensions of student learning outcome that are difficult to measure in a quantitative manner so that all levels can profit from the results. One might consider whether the system should distinguish between indicators for learning outcome that can be reported at the county and national level and qualitative assessments that are based on information that the school and school owner level have access to.

## CHAPTER 3: SYSTEM EVALUATION

### 3.1 Current framework

A system implies an interaction between each part of the system and the system as a whole (Giddens 1997). It is not possible to isolate one part from the whole because the individual part depends on, is influenced by and influences the whole. System evaluation is thus an assessment of if and how the different parts of a system can work together to support each other, and as a whole contribute to realising defined objectives.

This chapter deals with system evaluation on the national and local level.

### 3.2 National system evaluation

Research, statistics and analyses are an important part of system evaluation in Norway. Goal attainment for basic education is evaluated according to results from research and analyses. NKVS provides valuable data on which many research and analysis projects are based through international studies, statistics, national tests, user surveys and questionnaires.

The Directorate for Education and Training's research portfolio is relatively extensive. The Directorate received 15 final reports from research and evaluation projects in 2009, in addition to a large number of interim reports. Moreover, research reports written on assignment for the Ministry of Education and Research were also received.

The Directorate also has the overall responsibility for national education statistics. This involves the responsibility to produce and order statistics as well as carry out practical analyses on education statistics and convey them to the sector.

#### 3.2.1 International studies

Participation in international studies is an important part of the system evaluation. Norway participates in a number of international comparative studies. The most important operators in this area are: the OECD (PISA, TALIS) and IEA (TIMSS, PIRLS, ICCS, TEDS-M and TIMSS Advanced).

##### *Norwegian participation in international studies*

<b>Study</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
PISA	R		X	R
TIMSS		X	R	
TIMMS adv	R			
PIRLS		X	R	
ICCS	R			
ICIL				
TALIS				X
PIAAC		?		

X= Execution, R= Report

It is important for Norway to participate in international studies to receive an assessment of Norwegian student competence compared to other countries. These studies give us an indication of trends on a national and international level, and provide us with important control information.

Trend measurements of student results are based on comparing results for a certain period of time with a specific starting point. These measurements require a sample of comparable students for each time period, and it also requires that a reasonably large number of identical assignments (anchor tasks) are tested under the same conditions each time. The most important trend studies that Norway participates in are: TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA.

Participation in international studies has been important to the development of Norwegian compulsory education. These studies have contributed to putting basic skills on the national agenda. They have also stimulated debates on how changes to teaching, curricula and teacher training can explain changes in the performance of Norwegian students since 1995. They have also helped to highlight what the characteristics of a successful school system are. Norway's results from international studies have been a significant knowledge platform for a number of key documents, such as the Reports to the Storting (White papers) and political strategies.

A report has been issued through a pan-Scandinavian scholastic co-operation project under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers that analyses the results from PISA for the Scandinavian countries. Norway participates in this co-operation on this report that has been entitled *Northern Lights on PISA*. This report was issued for PISA 2003 and PISA 2006, and a new co-operation round based on the new PISA 2009 report is being worked on now.

### **3.2.2 Education statistics**

Norway has traditionally had little focus on education statistics, and the poor quality of the statistics coming from Norway has been a major challenge. The Directorate for Education and Training has invested a great deal of work to raise the quality and relevance of national education statistics in recent years. The Directorate has the overall responsibility for national education statistics in the area of basic education. Important elements of this work are:

#### *The Compulsory School Information System (GSI)*

This is data on the compulsory school in Norway. About 700 different items of information from all compulsory schools in Norway are compiled. The GSI contains information on the following themes: number of students, annual class hours, resources, special education, language minorities, first and second choice of the Norwegian language, the student transport system, school camps, elective subjects, the school day-care programme, ICT and the educational and psychological counselling services.

#### *Upper secondary education*

VIGO, the central database that is the source of statistics for upper secondary education, is owned by the county authorities. The Directorate for Education and Training compiles and publishes statistics from this database.

#### *Indicator development*

New indicators are constantly being developed to provide information on the status and condition of compulsory education based on available national education statistics. The Directorate for Education and Training has recently recommended a number of new indicators which will be published on *Skoleporten*. The focus on indicator development can be seen in connection with the increasing demand for making knowledge-based decisions and the need of the national authorities to establish clear objectives for the quality of primary and secondary education.

The indicators that have been worked on until now are related to the different result categories listed on *Skoleporten* (School facts, Learning environment, Results, Completion rates and Resources). In addition to these topics, new indicators have been developed for Learning environment pursuant to the guidelines from Report to the

Starting no. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in Compulsory School*. The objective of this work is to provide better control information on the national and local levels.

The following items are the basis for working with indicators:

- Useful information (school leaders, school owners, others)
- Interesting information (useful for quality development, for example)
- Unambiguous definitions
- Built on a precise data set
- Reliable data
- Sufficient number of individuals (consideration to protection of privacy)
- Limiting the number of indicators (to maintain a clear overview)

#### *International indicator collaboration*

The Directorate for Education and Training is directly involved in the development of international indicators through our participation in the OECD NESLI network. These indicators aim to compare the OECD countries from various perspectives and dimensions, such as teacher salaries and teacher working hours, hours of actual teaching, the opportunity to choose one's school, parental influence at school and equality for different groups seen in light of results from the education system. The Directorate is also co-operating with the Ministry of Education and Research to develop international indicators for completion rates, a task that has its foundation in the INES Working Party (where the Ministry of Education and Research is Norway's representative). The work on indicators is reported in an annual publication entitled *Education at a Glance*.

### **3.2.3 The national tests**

The intention of the national tests in arithmetic and reading is to ascertain the degree to which student skills meet the National Curriculum's goals for basic skills in math and reading as these are integrated in the competence aims for the subject after years 4 and 7. This means that these are not tests in the subjects of Norwegian and mathematics; rather, they are tests in reading and math proficiency as basic skills across all subjects. The English test does examine part of the English subject, but limited to reading, vocabulary and grammar.

An important reason underlying the introduction of the national tests was that international studies such as PISA, TIMSS and PRILS showed that Norwegian students had poorer basic skills than the national authorities had expected. A key objective in developing the national tests was to give the national authorities a tool to follow how the Norwegian school is succeeding in developing the students' basic skills.

The students' results for each of the national tests are presented using averages, standard deviations (spread) and as percentage distribution on a scale with three levels for year 5, and five levels for year 8 and 9. Descriptions are provided to explain what the mastery levels means for the three test subjects; reading, mathematics and English.

There is currently no way to measure change in actual student performance through the national tests. The reason is that the tests in mathematics and reading are given on paper, and the current scheme enables teachers to use the tests after they have been completed. This means it is difficult to keep the tests secret, and hence it is also difficult to carry out trend studies. The national tests in mathematics were given electronically for the first time in 2009. The Directorate for Education and Training has been assigned the responsibility of enabling trend studies of the tests given electronically, i.e. in mathematics and English, in the further work with national tests. This means that some of the tasks in the tests will be kept secret so that they can be used again as so-called "anchor tests" and thus standardise the level of the tests.

By linking the results of national tests with other statistics and data on student backgrounds, the national tests are a very important basis for analyses and research on

factors that impact quality in school. Most large research and analysis projects initiated by the national authorities use data from the national tests. As the tests are designed today, they do not give information about developments over time on the national level.

### 3.2.4 User surveys

The results from the Directorate for Education and Training's user surveys are used on the national level to analyse and assess measures to develop school's learning environment. The results from the Pupil Survey are for instance used to assess development in school's work with bullying and the extent to which students receive feedback. Data from the surveys can be used for research (see Chapter 4).

### 3.2.5 Evaluating national strategies and measures

Most of Norway's national strategies and measures are being evaluated. The main objective of these evaluations is to learn more about which measures actually function according to plan.

It has been difficult to evaluate many of the strategies and measures because the goals set for them have hardly been operationable. Many of the evaluations discuss challenges that arise because the strategies and measures have been too big and too heterogeneous.

The most extensive strategy plans cover many very different measures and projects that are found on the various levels in the sector. When the structure for the goals of a strategy plan is very complex it will also often be difficult to see the relationship between the goals and measures (Rambøll Management 2007).

It is also challenging to see these evaluations in context, in order to come to more long-term conclusions about quality development in compulsory education. This is due to the fact that many evaluations are undertaken at the same time because there have traditionally been many strategies and measures running parallel. None of the evaluations takes a look at *the big picture* or what is happening with development work at the central and local levels. The national authorities are also focused on concentrating efforts on fewer strategies.

The working processes related to how strategies and measures should be prepared and evaluated have until now not been standardised. The Directorate for Education and Training is working on making this process more knowledge-based. New strategies and measures are also being formulated in such a way that it will be possible to make good evaluations that can provide useful information for the authorities (see Chapter 3.5).

#### *Main National Strategies and Measures that are being evaluated*

<b>Strategies/Measures</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Regular</b>
National Strategy for Science Subjects (2003-2007)	X		
National Reading Strategy (2003-2007)	X		
Vocational Subject in Lower Secondary Education (2010-2013)		X	
National Tests			X
National Exams			X
National Training Programme for Principals		X	
Homework Assistance		X	
Competence for Quality – A Strategy for Continuing Education of Teachers (2009-2012)		X	

Better Assessment Practices Project (2007-2009)	X		
National Quality Assessment System (2005-2009)	X		
Knowledge Promotion – from Word to Deed (2006-2010)	x		

### 3.2.6 Evaluating the Knowledge Promotion Reform

A research-based evaluation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform is underway. It started in 2006 and is planned for completion in 2012 (see Chapter 1 for more information on the Knowledge Promotion Reform). This evaluation began as a follow-up evaluation in 2006 at the same time as the new reform was introduced.

This evaluation is meant to document and shed light on the degree to which the challenges to compulsory education and the intentions of the reform are being followed up and actually give results in practice. The evaluation is meant to fulfil the need for well-documented knowledge on how the strategies and mechanisms of the reform are implemented, what changes are occurring in the learning culture, in organisational and working methods and what effects arise from the reform when it comes to learning outcome and completion rates.

The main parts of the evaluation are:

- I - Implementation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform
- II – Effects of the Knowledge Promotion Reform on student and apprentice learning
- III – Two quantitative questionnaire surveys during the period.

The evaluation focuses on five main areas within these main sections:

- Content and learning outcome
- Adapted education
- Structure and implementation
- Vocational education and training (VET)
- The administrative levels and distribution of tasks in compulsory education

A reference group composed of a broad range of stakeholders has been formed as a result of the evaluation work. The group consists of representatives from many important special interest organisations. The Research Council of Norway is also represented. The group discusses the findings of evaluative research and requires its representatives to be well-informed on the evaluation and able to convey the findings from the evaluation to their own organisations.

Frequent conferences are also held to distribute and present the reports from all the projects in the evaluation programme to a wider audience.

### 3.2.7 Annual questionnaire surveys for the education sector

The sector receives many requests to participate in numerous questionnaire surveys. To limit their own work in the field – and in this way reduce the load on the education sector – the Directorate has signed a multi-year framework agreement with a professional academic community to conduct one or two questionnaire surveys a year.

The questions in the survey will generally have two goals:

- 1) Co-ordinate what has up to now been considered minor and ad-hoc mapping
- 2) Systemise questions related to the Directorate's need to follow-up on important priority areas, with special focus on the *Education Mirror* and inspection work.

Topics for the surveys will fall within the following primary areas:

- 1) Organising teaching and learning
- 2) Following up the NKVS
- 3) School administration and leadership
- 4) Continuing and further education
- 5) The learning environment
- 6) Use of resource - priorities
- 7) Following up rights, Acts and regulations

The idea is that the topics can be used at three-year intervals, changed and circulated in the surveys so that the individual topics will reappear in the survey every third year.

Full-scale surveys have been replaced with representative sampling surveys. Comparable sampling surveys are arranged so that school leaders and school owners are not contacted more than once every 18 months. One exception here is for the counties, where all 19 are included in all the surveys. The upper secondary schools are divided into three sample groups with approximately one-third of the schools from each county in each of the samples.

The target groups for the surveys are usually limited to the school owners and school leaders, and the surveys are carried out electronically by logging on with a user ID and password.

The respondents are anonymised to guarantee confidentiality.

### **3.2.8 Register-based analyses**

The Directorate for Education and Training has the responsibility for compiling all the student results from the national tests from the schools' administrative systems, in addition to overall achievement marks and examination marks from the graduating classes at the end of lower secondary school. Gender and age (year and month) can be discerned from the student's national identification number. The SSB registers also contain information about the immigration status of the population and the students' national identification number which can be linked to the parents' nationality, education, income, occupational status, marital status and other useful information.

This data can also be linked to many kinds of information about schools from the school's administrative system through the Compulsory School Information System (GSI).

SSB has also collected individual data about students who are registered at upper secondary school as of 1 October, and the students who have completed upper secondary education and/or training since the middle of the 1970s. Statistics relating to marks have also been collected for upper secondary education and training. Gender and age are also found here as part of the student's national identification number and (as with primary and lower secondary schools) this can be linked to the students' background, which can tell us something about their parents' occupation, education and so on.

Other types of questionnaire surveys from the local authorities and school leaders have been linked to the data in the registers, but they can only be accessed if the surveys are mandatory or if those who answer the questionnaires give their consent for data to be linked after the target groups for the various surveys have given their answers. The same applies to survey data from teachers and students.

SSB also compiles data on the Norwegian municipalities that can be linked to schools and student results; this applies in particular to economic and demographic data.

The fact that all the mentioned data sources can be linked together creates ample possibilities for multi-level analyses of Norway's compulsory education, and gives a good picture of how various conditions can be of significance to student competence.

The Directorate for Education and Training started a long-term analysis to create a better knowledge platform for assessing the use of resources and learning outcomes in compulsory education. These analyses are based on register data, such as mark statistics, results from the national tests, as well as user surveys, results from international studies, research-based evaluations of national priority areas and development projects, resource indicators and so on.

The goal of these analyses is to ensure good and predictable grounds for decision-making, and to lay the foundation for developing good quality indicators, by

- undertaking good annual analyses of how resources are used and of learning outcome where development over time is followed up
- performing dynamic analyses of how resources are used and of learning outcome, and shedding light on the relationship between these
- utilising the wide-ranging data material we have on a national and international level to create a balanced and differentiated image of the relationships between results and various input factors
- performing in-depth research to shed light on the problems that cannot be answered by reading the data found in the registers alone.

### **3.2.9 The Education Mirror**

The Education Mirror is an annual report that provides an overall picture of the status of primary and secondary education and training in Norway. The structure of the Education Mirror follows the general structure of *Skoleporten*, with chapters on

1. Facts about primary, lower and upper secondary education and training
2. Resources
3. Learning outcomes
4. The learning environment
5. Recruitment, completion rates and competence achievement in upper secondary education and training
6. Quality development

An introductory chapter gives the reader a view into Norwegian schools that are participating in new national development projects. Chapter 6 deals with quality development and discusses different themes from year to year where relevant research and fundamental government measures, strategies and mechanisms for improving the quality of primary and secondary education are presented.

The target groups for Education Mirror are the National Education Administration, the administrative education departments at all the county governor's offices, school owners in the municipalities and counties and school leaders, but also teachers, students, parents, special interest organisations, researchers and all stakeholders will also find this report useful.

## **3.3 Local system evaluation**

Local system evaluation is evaluation of the local level, and comprises the inspection by the Directorate and the county governor of the evaluation of the school owner and the evaluation made by the school owner of his/her field of authority.



### 3.3.1 Inspection

#### *Inspection*

The purpose of inspection is to help children and young people obtain the right to equal education in accordance with the aims of the legislation. The Education Act and the Private School Act regulate this sector. These Acts impose a number of obligations and grant a number of rights for school owners and students.

The rules in the education sector were changed towards the end of the 1990s. In this connection it was pointed out that state inspection should be strengthened to ensure that the rules and regulations were complied with. Compliance with the rules and regulations is considered to be an important part of achieving an equal education.<sup>16</sup>

The Directorate for Education and Training has the overriding responsibility for inspection in the education sector. Inspection of private school is carried out by the inspection department of the Directorate for Education and Training (12 employees with varied backgrounds), while the county governor offices conduct inspections of public schools.

Inspection in Norway is not designed as a full-scale inspection of the full set of rules with all school owners. The inspections that are carried out are focused on school owners, i.e. the board of private schools, and the local and county authorities. Norway does not undertake direct inspections of schools, which means that the quality of the teaching given by teachers is not part of the inspection. The inspection in Norway focuses on legal control, in other words an inspection of the school owners' compliance with statutory obligations. The inspection authority in question does not inspect the school owner's compliance with the entire set of rules, but rather with parts of it. When carrying out an inspection, the Directorate for Education and Training and the county governors may not inspect other matters than those regulated by the Education Act and the Private School Act. The sections of the rules that are selected as the theme for inspection are mentioned below.

Norway has 18 county governor offices, and these all have separate departments with duties related to the education sector. These departments (here called education departments) carry out inspections of public schools, but the education departments also have a number of tasks that are not related to inspection.

In total, the county governor education departments had 134 full-time equivalents for all their duties. The education departments spent approximately 47 of these on inspection duties. Education department employees are generally trained as teachers and jurists.

#### *Methodology*

When an inspection is to be held, a school owner is selected and possibly also a specific school for sampling inspection. Document review is an important element of the inspection. When the inspection authority has reviewed the documentation from the school owner, meetings and interviews will in some cases be arranged with representatives from the school owner.

The Directorate for Education and Training has prepared a special manual that explains the methodology to be used when carrying out inspections in the education sector. This manual functions as instructions for the county governor offices, and therefore helps all the offices to conduct their inspections in the same manner and deals with school owners on an equal basis. The Directorate for Education and Training also follows this methodology manual when inspecting private schools.

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<sup>16</sup> See Odelsting Proposition No 46 (1997-1998) *The Norwegian Education Act*, Official Norwegian Report (NOU) 1995:18 *New legislation for education"... Otherwise One Can do As One Pleases"*, and Report to the Storting No 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School*.

The methodology manual calls for some variation of the methods used when inspecting school owners. The choice of method may, for example, depend on the theme of the inspection and its complexity. It will not always be necessary to visit each school to check compliance with rules in the legislation. No guidelines are given as to the time to be spent inspecting individual schools if an on-site inspection is carried out, but normally it takes three months from when a case is opened until finalisation.

If an inspection finds that a school owner's practice or the practice at a school deviates from the rules, an injunction is given by the inspection authority and the school owner have to undertake changes. No other means of sanction exist, such as relieving the principal of his or her responsibilities or closing down the school.

After each inspection, an inspection report is produced and sent to the school owner who was inspected. The inspection report, which is made public, must explain the findings and assessments made by the inspection authority. If violations of any rules are found, the inspection authority must make an individual decision with an injunction to rectify the violation. Grounds must be given for all individual decisions, and the inspection authority must therefore explain what the violation consists of in each case. In cases involving injunctions, the school owner must always be notified that such an injunction will be given, and the school owner must be allowed to make a statement. An injunction is given in the inspection report, and the school owner has the right to appeal. The time limit for submitting an appeal must be a minimum of three weeks.

The county governor offices and the Directorate for Education and Training must follow up their inspections, particularly those where violations have been found. School owners must be followed up so that the inspection authority can ascertain that the violation no longer exists.

It is important that the inspections focus on relevant and appropriate matters for inspection. The Directorate for Education and Training wishes to achieve predictability in the planning, and wants the inspections to have the greatest positive significance for the students.

#### *National inspections*

Each year the Directorate for Education and Training coordinates a national inspection that is carried out by all the county governor offices. This was conducted for the first time in 2006 and represented the start of coordinated inspections from the national level in the education sector. From 2006 to the present, inspections have been a prioritised measure for realising political aims in the education sector. Norway has no rules regulating how often school owners must be inspected.

The Directorate for Education and Training is preparing a directive, together with the county governor offices, on how to carry out the national inspections. The directive includes guidelines for the number of municipalities and/or schools each county governor office must inspect and guidelines for how they must report the results of the inspections to the Directorate for Education and Training. This directive will also deal with how the county governor offices are to react if violations of the legislation are uncovered.

One of the primary focus areas of the national inspection has so far been to check that the school owner's systems follow up their own activities. Section 13-10 of the Education Act states that the school owner "shall have a satisfactory system for assessing compliance with the requirements of the Education Act and regulations issued pursuant to the Act" and for "following up the results of these assessments". The Private School Act has a similar regulation in Section 5-2. The main theme of the national inspection has so far been to check routines, procedures, competence, communication and clarification of the school owner's role. The satisfactory system shall ensure that the school owner

has a general overview of and control over the school and its activities which must be operated in accordance with the requirements laid down in the rules and regulations.

The national inspection of 2010 and 2011 has the students' psycho-social environment as a theme for inspection. When planning the inspection, a reference group was formed, consisting of representatives from the Norwegian Student Organization, the Norwegian Directorate of Health, the Labour Inspectorate, the Union of Education Norway and the National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education. The Ombudsman for Children, KS and four county governor's offices has also been involved in the planning.

#### *Other inspections*

In addition to the national inspection, the county governors' offices carry out inspections initiated by their own offices. A summary of the annual reports from the county governors' offices shows that a total of 195 inspections of varying scope were carried out in 2009. The trend is that more and more inspections are being co-ordinated by the Directorate for Education and Training.

The Directorate determines the themes for inspection of private schools that are to undergo an inspection. The Directorate uses the same methodology as the county governor offices are obliged to use.

Inspections in the education sector inspect essential requirements for students' learning, environment and safety. The requirements are not tied to specific results achieved but rather to the programme to be offered to students. Factors such as learning outcome, test results etc. may be used as indicators that a service does not satisfy the legal requirements, but these are in themselves not subject to inspection.

### **3.3.2 School owners' assessment of their own field of authority**

School owners must have a satisfactory system to ensure that the activity is operated in accordance with the requirements in the rules and regulations. This is described in the second paragraph of section 13-10 of the Education Act: the school owners "shall have a satisfactory system for assessing compliance with the requirements of the Education Act and regulations issued pursuant to the Act" and for "for following up the results of these assessments". A similar regulation is found in section 5-2 of the Private School Act. School owners are free to design the system for internal control so that it is adapted to local conditions.

For some municipalities, the internal control system and follow-up of school evaluation (see Chapter 4) are part of one comprehensive quality assessment system. Seen from a developmental perspective, it can be said that there are three overriding quality dimensions of vital importance for a well-functioning quality system (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009):

- *Controlling premises*  
This deals with deciding how resources are used to comply with the statutory requirements and the school's expectations and premises
- *Controlling processes*  
This deals with investigating the degree to which teaching practices are based on the subject curriculum and national and local intentions (organisational capacities and competence)
- *Controlling results*  
This deals with investigating the degree to which the results are in line with what can be considered realistic to expect of schools and students

### *The School Portal (Skoleporten)*

The objective of *Skoleporten* is that school owners, schools, parents, students and other stakeholders will have access to relevant and reliable key figures from basic education

The School Portal has the following indicator areas:

- *Results*

apply to overall achievement marks and examination marks in Norwegian, mathematics and English, results from the national tests, exemptions and absence from these tests, and points from compulsory education in the Knowledge Promotion Reform.

- *Resources*

are divided into teaching personnel, finance and materials. Teaching personnel is measured according to number of full-time equivalents, hours per student and teacher density. Finance deals with salary expenses and operating expenditures, and material means the number of PCs per student and the number of PCs connected to the internet.

- *Learning environments*

are measured mainly through the Pupil Survey. The survey's questions and themes are presented through the main indicators "well-being", "student democracy", "physical learning environment", "bullying", "motivation" and "academic guidance".

- *Completion of upper secondary education*

deals first with the proportion of students in compulsory school who go directly over to upper secondary education. Second, this deals with certain indicators on completion of upper secondary education in the normal length of time, longer than the normal time, the percentage still in school after five years, and the percentage that did not complete upper secondary education.

- *School facts*

contain factual information on the schools, such as the number of students and number of teachers.

The four areas results, learning environment, completion of upper secondary education and resources are called assessment areas because they contain relevant information for local assessment work. Each of these areas is connected to indicators and guidance resources, such as guidelines for each set of indicators. The indicators are generally based on the elements from NKVS (the national tests and the Pupil Survey), as well as available statistics.

*Skoleporten* has undergone a number of revisions since it was launched in 2004.

*Skoleporten* currently has one open and one closed portal. The open portal is available to internet users. The closed portal is reserved for users who log on with a user name and password, such as school owners, school leaders, county governors and national education authorities. These have, according to authorisation, the right to read the restricted information within their area of responsibility. The closed portal also has additional modules, for example a reporting function that can be used to generate local reports.

*Skoleporten* advises that when comparing results with other schools and municipalities, the local situations and local priorities must be taken into consideration. It is also important to consider more factors in connection with each other.

*Skoleporten* as a tool for quality assessment appears to be more useful for the local authorities than for the schools. According to the evaluation of NKVS, about 50% of the municipalities believe they have major benefits from using *Skoleporten* with respect to information on student learning outcome and learning environments. Less than half as many school leaders and only 10% of teachers agree with this. Almost 80% of school

owners say they use *Skoleporten* to compare their own municipality's results with the results from other municipalities (Allerup et al. 2009).

#### *Survey Report*

In 2009, the responsibility of school owners was made stricter in a revision of section 13-10 in the Education Act. Section 13-10 point out that an annual report must be prepared on the state of basic education. The background was the recognition that many school owners lack systems for following up the quality of the teaching at their own schools, as well as clear links between the academic achievements of students and the extent to which school results are systematically followed up.

The survey report is a key element of the national quality assessment system. As a minimum, it must deal with learning results, drop-out rates and learning environments. Data from the School Portal will primarily be used as the basis for school owner assessment of the state of affairs, and it follows from Report to the Storting no. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School* that school owners and schools are encouraged to list specific aims for what they wish to achieve in the target areas that have been selected. School owners are otherwise free to expand the content of the survey report.

A tool has been developed and can be found on the School Portal which school owners may freely use to design the statutory survey report. School owners may also use other tools if they have developed any instead of the School Portal tool.

The tool consists of a prepared template where the data to be included in the report are automatically taken from the School Portal. These data are divided into the following main categories:

- Obligatory indicators tied to the national goals
- Indicators which the Directorate for Education and Training recommends that school owners also include in the report

### **3.3.3 Examples of school owners' own assessment**

#### *Efficiency improvement networks*

The municipal networks for efficiency and improvement started work in 2002 as a joint project for the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration (AAD) and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KRD). This project was to be part of the government's major renewal programme for the public sector (Askim et al. 2006).

Since 2005, KS has had the efficiency improvement network and the use of tools for improving quality as a regular offer to its members. About 180 municipalities participated in the network in 2006. Each network has from four to eight participating municipalities. They compare themselves to each other, learn from good examples and implement improvement measures in their own municipalities and activities. Through the use of management tools, they compare resource use, the availability of services, productivity and quality. This data is then used by the municipalities to evaluate and analyse the different ways to organise and provide services. The municipalities that participate must now pay a membership fee, depending on the size of the municipality in question ([www.ks.no](http://www.ks.no)).

The offer of the efficiency improvement networks is incorporated within a number of services. Acceptance of the methodology is greater in the nursing and care sector and among municipal leaders than among the administrators of compulsory schools. Nonetheless, evaluations of the efficiency improvement networks show that participation has a positive influence in the municipalities and that the network's format with standard tools and a common analytical approach seem to be well received. The programme also emphasises the importance of adapting the network to the needs of its participants (Paulsen 2004).

For the school field, KS has entered into an agreement with the Directorate so the efficiency improvement networks can utilise data from the results and user surveys (the elements) that are part of the national quality assessment system.

*Examples of local system assessment from the City of Oslo*

The City of Oslo is both a municipal and county school owner, responsible for 137 compulsory schools and 26 upper secondary schools (as of the 2009/2010 school year). The Oslo Education Authority has been developing a system for a number of years for schools' and school owners' follow-up of the results from national and local quality assessments, pursuant to section 2-1 on school self-evaluation and section 13-10 on a satisfactory system for assessment in the Norwegian Education Act.

The City of Oslo's system for quality assessment and follow-up is a tool for a steering dialogue between the school owners and schools, and is based on strategic planning founded on the guiding principles for the Balanced Scorecard.

The overriding objective of the development of the City of Oslo's system for quality assessment is to obtain knowledge on the situation of Oslo's schools to ascertain the development needs of its students, and to initiate any necessary measures as early as possible. Reporting the results and the actions the schools take based on the results are very important aspects of the city's quality assessment work. The schools must prepare a strategic plan based on an analysis of the test results which points out priority measures for follow-up. The schools' annual reports on their own goals and goal attainment are presented through *Kvalitetsportalen Oslo*, which is a web-based portal for quality assurance of the schools in Oslo.

The Oslo Education Authority has committed to training and guiding school leaders and teachers for a number of years in the use of the results from quality assessments of Oslo's schools in their school evaluations and development. Processing and analysing the results, and drawing conclusions from the results have been key aspects of this system. The Oslo Education Authority carries out systematic and professional reviews with school leaders. The results from the national and local quality assessments are included as an obligatory part of these reviews.

In addition to the mandatory tests and surveys that are included in the national quality assessment system, the City of Oslo has chosen to make the use of a number of quality assessment tools mandatory for the schools.

An obligatory test plan for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools have been developed. The objective of these tests is that systematic and regular follow-up of the results will help to ensure good learning outcomes and adapted teaching for each student. The test plan covers the mandatory national tests and mapping tests, the voluntary mapping tests at the national level that have now been made mandatory, and the so-called *Oslo Tests*.

As an addition to the website *skoleporten.no*, the City of Oslo has developed its own quality assurance portal for the Oslo schools, where all results from the national and local quality assessments are shown. The purpose of this portal is to make information available on the test results and resources used at each school in Oslo as a basis for working with improving primary and lower secondary education. *Kvalitetsportalen* is divided into these areas: quality of results, quality of structures and quality of processes. All the results are published at the school level as long as the rules for personal data protection are followed and permit publication.

*Example of local system assessment from Nord-Trøndelag county authority*

Nord-Trøndelag county authority has worked systematically for many years on knowledge-based school development that focuses on the relationship between

organisational development and student learning environments and results. One essential mechanism for improving the quality of the learning services has been to describe the organisational capacity of each school, bearing in mind the specific premises of each school, their procedural work and results achieved. The county authority has many years of experience in co-operating between politicians, administrators and the schools themselves, and reports on the quality of upper secondary education are prepared and published to serve as the basis for political action and active school ownership.

Long-term development work is based on a self-evaluation model (*Common Assessment Framework*) that provides the opportunity for openness and dialogue on the schools' strengths and challenges. Administrative levels in the county authority use measurements as part of the system actively in leadership reviews and performance reviews of each school, and the schools must work systematically within defined development areas. The schools are measured on such factors as leadership, strategy and plans, co-workers, partnerships and resources, and results for users, co-workers, society and key areas. Internal and external quality control work helps to improve and develop the schools' organisational capacity and internal development of quality. By encouraging teachers and school leaders to have an analytical and dynamic perspective at their own school, the evaluation of results is anchored in a local understanding, while at the same time the evaluations give more room for active administrative leadership and an active political ownership.

In the report entitled *Come Closer, About the Municipalities and Counties' Work to Improve Student Learning Outcomes* (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009), the work performed by the Nord-Trøndelag County Authority is found to be an example of long-term quality improvement which is not based on the measurement of test results alone.

#### *Examples of local system evaluation from the municipality of Bergen*

The municipality of Bergen has developed a comprehensive system for quality development over a number of years. The aim of the comprehensive system for quality development is to:

- acquire competence on analysis and assessment on all levels
- acquire control information of a quantitative and qualitative nature
- contribute to dialogues between school owners and schools about quality assessment and quality development

Annual subject follow-up meetings are part of the quality assessment system. This is a prepared full-day meeting between the city's education authority and the school, where the quality of a school is analysed against common standards for all the city's schools. The education authority has in advance compiled statistics from open sources. These sources include available statistics, results from national tests and from the city's own mapping tests that are obligatory for the schools. The school documents its work process through practice narratives. At the end of the meeting participants together pinpoint the school's success points and improve areas. The school may order assistance from the education authority about the themes that are included in the conclusion under "Areas for improvement".

During the last two years, follow-up meetings have been carried out with all schools in accordance with the following pattern:

- Two persons (supervisors) from the city administration meet with the school leaders, teachers and representatives of parents and students
- The education advisor in the city district takes part in the meeting to follow up in management interviews
- The meeting agenda is tied to the city's focal areas reading, mathematics, natural science and ICT
- Standards have been prepared for the four focal areas. These apply to framework

- factors, processes and results, and are the same for all schools
- Documentation about the standards is collected.

Both school owners and school leaders find that the subject follow-up meetings are conducive to the dialogue on results (cf. the use of statistics and test results) and the processes leading to results (cf. school's practice narratives).

Strategic planning and steering through Balanced Scorecard, professional agreements and reviews with school leaders and quality reports to the city council are also part of the system for quality development.

### 3.4 Use of results

The comprehensive knowledge base from national system evaluation is used as documentation in such important documents as Reports to the Storting, budget propositions and other essential documents. In this way, the results from research, evaluations, incoming statistics and inspections are used to lay the foundation for making policy. The use of results from research, evaluations and analyses is also being increased in the Directorate's assessments of its own mechanisms.

One of the projects being evaluated from the Knowledge Promotion Reform (Engelsen 2008) criticised how subject curricula were formulated and how work on the subject curricula development was actually functioning at the schools. The report especially pointed out the challenges small municipalities have in implementing locally subject curricula. This and other important signals from the sector led the national authorities to design a comprehensive guideline for the subject curricula.

Participation in international studies has been an important mechanism in system evaluation because this is the only mechanism that is able to say something about the development of student results in Norway compared to results from other countries. International studies have also helped to shift the focus of the national debate on school more towards results. Findings from international studies have shown that Norwegian students score lower than the Norwegian authorities expected they would, based on a high allocation of resources, a higher number of teachers per student and so on. Among other things, this means Norwegian students do not show a satisfactory level of basic skills or competence in significant areas. Bearing this in mind, a number of new mapping tests have been developed that may be able to ensure that Norwegian students who need extra help in various areas get the help they need as early as possible in the course of their education. Findings from international studies have also contributed to the greater effort being made to improve basic skills.

Analyses of the national tests are used as the basis for national measures. The guidance corps was formed as a pilot scheme in 2009 (see Chapter 4) and was established after an analysis of the national tests indicated that many municipalities had poor test results. In 2010, the Directorate was given the task of using the results from the national tests in 2007, 2008 and 2009 to identify about 40 municipalities that had poor student test results over time. These municipalities will be followed up through focused schemes based on an analysis of their specific characteristics.

Discussions have revolved around whether the results from the national tests can be said to be poor indicators of the quality of a school because the schools with the "best" student base will always attain the best results. So-called *value added-indicators* are more precise than other performance measures when it comes to indicators for school quality – or as a contribution to improving students' learning – because these types of indicator make corrections for important differences between the schools (for example, the student base) which are outside the school's control.



In 2005, the Directorate for Education and Training gave Statistics Norway the assignment to develop school performance indicators. The school performance indicators showed examination marks that were adjusted for the students' social backgrounds. This project resulted in the publication of the school performance indicators on *Skoleporten* in 2006. However, they were removed the following year in connection with the removal of published results at the school level.

The first school performance indicators that were developed in Norway were not so-called value added-indicators, but were understood as showing performance measures from at least two different points in time.<sup>17</sup> There are a number of research projects underway in Norway today that are looking at the development of value added-indicators. The goal of these projects is to look at what methods would best measure a school's performance to contribute to students' learning. The Directorate for Education and Training gave Statistics Norway a new assignment in 2009 to develop the value added-indicators. The goal of this project is to find out whether value added-indicators can be implemented into and through NKVS. An assessment will be made as to the extent to which these indicators can be published on *Skoleporten* in the future.

No national standards or references have been defined for national and local system evaluation.

Inspection reports are published on the websites of each county governor's office and on the Directorate's website. The purpose of publishing the reports is to improve the understanding of the rules and regulations governing the sector by informing about how the national authorities think they should be understood and how inspection activities should be carried out.

Reports from the county governors' offices following the national inspection of 2009 show that the reason school owners do not comply with this requirement may be because the rules and regulations are difficult to understand and difficult to access.

Information on relevant conditions in the sector, which means research results, results from the national tests, the Pupil Survey, statistics, and appeals cases are compiled and analysed on the national level and used for long-term planning of inspection activities. Experience from previous inspections and experience from guidance and processing of appeals from the county governor are given priority when planning the inspections.

The evaluation of NKVS (Allerup et al. 2009) showed that school owners and schools primarily use the results of national tests and user surveys as steering information, i.e. to determine whether they are on the right track or if changes should be undertaken.

### **3.5 Implementing system evaluation**

#### **3.5.1 National system evaluation**

The Directorate's report from 2009 on the use of policy instruments concluded by saying that there is a need for continuous assessment of the measures at the overriding level. Knowledge shall be compiled, systematised and made available to the organisation by creating an annual report on implemented measures. This will strengthen the opportunities for continuous assessment of the content in the school system as a whole (Directorate for Education and Training 2009).

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<sup>17</sup>The OECD (2008) defines such indicators as contextualized attainment models.

One major problem is how the national authorities can increase the use of research-based knowledge as the basis for school practice and decision-making in the sector with respect to the development of policy. An important part of the Directorate's strategy is to work in a more knowledge-based way. This presumes that the knowledge compiled through the many research and evaluation projects that the Directorate is responsible for is put to use.

Some of the research projects undertaken on assignment for the Ministry of Education and Research and for the Directorate have not had adequate quality. Good quality is a precondition for results being used in the sector and in policy development in an expedient manner. One of the reasons for the low quality of some projects may be that there are few research communities willing to accept this type of research project, while at the same time it is becoming easier to be awarded funds for educational research. With the limited number of relevant research communities in the institute sector, there is not always a large enough group of bidders to select from for such assignments. The university and university college sector has not been too active in taking part in announced tendered research assignments. Another problem is that the demand for quick information means that the national authorities often call for tenders for small research projects with short deadlines. This makes it difficult to undertake real in-depth analyses.

### 3.5.2 Local system evaluation

It is a challenge that there are a number of agencies carrying out the inspections in the sector. Experience shows that there are great differences in how inspections are carried out by the county governors' offices. This can create problems for the fair treatment of school owners and can increase the risk of misinterpretation of legislation in the sector.

Bearing these challenges in mind, it is important that the inspections are well planned and should be carried out according to criteria for exercising state authority; criteria such as predictability, equal treatment and verifiability.

The Time Utilisation Committee that presented its report to the Ministry of Education and Research in 2009 recommended that the inspections be followed up with guidance and the requirement to follow up the school owners. The committee also recommended evaluating whether the inspections should also cover curricula-related themes and student learning outcome. In its follow-up to the recommendation the Ministry pointed out that the inspections should contribute to learning and that the school owners have an unconditional obligation to comply with the rules and regulations; see Report to the Storting no. 19 (2009-2010) *Time for Learning*.

Several local authorities lack a level between the political/administrative level and school leaders. This means that the local authorities have a less solid system for internal control and are less capable of following up the results of schools.

Many municipalities nevertheless work well on following up schools. There are examples that new work forms between the school and the local authority level may mobilise an analysis and developmental will from above and below in the municipal organisation. More creative work processes come about when the political leadership in the municipalities, the political administration and school leaders have common places to meet (Roald 2010).

## 3.6 The viewpoints of the special interest groups

<b>Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)</b>	KS refers to the guidelines' definition of system assessment which means assessing the degree to which the organisation of the education itself and the control of it contribute to the students' learning. As Norway has delegated a great deal of responsibility for education to the municipalities, this means that system
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	<p>evaluations must revolve around assessment of the education system as a whole, but also focus on local system evaluation. Evaluations of NKVS point to a poor relationship between the different elements in NKVS. It is important that the elements in NKVS are applied to the municipal quality systems so that politicians can learn more about the schools' activities, in addition to obtaining information about the national tests. In this way, the politicians will have a better basis for making decisions that can have a positive impact on schools and student learning outcome. For the schools to find NKVS useful, data in the system must also be used in school evaluations so that the organisation can learn. NKVS must contribute to professionalising teachers, school leaders and school owners.</p> <p>NKVS is developing. The new <i>Skoleporten</i> with tools for status reports and local point-of-view analysis will help to improve the systemic perspective if the elements in NKVS are used in system evaluation. The local Point-of-View Analysis is a tool for executing system evaluations at the school level and school owners must of course be given access to the assessments that are made so they can comply with section 13.10 of the Education Act. Schools are institutions that school owners are responsible for, and school owners must be allowed to learn about and from their own employees' assessments of their own practices if they are to follow up on these assessments. This is useful for employers and employees. Unfortunately, NKVS does not facilitate for this.</p>
<b>The Union of Education Norway</b>	<p>The Union of Education Norway is concerned that the national inspections increasingly find poor compliance with the rules and regulations by the local and county authorities. If the guidance function in the rules and regulations and quality development are to function as intended, this requires that the requirements in the Education Act concerning educational competence at the municipal level must be complied with. When the inspection uncovers violations of the provisions in the Education Act, and these are not remedied, then there must be consequences in the form of sanctions for the local/county authority.</p> <p>The Union of Education Norway is critical of reports on the state of schools will be tied unilaterally to indicators on the School Portal and the aims and indicators that were outlined in Report to the Storting no. 31 (2007-2008) <i>Quality in School</i>. Reports on the state of schools should not narrowly focus on some basic skills, completion rates in upper secondary education and the learning environment, as exemplified in the Pupil Survey. This might lead to restrictions on the educational work in relation to school's social mandate and the objectives in the subject curricula.</p>
<b>Norwegian Association of School Leaders</b>	<p>The system must function as intended for the inspections and the rest of NKVS (better quality on all levels), and those who develop the systems at the national level and who give the orders must listen to teachers and administrators in the field. The reference group has an important task here. Good forums must also be established for discussion at all levels, horizontally and vertically, so that the various stakeholders together can create more effective and better systems. This can help ensure a better foundation and facilitate implementation of new procedures and systems.</p>
<b>Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers</b>	<p>Today's inspection scheme is generally process-oriented and to a lesser extent result-oriented. It would be preferred to develop the current inspection scheme so that there is more direct and positive impact on the quality of student learning outcome at school.</p> <p>When formulating the user surveys and questionnaires questions are often asked that the "owners" of the system need to have answered. The viewpoint of this scheme seems to be that of looking down on local stakeholders from above, and it seems the scheme does not ask the questions that the users of the system, the school leaders and the teachers, want to highlight.</p>
<b>The Waldorf School Association</b>	<p>The Waldorf School Association agrees on the need for such inspection and that it might help schools to undertake activities in accordance with legislation and guidelines. Each Waldorf School is a school owner, and the systems the inspection authorities expect to find at each school are often over-dimensioned for such small units. The Association need inspection authorities that are familiar with the special nature of Waldorf Schools.</p>
<b>National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education (FUG)</b>	<p>FUG has noticed that the national inspections in the period from 2006 to 2009 document very high deviations without any sign of this level dropping. FUG is concerned that when the inspection uncovers violations of the Education Act in the municipalities and counties, this should have consequences in the form of sanctions. FUG also encourages parents/FAU to become active parties in the inspection.</p>

## **3.7 Policy initiatives**

### **3.7.1 National system evaluation**

Report to the Storting no. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School* points out many important aspects of policy development for primary and secondary education in Norway. The report emphasises the importance of strengthening the knowledge platform, both with respect to what functions, but also to a general strengthening of the basis on which policy is formed. A Centre of Expertise on Education will be established, along with a separate centre for psychometric studies, and a general strengthening of educational research.

Report to the Storting no. 19 (2009-2010) *Time for Learning* promotes measures that should contribute to more effective utilisation of the teachers' time. The report contains a recommendation to reduce the number of national action plans and strategies. In addition to this, the consequences for how teachers use time to introduce new and extensive measures and in connection with developing new or revising existing action plans and strategies must be evaluated.

This same report requests that the Directorate carry out a systematic review of how information is collected from schools with a view to rationalising the process and setting priorities.

### **3.7.2 Local system evaluation**

State inspection is being improved to guarantee better compliance with the rules and regulations governing compulsory education in the municipal sector. Inspection and inspection themes will generally be prioritised according to risk and cost-effect assessments. It is important to gain a general overview of the risk areas and non-compliance and this requires better monitoring schemes in such areas. Area monitoring should be used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from various information sources. The national quality assessment system (NKVS) will play an important role in this context (Report to the Storting no. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School*).

The Directorate is now preparing a new method for choosing themes for inspections. This method will be completed in the course of 2011. In this context, work is being undertaken to categorise all available information on the sector, and to assess how the information can be used when selecting themes for inspection. The intention is that the inspection model will provide a more regular frequency for how often schools undergo inspections.

Efforts are also being made to improve the abilities of the county governors' offices to carry out the inspections as there is a gap between the capabilities of the county governors' offices and the need for more inspections in the sector.

The Ministry of Education finds that the authorities have not attached enough importance to supporting and guiding schools so that they can utilise the information from NKVS. One of the reasons may be lack of competence, both within quality assessment but also within management (Roald 2010). Based on Report to the Storting no. 31 several state support and development programmes have been developed in recent years to strengthen the local quality efforts.

The establishment of a national guide corps is one of the measures to be established as a stage in strengthening the local quality evaluation activities. The guide corps will provide support for school owners and schools with respect to strengthening activities to develop, change and improve school and school as an organisation. The measure primarily focuses on guiding the municipal administration and the school administration. The aim is that more students will learn more, master more and complete at a higher rate. The guidance

shall focus on the three overriding national goals for quality in basic education (see Chapter 1).

The guide corps shall give priority to schools, municipalities or counties with documented challenges in the following fields:

- many students with poor reading skills
- many students with poor mathematics skills
- learning environments that are not very inclusive and do not promote learning
- many students and apprentices who do not complete and pass upper secondary education and training

In 2010, selected school owners and schools in seven counties wishing to focus on quality development in their own organisation were invited to participate. In Report to the Storting no. 19 (2009-2010) *Time for learning* the Ministry proposes that the guide corps service should be developed and made national in 2011.

In 2010, work was started on offering state support programmes to 40 municipalities. The measure shall help to strengthen the work undertaken by school owners and schools on quality assessment and improvement work. The point of departure is that not all municipalities succeed equally well in developing student skills in reading, mathematics and English (cf. results from the national tests). The Ministry wishes to obtain knowledge on the specific measures that are demanded by the municipalities with the greatest challenges in developing basic student skills, and ensure that support programmes reach these municipalities. 40 municipalities were invited to participate from December 2010. The selected municipalities will receive guidance on the process of mapping out their own needs and choosing relevant development measures.

## CHAPTER 4: SCHOOL EVALUATION

### 4.1 Current Framework

In Norway all schools are obliged to undertake school self-evaluation. This school evaluation means that the school shall regularly evaluate the extent to which the organisation, facilitation and implementation of teaching contributes to reaching the objectives laid down in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion. School evaluation in Norway is now statutory pursuant to Chapter 2 in the regulations for the Education Act. School owners must ensure that the school carries out such self-evaluation (section 2-1 of the regulations).

#### 4.1.1 School evaluation

Since the 1970s, Norway has developed a tradition for school self-evaluation. This school evaluation is an evaluation process anchored in the school itself and directly related to the school's own development. Internal assessments and the development of these can be seen as a "bottom up" process (Granheim et al. 1990, Official Norwegian Report 1978:2 *Assessment, Competence and Admission to the School System*, Nilsen and Overland 2009). Almost half of all Norwegian schools and municipalities have developed systematic forms of school evaluation leading up to 2000. It has been challenging to get the remaining schools and municipalities started on this type of quality assessment (Roald 2010).

School evaluation can be an internal and an external process. The internal dimension implies that the school itself has control over how evaluation and development work is to be addressed (Nilsen and Overland 2009). Because school owners have great responsibility for assessing and following up the quality of their own schools, school owners have a role in the school evaluation. There are no national guidelines for external school evaluation in Norway. Nor are there any external evaluation agencies with a defined responsibility for school evaluation. School evaluation can also include external operators if the school or the school owner wishes to have an independent observation of its activities. Some schools order services from the university or college sector or private competence communities.

One of the reasons why school evaluation has lasted so long in Norway is that we have not had an authority-controlled evaluation system for compulsory education, such as an education inspectorate. With the introduction of the NKVS, the national authorities have established guidelines as to which tools should be used and which areas the school should evaluate, particularly the quality of the results. Beyond this there are no national guidelines for the content of school evaluation or which methods schools should use when, for example, they follow up results from NKVS.

There are no defined national standards or references for school evaluation. It is up to individual schools, or school owners, to define such standards or references if they want.

Section 2-2 of the regulations also states on reporting from the local and county authorities that: "The school owner must collaborate on establishing an administrative system and compiling statistical and other information that is needed to evaluate the status and development of the education."

And in sections 2-3 and 2-4 on national surveys on the learning environment for students and tests, sampling tests and other surveys, it states that:

"The school owner must ensure that the national surveys on motivation, well-being, bullying, student participation, student democracy and the physical environment are

implemented and followed up at the local level." "Students shall participate in the tests, sampling tests and other surveys established by the Ministry. The school owner must ensure that this is done".

#### **4.1.2 Inspection of schools and school owners' work with health, environment and safety activities**

The Norwegian Labour Inspectorate has the responsibility for inspecting health, environment and safety in Norwegian schools.

In the period from 2008 to 2011, the Norwegian Labour Inspectorate conducted a national inspection initiative focusing on primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools. This project is part of the Inspectorate's effort for an inclusive working life.

In 2009, the Norwegian Labour Inspectorate carried out inspections of the school sector across Norway, a total of 538 inspections. A total of 418 of these inspections were carried out on the school level and 120 on the school owner level. Each school owner visited has had an average of inspections at three or four schools, depending on geography and the size of the school. Key themes for the inspections are situations involving violence and threats, conflicts, restructuring processes and the indoor climate. The Norwegian Labour Inspectorate can set fines or close schools when there are deviations.

## **4.2 Elements of school evaluation in NKVS**

One of the intentions of the introduction of the national quality assessment system by the authorities was to strengthen local quality assessment. The purpose of many of the elements in NKVS is to function as tools for school assessment, either at the school level, the school owner level or the regional level. This section of the chapter describes the different elements of NKVS that are most relevant for school evaluation.

### **4.2.1 Results from student assessment**

As mentioned above (see Chapter 3), the aim of the national tests is to provide information on the basic skills of students in mathematics, and reading Norwegian and English as the basis for improvement and development work on various levels. For schools and school owners, the purpose of the tests is to ascertain and assess the degree to which the schools succeeded in developing the students' basic skills. The Directorate for Education and Training has developed a guide to help school administrators and school owners in their follow up work on the results from the national tests.

Students sit for the national tests in the fall only a short time after they start year 5 and year 8. Many students change schools when leaving primary school (year 7) and advance to lower secondary school (starting at year 8). School owners can "roll back" results for year 8 to the student's previous school at year 7.

The results from the examinations and overall achievement can be used by schools and school owners to compare their school's results with other comparable schools and school owners, and evaluate their own development from year to year and compare this with other information. Some school leaders use examination results as a basis for their internal quality assessment processes, however, the principals and heads of the Education Authority in each region see an untapped potential in this material (Roald 2010).

The mapping tests are primarily an educational tool schools or teachers can use when following up students' learning. The principal is responsible for ensuring that the results are used as a stage in the local improvement and development work.

#### 4.2.2 User surveys

NKVS contains various web-based user surveys. These are used as the main instruments for measuring the quality of the learning environment. The user surveys include the Pupil Survey, Teacher Survey and Parent Survey.<sup>18</sup>

The aim of the Directorate for Education and Training's user surveys is to give students, teachers and parents the opportunity to express their opinions on learning and well-being at school. The results from the surveys are used by schools and school owners to help analyse, develop and improve the learning environment.

There is one version of the Pupil Survey for years 5 to 7, one for years 8 to 10 and one for upper secondary education. The Pupil Survey is obligatory for years 7 and 10. The intermediate version (years 5 to 7) consists of 46 standard questions on well-being, motivation, learning, assessment and guidance, the working environment and student co-determination. The lower secondary school version (years 8 to 10) and the upper secondary school version cover the same themes but have 64 standard questions. A total of 89 per cent of the students at year 7, 83% of the students at year 10 and 75% of students from the first year of upper secondary education answered the Pupil Survey in 2010.

The Directorate has the full responsibility for processing the Pupil Survey, and all precautions are taken to ensure full confidentiality when processing the basic data from the Pupil Survey.

Parts of the results from the Pupil Survey are published at [www.skoleporten.no](http://www.skoleporten.no), as are the indicators that are developed on the basis of the questions on the survey. At year 7, the indicators for "well-being", "student democracy", the "physical learning environment", "bullying at school", "motivation" and "academic guidance" are published. At year 10, indicators are also published for "co-determination" and "career guidance".

A reporting portal has been developed for the Pupil Survey so that school leaders can obtain a complete overview of the learning environment at their school. This reporting portal shows a number of other indicators in addition to those published by *Skoleporten*. In this way, it should be easier to carry out a thorough local analysis of the results from the Pupil Survey.

The Teacher Survey consists of 47 questions on their students' learning environment as the teacher sees it. The Parent Survey has 13 questions or sets of statements to be answered by the students' parents relating to communication with the school, dialogue and co-determination, familiarity with the school and expectations, support from parents, performance review and so on (this list is not exhaustive).

The evaluation of NKVS (Allerup et al. 2009) shows that half of all school owners, principals and teachers believe that they have been following up on the results from the Pupil Survey in a systematic manner. Only very few feel this has been done only to a little degree. Most schools work systematically to a certain degree on following up the results. The general opinion is that the Pupil Survey can show the extent to which something is "wrong", and in such cases the school will attempt to remedy this. The evaluation also shows that the normal practice is for the results from the surveys to be discussed with the teacher teams and in the education committee (Allerup et al. 2009).

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<sup>18</sup>In addition to this, there is also an Apprentice Survey and an Instructor Survey. These are not discussed further here as vocational education and training (VET) in companies are not a part of this report.



### **4.2.3 The Point-of-view analysis and the Organisational analysis**

One of the measures in Report to the Storting no. 31 (2007-2008) *Quality in School* is that all schools must have access to good point-of-view analyses and receive guidance if needed in how to use these. These two analyses are available at the Directorate's website. The directorate has attached importance to developing guidance material, and in 2010 regional conferences were arranged where one of the aims was to introduce the Point-of-view analysis and the Organisational analysis as tools for school development.

The Point-of-view analysis is a process and reflection tool for joint assessment of the school's practice and results in working with student learning and learning environments. There are two versions of the analysis, one for compulsory school and one for upper secondary school. The tool can be used for school evaluation in Knowledge Promotion, and builds on steering documents in the sector, including the Education Act and the Regulations under the Act. The analysis helps schools to compare examination results and other marks as well as data from the Pupil Survey and national tests with the employees' assessment of school's practice. All in all, this is designed to provide school with a point of departure, a point-of-view, so that it can choose and prioritise some focus areas for its development activities. Implementation of this analysis will ensure that such processes are well anchored in the staff.

The Organisational analysis is a process and reflection tool developed to analyse schools as a knowledge workplace. The survey helps to pinpoint aspects of the organisation that impact the work situation for employees and which have importance for student learning and learning environments.

The choice of themes and the design of questions in the analysis are made in collaboration with experts and are based on previous research. The tool is primarily designed for use in the school's development activities. The survey involves getting employees to adopt a point-of-view on a number of statements on organisation, interaction and culture at the school. It lends itself best to capturing main patterns and stimulating discussions on one's own areas for improvement. No very firm conclusions should be drawn on the basis of the results.

### **4.3 Knowledge Promotion – from Word to Deed**

The Norwegian educational programme called *Knowledge Promotion - from Word to Deed* 2006-2010 was a national campaign run by the state intended to strengthen the sector's ability to assess its own results and carry out comprehensive change projects in accordance with the objectives in the Knowledge Promotion Reform. This programme aimed to improve learning and the learning environment for students and apprentices by allocating funds to local collaborative projects implemented by school owners and schools. The primary mechanism of this programme was to provide schools and school owners with the opportunity to enlist external assistance from centres of expertise so that local development work can be more systematic and knowledge-based. During the period, 100 projects and about 250 schools across all of Norway have participated in the Word to Deed campaign.

The main tools used in this programme so far have been a dedicated methodology for school assessment, a local point-of-view analysis and an organisational analysis. This methodology was inspired by and developed in co-operation with the Hardanger-Voss Competency Region (see more about this in Chapter 4.4.1). This programme emphasised the interaction between school self-evaluations and external evaluations of schools as mechanisms for the initial phase of the schools' development projects. This was done, for example, by establishing a dialogue on the school's development needs between school leaders, school owners and the external expertise centre and external educational assessors (Rambøll 2010).

One main finding from the programme so far is that two-year projects and formalised collaboration between schools, school owners and external centres of expertise have produced positive results. In particular, the projects report having attained positive results when it comes to organisational goals. Evaluations of the programme show that school owners have used the project to develop the schools' abilities to work with systematic quality assessment, and even though development varies a great deal from school to school, the schools have generally been moving in a positive direction as learning organisations.

Further development of the tools for school development that have been used thus far in this programme has led to the creation of the local Point-of-view analysis and the Organisational analysis (see 4.2.3) and the publishing of a pamphlet on school assessment that is now available to all schools.

This programme has also contributed to establishing 11 new regional groups working on external school assessment. These groups have been trained in the programme's methodology for external school assessment and have already started local assessment activities in their own school districts.

#### **4.4 Local school evaluation practice**

There are regional and local examples of well-established systems and practices for school evaluation. The following describes some of these.

##### *Example of school evaluation from the Hardanger/Voss Competency Region*

Eight municipalities in the region of Hardanger/Voss have formed a regional co-operation programme for competence and assessment. As part of this, the heads of the Education Authorities in the competency region have established an external assessment group that works across municipal borders. The goal of this group is to help in the work to develop quality of education and its assessment by functioning as an external observer. The assessment group is composed of educators from various municipalities who have worked as teachers, school leaders or with the Education Authority. It emphasises that the external evaluators' role is not to be an overseer of schools, but rather a "critical friend" in the development work.

The group's mandate was formulated by the Education Authority or those people responsible for the schools in the municipalities and has the intention of providing external assessment of the schools in the municipality to ensure compliance with the requirement in the Education Act concerning the school owner's responsibility to ensure the schools regularly evaluate their own activities (section 2-1). The group shall evaluate all the 48 schools in the municipalities; eight each year for a period of six years. Currently, 35 schools have received an external evaluation, between ten and 12 schools per year over a period of three to four years.

The school assessments are organised so the schools themselves can select focus areas in consultation with the Education Authority or the main person responsible for education in the municipality. Two persons from the assessment group evaluate each school, and they do not have a personal or professional relationship to the school in question nor do they work in that municipality. A methodology for school evaluation has been developed where the schools being evaluated, and those who are undertaking the evaluation, agree on the description of the evaluation criteria, and agree on the characteristics of good practice. After the school has been visited, interviews conducted and observations made, the group that makes the evaluation prepares a public report which is given to the municipal education administration. Emphasis is placed on discussing the evaluations and

recommendations in the report with the principal and personnel at the school, with a focus on how the school can act on the information provided by the evaluation.

One of the competency region's experiences from this work is that the biggest challenge is to establish systematic use of the evaluation group's work by a municipality or region so that schools are provided with a useful tool for school evaluation that is undertaken outside of the external evaluation.

The Hardanger/Voss Competency Region is one example of school evaluation that is internally anchored in the schools but also uses external evaluation as a resource.

*Example of school evaluation from the municipality of Giske*

After 2000, the municipality of Giske has had a system for quality assessment which ties together the school evaluation and the school owner's obligation to follow up quality at each school.

Each year one of the development areas in the municipality has been selected. These may be reading, adapted teaching of mathematics, digital competence and cooperation between school and the home. The school evaluates its status according to a given template and submits an internal report. This report is used as the foundation when the municipal administration, PPT, a principal from another school, the head of FAU and the political representative on the cooperation committee visit the school and review the document with it. This aspect of the system is called the quality interview. During the visit, the school shall also demonstrate the practice that is typical within the evaluation theme and the visitors shall hold discussions with the school leaders and the staff. The school receives a report which sums up the school's strong sides and gives the school some challenges. The strength of this system has been broad involvement, with emphasis being placed on the democracy principle instead of the purely academic review. One of the points is that the annual theme must be important for competence development and in network meetings, thus contributing to learning among schools.

In doing this, the municipal administration saw that one school had started early to analyse its mapping results and used them actively in the school's self-evaluation. They had systematically compared mapping data over time and back and forth by following one class year and comparing it with the same year level over time. The questions they asked were for example:

- What is the effect of the way we organise?
- What is the effect of the adaptation measures we launch?
- Do we have the right competence and are we exploiting the competence we have?

In this systematic but simple manner they had a good basis for their internal assessment activities and for further development. The principal was particularly aware of showing and celebrating progress. This has created awareness that school self-evaluation is important if student learning is to be optimal.

As the national quality assessment system was developed with obligatory mapping tests, national tests and user surveys, the municipal administration saw the need to develop the municipal quality assessment system. Since 2009, the system has been as follows:

In all its assessment activities the school must collect all obligatory mapping data set by a municipal minimum requirement. Furthermore, selected areas from the Pupil Survey must be analysed. In its report, the school must explain how these results have been discussed on the student, class and school levels. How does the school understand the overall results and which measures have been launched based on the internal assessment activities? In the same way as previously, this report constitutes the basis for a meeting between the municipal administration, both the political and the

administration levels, parent representatives, and the school's leadership. Visits to classrooms are now not part of the programme.

The schools' evaluations have always been that the most valuable aspect of this programme has been the work with the internal report. The programme has greatly reinforced the steering dialogue between the school owner and the school, parents and politicians. The school owner's work with the report on the state of the school (see Chapter 3) has also been improved by such a review with each school.

#### **4.5 Use of results**

Norwegian schools must conduct the surveys and undertake the mapping, but they are not made formally responsible for the results (Møller et al. 2009). Even though many Norwegian schools have not developed robust systems for assessment and development of a school's quality, tendencies towards change are being seen, and this appears to be in the direction of the quality of results gaining a stronger focus (Møller et al. 2009).

The school owners and schools in some municipalities have established constructive dialogues on how to interpret results from the national tests, while in other municipalities demand from school owners for better results can be experienced as pressure from "outside" (Langfeldt et al. 2008). Some schools have experienced being ranked or pilloried as schools with poor results. When it comes to sanctions related to the results, some principals and teachers feel pressured by the school owners to improve the results, but pressure from the media is felt to be much more stressful. In spite of the experienced pressure, there is hardly any talk of these results having any serious consequences or sanctions, for example in the form of personal consequences for principals or the closing of schools. Many school owners include the school's average performance development as a component of a principal's salary contract (Langfeldt et al. 2008).

#### **4.6 Competence and implementation**

Studies show that in many places, the systems for school evaluation are poorly designed (Langfeldt et al. 2008, Roald 2010). Moreover, there are major differences between the municipalities' capacity and competence to support schools in their quality assessment work. There seems to be a very positive connection between the municipalities' capacity to support the schools and a constructive use of the results from NKVS at the school level (Allerup et al. 2009). There are strong indications that the school owner level now has far more focus on the school's content and results than previously (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009, Roald 2010).

As part of the local system evaluation, school owners need to evaluate the quality of their schools, cf. Chapter 3. Such an evaluation is external and aims to ensure the school owner's need for quality control. If the external dimension dominates the dialogue between the school owners and schools, this may impede the schools' improvement. There are examples of school owners who can establish good quality dialogues with schools while also maintaining their own needs for inspection and follow-up. In many cases the distance is nevertheless great between the school and school-owner levels, and occasionally there appears to be little perceived trust or openness between the levels (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS, 2010, Roald 2010).

Studies show that the school owner's political and administration levels see schools' self-evaluation and their own results as important information. However, few of them state that these types of reporting are important as of today. Because of this, school owners miss vital information as the basis for improvement work and dialogue with the schools.

On the political level, the school owners generally want more knowledge and insight into the conditions and basic premises of schools, their internal processes and results, and a broader information base than the case is today (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009).

The organisational underpinnings of school are decisive for whether quality assessment systems have an effect (Langfeldt et al. 2008, Roald 2010). Schools that are well organised and have the capacity and competence to interpret results and design and implement measures benefit much more from the quality assessment system. Schools with a weaker organisation do not have a proper address for accountability.

Follow-up by school leaders is important for the degree to which the assessment systems are in turn acted upon by the schools. The 2008 TALIS Survey (Vibe et al. 2009) points out that the regular follow-up from school to teachers and from school owners to school leaders is weak in Norway compared to other countries. Furthermore, Norwegian school leaders at the lower secondary level put more emphasis on administrative leadership than educational leadership. Less emphasis is placed on managing a school's practices to ensure that the school's learning goals are being met, or on controlling the teachers' classroom teaching and work (Vibe et al. 2009). In recent years, the national authorities have put a keener focus on strengthening school leader competence, for example by implementing a national training programme for principals in 2009. This training programme will be offered to all newly employed principals and principals without formal leader competence.

Research shows that schools with a tradition for undertaking school evaluation appear to have the greatest capacity to benefit from the national tests and other external assessment tools (Roald 2010). By using the NKVS tools on school evaluation, the schools and the school owner level gain comparatively large amounts of information. Only through various types of collective data processing will they be converted into knowledge of relevance to the challenges schools are facing. NKVS can often feel like a "time eater" and be seen as too bureaucratic if the knowledge it provides is not found to be relevant, or if the knowledge is not analysed and used as the basis for development.

#### 4.7 The viewpoints of the special interest groups

<p><b>Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)</b></p>	<p>School must consider organisation, facilitation and implementation pursuant to section 2-1 of the Regulations, and the school owner must ascertain that this takes place (section 13-10 of the Act). The national quality assessment system must facilitate so that the school evaluates what it should as an important condition for development. It is the responsibility of the school leadership and the local authorities to facilitate so that teachers, students and parents are involved in the evaluation activities. The evaluation must have utility value for the teachers. Sadly, some evaluation activities today are described as time eaters, and then teachers do not perceive assessment activities as useful. School owners must be careful and show respect for the professionals so they do not end up with disgruntled teachers, but they must also be allowed to assume their responsibility of being in charge of the school's activities and the teachers as their employees.</p>
<p><b>The Union of Education Norway</b></p>	<p>School evaluation has not been implemented according to the intention, even though this is obligatory; see the Office of the Auditor General's report from 2006.</p> <p>The Union of Education Norway feels that if true quality development is to take place, each school must have procedures and processes in place that involve the educational personnel in the assessment/decision-making and development processes. Professional development and development of a school as a co-operative environment must be facilitated school self-evaluations must be a key element of the national quality assessment system.</p> <p>The Union of Education Norway feels that the national tests must primarily be an aid for schools in their work on developing and improving the teaching. The tests must therefore be seen in connection with the schools' other assessment and development work. The national tests can be a useful aid in school development if they are carried out in a way that makes them a part of a school's ordinary work, and schools are given the necessary guidance in using the tests in an educational</p>

	<p>manner. The results must not be published at the school level. There are too many contingencies and too much statistical uncertainty tied to the averages, in addition to the unfortunate consequences that publishing these can have on the work at school.</p> <p>The Union of Education Norway supports the recommendation to give all schools access to good point-of-view analyses and the amendment to the Act that orders and the local and county authorities to prepare an annual report on the status and conditions of a school. We also agree that guidance for schools and school owners with special challenges should be prioritised.</p>
<b>Norwegian Association of School Leaders (NSLF)</b>	<p>How the system is understood and used according to the intention varies. Not least, the principal's and school owner's competence and interest are decisive for how the system is followed up and beneficial for students. Raising the competence of the principal and school owner is decisive; not least in the area of competent analysis.</p> <p>Recent focus on school owners also being responsible for student and school results has moved some of the pressure away from the schools, teachers and leaders in relation to poor student and school results and to the politicians and administrative leaders in the municipalities and counties. NSLF supports such developments.</p> <p>NSLF is positive to a quality assessment system that provides leaders at the school/municipal/county level with necessary information about a school's status. This is the only way to ensure that all input factors can be used most effectively for the objective to improve learning outcome and quality. We see that management on all levels who demand the results and follow up measures and who provide constructive support and feedback are able to profit well from the system.</p>
<b>Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers</b>	<p>When formulating the user surveys and questionnaire, questions are often asked that the "owners" of the system need to have answered. The viewpoint of this scheme seems to be that of "looking down" on local stakeholders from above, and it seems the scheme does not ask the questions that the users of the system, the school leaders and the teachers, want to highlight.</p>
<b>The Waldorf School Association</b>	<p>The Waldorf School Association considers school evaluation as a need for the overriding authorities to gain an overview and control over the activities. Again the system is too big and little suited to individual Waldorf schools. Much time is spent on performing duties that appear unnecessary and meaningless, and which are intended to be passed on in a bigger system</p>
<b>National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education</b>	<p>The Knowledge Promotion reform underscores that parents shall take part in real discussions on the school's development. Parents can take part in school evaluation through the Parent Survey where they state their opinion on the learning environment and student well-being at school. The results of user surveys must be followed up later by school's decision-making bodies and thus contribute to quality development.</p>

## 4.8 Policy initiatives

A number of state support and development measures have been established in recent years to strengthen local quality assessment work (See Chapter 3). These measures aim to strengthen developmental, change and improvement work on the school owner and school level, and may thus help strengthen school competence and expand the capacity to undertake a school evaluation.

In 2009 and 2010, the Directorate of Education and Training announced funding for municipalities/regions for building local evaluation groups for external evaluation. State initiatives have also been taken to operate a network for these groups.

## CHAPTER 5: TEACHER APPRAISAL

Norway does not have national measures in place to use for teacher appraisals, and teacher appraisal is not an element of the national quality assessment system. Some explicit requirements are set by national authorities for the sector, stating that teacher appraisals must be implemented.

This chapter will therefore mainly deal with what we know about teacher appraisal in Norway and some examples of how teacher appraisals are carried out locally.

### 5.1 Teacher competence

Teachers in Norway are first educated through the state's four-year teacher training programme for compulsory school teachers or through teacher training at university. From the autumn of 2010, a new teacher training programme for compulsory school teachers was introduced in Norway. Students will either select a course of studies that qualifies them to teach years 1-7, or they may select a course of studies that qualifies them to teach at years 5-10. The new teacher education structure also includes more practical training, more academic in-depth work by having the students go in-depth in fewer subject areas and new and expanded studies in education science.

Other teacher training programmes also qualify for working in schools, including PPU (practical-pedagogical education) – a one-year undergraduate teacher training programme. The PPU programme takes one year and builds on subject studies or a vocational training with practice and vocational theory, and focuses on teaching in upper secondary education and lower secondary school. Four- and five-year integrated teacher training programmes follow the framework plan for the PPU when it comes to the scope of pedagogy, subject didactics and practice.

Measures have also been implemented to improve the transitional phase from teacher education to working life. An agreement between the Ministry of Education and Research and KS in 2009 established that as of the autumn of 2010, all newly-educated teachers will be offered guidance. In Report to the Storting no. 11 (2008-2009) *Teachers – Their Roles and Education*, the Ministry recommended the implementation of a national certification scheme for teachers. The purpose of this certification will be to ensure that teachers are qualified to satisfy the requirements and fulfil the responsibilities that come with working at school and to clarifying what is expected of new teachers. The Ministry will invite the key partners to participate in a feasibility study on introducing this certification on the national level.

GNIST is the name of a five-year collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Research, the Union of Education Norway, KS, The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), Education Students in the Union of Education Norway, the Norwegian Students' Association (StL), the Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers, the Norwegian union of school employees (SL), the Norwegian Association of School Leaders and the National Council for Teacher Education (NRLU). GNIST is an extensive programme aimed at improving the quality of teacher education and developing the teaching profession. This partnership is working to improve the status of the teaching profession and to recruit good teachers for the future. The main items in the collaboration are an extensive recruiting campaign, improved teacher education and upgrading the competence of teachers and school leaders.

The local and county authorities and private school owners are responsible for developing the competence of their employees, cf. section 10-8 of the Education Act. The state

authorities have in recent years contributed substantial funding for competence-raising, most recently through the establishment of a permanent system for continuing and further education. An agreement was entered into in 2008 between the Ministry of Research and Education, KS, teacher organisations and the National Council for Teacher Education (NRLU) on such a system. The programme provides continuing education to teachers with a scope of up to 60 study points in individual subjects or fields of study.

All teachers are required to spend one week of the school year on continuing/further education. Reports on such use of funding for continuing and further education in 2009/2010 show that 49.8 per cent of all participation in continuing and further education took place through the use of in-house expertise at the school or school owner, 16 per cent used expertise from a college and 10.1 per cent from a university. A total of 24.1 per cent used other external expertise environments. It is also reported that 1438 teachers have taken continuing and further education that gives state funding, and that each teacher who participates in continuing and further education on average takes 25.4 study points (Rambøll 2010).

When it comes to the need for continuing and further education in the years to come (Vibe and Sandberg 2010), primary schools and lower secondary schools pinpoint the subjects of mathematics, English and student assessment. School owners would like to give slightly higher priority to teaching reading and writing than the schools would. Upper secondary schools believe that the focus must continue to be on student assessment and digital competence, as it is now, and the school owners agree.

## 5.2 Teacher Appraisal

The school owner is the employing authority responsible for the teaching staff (cf. section 10-8 of the Education Act). The school owner is responsible for ensuring correct and necessary competence at the school and to provide the opportunities for necessary competence enhancement of its personnel. The school owner may choose whether or not it will have a system for teacher appraisal and the way in which this will be carried out.

It is compulsory for the administration of all schools to carry out a formal individual performance review with all teachers once every year. The employee performance review is to be an opportunity for the employee and the school leader to clarify work responsibilities, expectations and challenges, as well as possible wishes for development.

### 5.2.1 Indirect assessment of teachers through the Pupil Survey

Even though teacher appraisal is not an explicit part of NKVS, teachers are evaluated indirectly through the Pupil Survey which is mandatory for all schools (see Chapters 2 and 4). All Norwegian students answer the Pupil Survey every year, with questions on learning and well-being at school. The survey has two questions that regard the students' perception of *professional guidance*:

- *Do you tell the teachers what you need help with to be better in school subjects?*
- *How often do teachers tell you what you need to do to be better in school subjects?*

The results from the Pupil Survey are stored and used by the schools, school owners and the state's educational administration to help analyse and develop the learning environment. Beyond this, no direct element of teacher appraisal is part of NKVS.



### 5.2.2 Reasons for the current approaches to teacher appraisals

The appraisal of teachers has been discussed a great deal over the last 20 years by all the stakeholders in the sector. There has been disagreement as to whether teacher appraisal should be given a central role in quality assessment. Among other things, the discussions have dealt with whether it is possible to develop objective criteria for appraising teachers, and if one can distinguish between the teacher's teaching practices and the teacher as a person.

The reason given for the current scheme is that emphasis must be placed on a local focus and local ownership, and because of this, the school owner must be the one who decides how teacher appraisals are to be carried out.

### 5.2.3 What do we know about teacher appraisal in Norway?

Norway participates in the international OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS). NIFU STEP led the Norwegian survey among teachers and principals at the lower secondary level. A total of 156 schools with 153 school leaders and almost 2500 teachers participated. The survey answers a number of questions on attitudes, practice and experience related to teaching and learning.

Below is an extract of the NIFU STEP REPORT 23/2009 - *Being a Lower Secondary School Teacher in Norway, Results from the OECDs International Survey of Teaching and Learning* (Vibe et al. 2009)

The greatest challenges faced by Norwegian schools as seen in the results from the TALIS survey are: a poorly developed structure for following up the teaching practices of teachers in the classroom, a school administration that is relatively unskilled in the field of education science and the lack of a system for enhancing the competence of teachers who would benefit greatly from such enhancement. Feedback, evaluations and follow-ups are often lacking, from school owners to school leaders, from school leaders to teachers and from teachers to students. This survey shows clear indications that Norwegian teachers follow up their students' work and learning to a lesser degree than many other countries. Follow-ups and feedback from school leaders to teachers concerning their work is also systematised to a very little degree. Norway stands out when compared to other countries in that school leaders are clear as administrative leaders, while their educational leadership is less clear. One indication of this is that school leaders acknowledge their formal responsibility for the teachers' professional development, but this is not necessarily acted on in practice. For example, the majority of the schools lack some sort of follow-up programme for newly-employed teachers, and there are fewer measures directed at enhancing the competence of teachers in Norway than in most of the other countries in the TALIS survey.

When Norwegian teachers are appraised or given feedback on their work, it is primarily from the principal, while appraisals by colleagues and external evaluations are less common. About two-thirds of all teachers in Norway have a principal who says he or she has given an appraisal or feedback during the last 12 months.

Norwegian teachers feel that the assessments they are given contain very few specific recommendations for improvement. Many Norwegian teachers experience this kind of assessment and feedback as irrelevant and unspecific. Compared to other countries, Norwegian teachers do not believe that these assessments will have any consequences.

#### *Teacher appraisal seen from the school leader's perspective*

Below is Norway's ranking of criteria for teacher appraisal such as the principals see it:

1. Classroom management
2. Student discipline and behaviour
3. The relationship between teachers and students
4. Teacher's knowledge and understanding of his or her subject areas

5. How well the teachers cooperate
6. How they teach students with special needs
7. The teachers' academic and professional development
8. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of didactics
9. Feedback from parents
10. Other results of the students' learning
11. The students' assessment of the teaching
12. The students' test results
13. Direct assessments of classroom teaching
14. Innovative teaching practice
15. Student completion rates
16. Teaching in a multicultural context
17. Participating in activities with students outside of school hours

#### *The goals of teacher appraisal*

In the survey, the school leaders were asked to give their opinion on the goals of assessment of their teachers' work, and indicate what importance each goal has in the assessment. With respect to *evaluating the performance of the entire school, evaluating teaching in a particular subject, gaining control over a crisis or a problem at the school, making decisions on school development and identifying a teachers' need for academic and professional development*, there is broad agreement that this has some or much importance. There is much greater variation in agreement when it comes to *deciding career plans for each teacher, informing a higher administration level than the school and making decisions on salaries and bonuses for teachers*. There is an especially large degree of variation between countries concerning the question of *deciding career plans for each teacher*. A total of 36% said this was of significance in Norway, and only a very few of these gave this great significance.

#### *Measures that arise from teacher appraisals*

A logical consequence of teacher appraisals is that specific measures should be implemented after the appraisal. School leaders were therefore asked to answer how frequently measures were introduced if an assessment pointed out shortcomings in a teachers' teaching.

Practically all the principals in Norway responded that they ensured that the results were conveyed to the teacher in question and that actions that could improve on these shortcomings in the teaching were discussed with the teacher in question. The proportion of respondents who answered "always", "usually" or "sometimes" varied greatly between the countries and Norway distinguished itself in both cases as being the country that answered "always" the least. Only one of three Norwegian principals stated that they always discuss actions to improve shortcomings in teaching practice with the teacher in question.

#### *Appraisals and feedback seen from the teacher's viewpoint*

The proportion of teachers who have received this kind of appraisal is generally somewhat lower when teachers are asked this question than when school leaders are asked. While 66% of Norwegian principals responded that they have appraised their teachers at least once a year or more, 56% of the teachers responded that they were appraised by their principal at least once a year or more.

Teachers were also asked to assess the importance of 17 criteria for the appraisal or feedback they received. The teachers were asked many of the same questions as the school leaders about appraisals and feedback on the work they do.

Below is Norway's ranking of criteria for teacher appraisal as teachers see it:

1. A good relationship with students
2. How well I co-operate with my colleagues

3. Student discipline and behaviour
4. Classroom management
5. Knowledge and understanding of my subject areas
6. Feedback from parents
7. Knowledge and understanding of didactics
8. The students' assessment of my teaching
9. Other results of student learning
10. How I teach students with special needs
11. Academic and professional developments I have participated in
12. Direct assessment of my classroom teaching
13. The students' test results
14. Student completion rates
15. Innovative teaching practice
16. Participating in activities with students outside of school hours
17. Teaching in a multicultural context

The order of the criteria shown above resembles that seen for teacher appraisals from the principals. The difference is that relationship to students and colleagues is ranked higher.

#### **5.2.4 Local examples of teacher appraisals**

Even though there is no national requirement for teacher appraisal, this is still done more or less formally and in different ways in many counties and in some municipalities.

#### **Examples of criteria for quality of teachers in the Municipality of Stavanger**

In 2007, the Municipality of Stavanger created a list of criteria for assessing the quality of teachers in the Stavanger school district. The criteria are divided into three dimensions; an academic dimension, a qualifications/personality dimension and an ethics dimension.

The quality criteria are to be used as a tool in quality development work for the Stavanger school district. The aim of the criteria is to contribute to a professionalization of the teacher role, and in this way strengthen that role. The goal is that the criteria will serve as a tool to be used by school leaders when quality assuring the teaching provided to the students in the Stavanger school district. These quality criteria can also be used in guidance and development dialogues between the leader and employee, in job performance reviews and for recruiting teachers.

The quality criteria for teachers in the Stavanger school district:

##### *1. Formal academic qualifications*

- Academic competence: The teachers shall have the academic basis, cf. section 14-2 of the Education Act regulations
- Didactic and pedagogical content knowledge competence: The teachers must be able to prepare, carry out, analyse and evaluate learning processes, teaching and the subject curricula in a systematic and well-considered manner
- The teachers must read, understand and master the curriculum subject curricula and display willingness to update subject knowledge

##### *2. Personal qualities – teaching ability*

- The teachers should be able to help create a good psychosocial learning environment that promotes well-being and learning
- The teachers should be able to communicate with and cooperate with children, adolescents and adults
- The teachers should have the ability to show empathy and care
- The teachers must be flexible and able to take the initiative

- The teachers must be resilient and able to face challenges
- The teachers must be solution-oriented

### 3. Ethical dimensions

- The teachers shall be aware of their own attitudes and values, and that these are expressed through their actions
- The teachers must set demands, challenge and give support
- The teachers shall be clear leaders and role models for children and adolescents
- The teachers shall perform the duties their position requires and use the working hours in a good manner
- The teachers shall work according to values laid down in the curriculum and in accordance with the core values of the Municipality of Stavanger
- The teachers shall listen to and act on information and enquiries from parents, students and co-operative agencies, and be aware of the duty of confidentiality
- The teachers shall show a willingness to accept guidance

These criteria are based on section 2 of the regulations concerning suitability assessment for the teaching profession, the Quality Development Plan *Good, Better, Best*, the Learning Poster, the Framework Plan for General Teacher Education and the Employee Manual for the Municipality of Stavanger. Reference is also made to section 9A: The students' school environment and section 10-1: Qualification requirements for teaching personnel of the Education Act, and section 14-2 of the regulations: Requirements for employment in the compulsory school.

In recent years, various political parties and political youth organisations have presented recommendations on introducing student assessment of teaching for upper secondary education. The political level for some county authorities has decided to introduce assessments of teaching, and many of these counties have already begun preparing various types of questionnaires on teaching practice. Some county authorities have already used such assessments at least once.

### **Examples of teacher assessment from the Hordaland county authority**

Hordaland was the first county to decide that all its schools would implement student evaluations of the teaching.

In 2006, the Hordaland County Executive Committee decided to introduce a system under which students would evaluate the teachers in the county's upper secondary schools. In the autumn of 2007, Hordaland's director of education sent a letter to the schools instructing them to implement the evaluation of teachers, together with a detailed explanation of the reasons for this, a list of minimum requirements for implementing the evaluation, the content of the survey and a collection of sample questions. The schools were free to design their own approach within this framework based on the challenges of each school had, the subject and teaching plan and so on. The schools could use a template already prepared by the county's Education Authority if they preferred, or they could write their own questions to be used in the survey.

The goal of the teacher appraisal survey is to act as a mechanism in the quality development of the education sector within the classroom or other education activities. It can also be seen as a link in the process of strengthening the students' contribution to their own learning process.

#### *The content of the questionnaire given to the students*

Nine themes were defined by the director of education and the schools were expected to include them in the questionnaire:

- The students' academic dividends from the teaching

- Classroom management and organisation of the teaching
- The use of varied teaching methods
- The teacher-student relationship (including the quality of student-teacher performance reviews if the teacher has arranged this type of review)
- The learning environment
- The learning process
- Student co-determination
- The ability to motivate
- Assessment work (including informal assessments)

*Requirements for follow up*

- Any extreme deviations should be dealt with in a suitable manner, for example through job performance reviews
- Actions taken beyond this must be decided by the school in question
- The content in and implementation of the teacher evaluations will be discussed with the employee representatives on the county level. The first time the evaluation was carried out representatives from the student council were encouraged to give their input in the process. This was later changed to the student council being invited to take part in the design of the questionnaire.

The teacher appraisal survey has been evaluated twice now; once after the survey's first implementation in 2007, and again after completion of the 2007/2008 school year.

*Summary of experiences from the first evaluation*

Some teachers feel that if the aim was to make teaching better, then the questionnaire should have been connected to specific subjects or subject teaching groupings. The questions that were directed specifically at the teacher were felt to be motivated by the principal's need to have control.

A recurring problem was that the students misunderstood the questions. Key concepts like portfolio assessment, chalkboard teaching and others were misunderstood. A number of schools included questions on the students' own efforts. This was seen as a success, and a way to make students more accountable for their own learning.

More than three out of four schools used open-ended questions, which produced mixed results. It was considered positive that the students were given the opportunity to express their viewpoints or say something in their own words about what they were unhappy with. Constructive feedback from the students seemed to give the survey an extra value, while flippant feedback from students was offensive and objectionable to the teachers concerned.

The teachers at most of the schools presented the results to the students in their class. Some presented an average of the results in a general school meeting or held a presentation for the student council. Reporting to the teachers was undertaken in a number of ways; either the teacher was given or was allowed to keep the response forms, was given a summary of the results, and/or that the results were presented in a performance review. The extent to which the principal was involved in this work varied a great deal.

The principal or another school leader at most of the schools had a one-on-one conversation with each teacher. Other schools chose to only speak with the teachers who had poor results or who wanted such a review. The value of these personal reviews can be seen in connection with how well the principal understood the context of the survey.

Not all the schools had discussed what the consequences would be for a teacher who scored poorly on the survey. The students expected that something would be done afterwards, and that the principal and possibly the county authorities would step in. From the teachers' point of view, it was said that if a teacher was found to function very poorly in the classroom in one area, then some kind of measure should be implemented to correct the problem, such as attending a course. The employee representatives were most interested in the principal or a competent professional intervening with the teachers who scored poorly.

The students were mostly interested in the survey being anonymous to ensure that all the students would say what they meant. The teachers were sceptical to this, primarily because the survey could damage communication between the teacher and the students. Both the teachers and the students pointed out that the teacher would not be able to help any students who expressed difficulties when the survey was anonymous.

#### *Utility value*

Both the principals and the employee representatives generally felt that the teacher appraisal survey was implemented in a good way at their school. The principals generally agreed that the appraisal made a good starting point for a teacher to develop his or her teaching practices, and that the appraisal gave the principal a good overview of how teaching was functioning at the school. The employee representatives did not agree. They felt that the survey functioned better as a control tool for the school leaders than as a development tool for the teachers.

One viewpoint that was common among teachers was that the survey did not tell them anything they did not already know. This was especially true for the more experienced teachers who had conducted such surveys with their classes in the past.

#### *Critical factors*

Based on the main findings of the analysis, the following areas were selected as the critical points of the teacher appraisal survey:

- The aim of the appraisal: It should be clear whether this is a tool for quality assurance for the principal, or if it is a tool that the teacher can use to improve his or her teaching. Many doubted whether the survey could fulfil both functions.
- Anchoring: Measures have to be well anchored in the organisation if the participants are to be motivated to undertake the survey.
- Clarification of the consequences: It is important that information is given about the consequences the survey might have; for example, what happens to teachers who score very poorly. The students want assurance that something will be done with these teachers. Teaching colleagues and employee representatives want assurances that the teachers' jobs are protected and that measures are implemented that will help them improve. Vague responses to these questions create a feeling of insecurity and suspicion among co-workers.
- Protection of privacy: The students' anonymity and the teachers' right to privacy must also be addressed. For the students, this applies to anonymity when filling in and collecting the questionnaires. For the teachers, this applies to filing and storing the data, and the problem of who is given access to such information.
- The questionnaire: A well designed and formulated questionnaire is decisive for the results being at all useful for their intended purpose. The students should be given some kind of dry run with an explanation of the concepts and wording before they begin to fill in the questionnaire.

The evaluation of the 2007/2008 survey gave the general impression that the results were about the same as those from the previous year, with the exception that the employee representatives generally felt that the teacher appraisal survey went well and saw a greater utility value of the measure.

### 5.3 The viewpoints of the special interest groups

<p><b>Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)</b></p>	<p>KS emphasises the formative elements of the teacher appraisal. Observations, guidance by colleagues and learning-by-doing are good tools for teacher appraisal. It is important to include the teachers in discussions on what kinds of development and appraisal tools they would find useful to find time for this in their daily work. School owners must demand this kind of appraisal work. It must be clarified whether teacher appraisal or assessment of teaching is preferred, who is to assess and appraise whom, and what this appraisal and assessment is to be used for.</p>
<p><b>The Union of Education Norway</b></p>	<p>The Union of Education Norway would like to replace the term <i>teacher appraisal</i> with the term <i>teaching practice appraisal</i>. The Union of Education Norway and the Norwegian Student Organization call for a common system that can easily be used at all schools and for individual subjects. These organisations believe that educational work, teaching and student learning outcomes should be evaluated, not the teacher as a person. The result of the teacher appraisal survey should be used for improving the learning environment and learning strategies in the individual classrooms and individual schools, and for educational development work at the schools. The goal of systematic teaching appraisal in a subject is to co-operate to improve the learning environment, and ensure good learning strategies and a good learning outcome.</p>
<p><b>Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers</b></p>	<p>To the extent that teacher appraisal is systematised on the school owner level, teacher appraisal is generally left to the students in the form of questionnaires (in upper secondary school). Questionnaires where the students assess identified teachers while the students remain anonymous are particularly controversial. This type of questionnaire assumes that students in this age group actually have the competence to appraise a teacher's academic and pedagogical skills, and teacher efforts within the frameworks offered by the national curriculum, the local resource situation, the student group in question and the local organisational structure. The Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers therefore considers it unfortunate that some school owners actually use surveys in which students evaluate teachers, and that it is especially alarming that the students are anonymous, so that the resulting information cannot be corroborated in any way.</p>
<p><b>The Waldorf School Association</b></p>	<p>The Waldorf School Association believes that teacher appraisal and the teaching that is given is the responsibility of the school leader. The school leaders must uncover poor quality, analyse the information and initiate short-term and long-term measures. The school management is free to reallocate resources within the frameworks. School must also have a system for its collaboration with parents and students which allows criticism to be heard and dealt with. User surveys, such as we know them from <i>Skoleporten</i> (the School Portal), yield little useful information, as the schools often are quite small.</p>
<p><b>National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education</b></p>	<p>The National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education believes that teachers and school leaders have a responsibility to ensure the quality of the teaching, and that the present situation opens for a practice that does not guarantee this responsibility. The school's mandate is practised and realised in the classroom in the encounter between teacher and student. A teacher's ability, professionalism, ability to impart knowledge and organise learning and the development of his or her students are important qualities. The National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education also feels that it must be possible to dismiss teachers who are not fit for the teaching role, and who do not have the professional attitude and the required academic and personal skills that are needed for the teaching profession.</p>

## 5.4 Policy initiatives

The Norwegian Student Organization and the Union of Education Norway have been co-operating for some time on a recommendation for principles and guidelines for teaching appraisals for each subject. They hope these guidelines and principles can become the foundation for such a survey that can be produced and used across the entire country, but with the possibility of making local adaptations.

During 2009 and 2010, the Ministry of Education and Research has had several meetings with the Directorate for Education and Training, the Norwegian Student Organization and the Union of Education Norway on the themes for the teacher appraisal survey.

A consequence of this, the Directorate was assigned the task of forming a working group to prepare a guide book that contains the principles and guidelines for teaching appraisals for each subject. This working group will consist of a representative from the Norwegian Student Organization, the Union of Education Norway, KS, a practitioner/school leader and a researcher with relevant competence in methodology.

The principles and guidelines will serve as a stage in improving the feedback culture at schools and helping teachers to get more feedback on their teaching practice.

The working group will evaluate whether the guidelines will only apply to upper secondary schools or if they will also be directed at the lower secondary level. The guidelines will contain examples of questions that can be used in an appraisal of the teaching in a specific subject. The working group will assess the various legal issues and other problems involved in such appraisals such as questions on who is permitted to review the results and on the protection of privacy. The working group will also explain who is responsible for processing the results, what the results will be used for and how long the results can be stored. This work will be completed early 2011.

The principles and guidelines for teaching appraisals in school subjects will be used as informative support material and it will not be mandatory to use them. The principles and guidelines will thus not be applied nationally as they are not laid down in the Acts, regulations or the subject curricula.

### *Recommendation from the Norwegian Student Organization and the Union of Education Norway:*

These agencies recommend that the survey should be called the *teaching appraisal*, and be formulated specifically for each subject. The students shall evaluate the teaching and present recommendations for improvements. Teachers will conduct the survey in their subject, and later undergo a review and analysis of the responses from their group of students. It is proposed that the survey should consist of three parts:

Part one will consist of a short self-assessment of the students' attitude towards the subject and his or her own effort. The purpose here is to give the student the opportunity to reflect on his or her own motivation and own contribution to the learning environment in the classroom. In this part of the survey, the students will also be given questions on how the attitude and efforts of fellow students influence the learning environment.

Part two will consist of questions on the teaching itself: for example, the following themes that are important for learning:

- well-being and the learning environment
- academic and professional follow-up and learning dividends
- co-determination
- adapted education
- feedback from teachers
- methods



Part three will shed light on the general framework for the teaching, for example the size of class groups, the quality of buildings, facilities and the physical working environment, the equipment and teaching aids, and the opportunity for class trips and excursions.

This recommendation also implies that the survey is carried out anonymously so all students will be as honest as possible. The responses from the appraisal will be reviewed by the subject teacher and the class group together with a view to improving the learning environment and learning outcome. The subject teacher and class group will produce a joint written summary and analysis of the results of the appraisal, and agree on what changes they have agreed to try. A joint summary, the proposed changes and relevant data are to be submitted to the teacher's closest supervisor.

## CHAPTER 6: STUDENT ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 Current Framework

The current approach to student assessment in subjects is based on the objective of both promoting learning and expressing the competence of each student continuously during the studies and at the end of the teaching in the subject (cf. chapter 3 of the regulations for the Education Act).

The students' right to assessment means both a right to formative (continuous) assessment and final assessment, and a right to documentation of the education.<sup>19</sup> The terms formative assessment and final assessment distinguish between continuous assessment during the education and assessment given at the end of lower secondary school and at the completion of subjects in upper secondary education.

Pursuant to the Education Act, students shall be assessed in the school *subjects and order and conduct*. In addition to this, teachers should have frequent dialogue with the students on their academic development based on the provisions in section 1-1 of the Education Act, the core curriculum and the *Quality Framework in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion*.

- *Subject assessment* shall have its point of departure in the students' goal attainment in relation to the overall competence aims for each subject. The student's own premises, absence or issues related to order and conduct are not to be taken into consideration. When assessing physical education at the primary and lower secondary level the focus should be on the competences attained and the student's own premises, but at the upper secondary level the student's own premises should not be considered when assessing the physical education subject. The competence aims are formulated so that the students can achieve the aims with *different degrees of goal attainment*. The national subject curricula do not specify what these different degrees of goal attainment involve and do not contain assessment criteria or other formulated requirements for the different degrees of goal attainment. When the assessment is a mark, there are general and not subject specific descriptions of the requirements for each mark in the Education Act regulations, for example, a mark of 6 will signify that the student has performed exceptionally in reaching the competence aims in the subject.

- *Assessments for order and conduct*: The basis for assessing order and conduct is the degree to which the student conducts him/herself in line with the school's regulations.

- *Dialogue on other developments* shall be conducted as a regular dialogue between the student and teacher, and possibly the student's parents. The dialogue will focus on whether the education has contributed to his or her development as stated in section 1-1 of the Education Act, the core curriculum and the Quality Framework in the national curriculum. The purpose here is to give the student, teacher, and possibly also the parents, the opportunity to talk about whether the student is developing in a positive direction based on the other aims for learning than the academic aims and to give teachers the opportunity to adjust the education to better attain these goals.

Assessments will be made only without marks at primary level (until the end of year 7). Starting at year 8 and in upper secondary school, the students are also given number

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<sup>19</sup> The Norwegian term *underveisvurdering* can be translated into *continuous assessment* in English. To simplify matters in the English translation of the report, the term *formative assessment* is used for this type of assessment.

marks. Number marks shall be used on a scale from 1 to 6. Only whole numbers are used for marking in Norway.

### **6.1.1 Distribution of responsibilities**

The responsibility for assessing students is shared between the national and local authorities and schools/teachers, so no responsibility for student assessment has been given to external evaluation agencies.

The Ministry provides the regulations for assessment of students and external candidates, and also the appeals of these assessments, and for the examinations and requirements for documentation. The principal at each school will organise the school pursuant to these regulations (cf. section 2-3 of the Education Act).

The school owners are responsible for ensuring that a student's right to an assessment is fulfilled cf. section 13-10 of the Education Act, including the provisions of the resources necessary for compliance with these requirements. The school owner has a great degree of freedom to organise and design the teaching as it wishes, but a suitable system for evaluating compliance with the Act and regulations and to follow up the results of this assessment must be in place.

The school owner is also responsible for ensuring that the students in its administrative district participate in the national tests, sampling tests and other surveys as established by the Ministry (see section 2-4 of the Education Act regulations). The principal is responsible for implementing the national tests and the mapping tests at his or her school according to the guidelines established for this.

### **6.1.2 Student assessment in private schools**

Learning in private schools is regulated by the Private School Act. The overriding guidelines for student assessment are the same at private schools as for state schools, as stated in Chapter 3 of the Private School Act regulations.

Private schools must give the same national tests, sampling tests and other surveys as the state schools as established by the Ministry. Private schools may apply to the Directorate for Education and Training for permission to set the national tests and mapping tests at a different year than those already established, or apply for an exemption from the tests. The application must state the reasons for this based on the school's own subject curricula. This does not imply that schools have a right to an exemption. This application will be evaluated as to whether the tests would be pointless due to the competence aims of the school's curriculum.

Private schools that are accredited on the grounds of having a different educational approach can apply for exemptions from the ordinary schemes for examinations and overall achievement if this can be justified on their pedagogical grounds and is a part of the school's different assessment system. One example of this is that the Waldorf schools are exempted from giving the centrally given examinations. Moreover, when setting overall achievement marks, the Waldorf schools give written descriptions of what characterises the students' competence in the subjects in addition to the marks.

## **6.2 Types of student assessment**

The tables below give an overview of the different forms of student assessment in subjects, which show, for example, the objectives they have.

*Overview of student assessment in subjects in primary school*

<b>Types of student assessment</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Subject/subject areas</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Internal/external assessment</b>
Formative assessment (see 6.2.1 for examples)	All levels		Promotes learning and expresses the student's competence continuously during the education	Internal. Teacher assesses.
Overall achievement mark in the subject	10th year	All subjects	Gives information about the competence of the student at completion of the education in the subject in the national curriculum	Internal. Subject teacher sets overall achievement marks.
Examination in the subject	10 <sup>th</sup>	The students are drawn for a centrally given written examination in one subject (Norwegian, mathematics or English) and a locally given oral examination in one subject		<p><i>The examination tasks are set externally through a centrally given examination. For the locally given examination, the subject teacher has to make proposals for the examination tasks.</i></p> <p><i>External examiner:</i> Only external examiner with centrally given written examination. For the locally given examination, the subject teacher and one external examiner make the assessment.</p>
National tests	9th Autumn	- Reading (compulsory) - Maths (compulsory)	Maps the degree to which the students' skills are in accordance with the objectives and goals in the curriculum.  Gives information to students, teachers, parents, school owners, school leaders, the regional authorities and the national level as the basis for improvement and development work	External
National tests	8th Autumn	- Reading (compulsory) - Maths (compulsory) - English (compulsory)		
National tests	5th Autumn	- Reading (compulsory) - Maths (compulsory) - English (compulsory)		
Mapping tests	3rd Spring	- Reading (compulsory) - Understanding numbers and arithmetic skills (voluntary)	Uncover students who have low skills and who need extra supervision and adaptation on the individual and school level	External
Mapping tests	2nd Spring	- Reading (compulsory) - Understanding numbers and arithmetic skills (compulsory)		
Mapping tests	1st Spring	- Reading (compulsory)		

Sampling tests in writing as a basic skill (5th and 8th years) and the subjects of social studies and natural science (10th year) are being developed and will be implemented in 2012.

*Overview of student assessment in subjects in upper secondary education*

<b>Types of student assessment</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Subject/subject areas</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Internal/external assessment</b>
Formative assessment (see 6.2.1 for examples)	All levels		Promotes learning and expresses the student's competence continuously during the education	Internal. Teacher assesses.
Overall achievement mark in the subject	Vg1, Vg2, Vg3	All subjects	Gives information about the competence of the student at completion of the education in the subject in the national curriculum	Internal. Subject teacher sets overall achievement marks.
Examination in the subject	Vg1	Approx. 20% of the students are drawn for a centrally given examination or a locally given oral examination or oral-practical in one subject		Similar to the examination given in lower secondary school (see table above)
	Vg2	Education programme qualifying for higher education: All students are drawn for a centrally given examination or a locally given oral examination or oral-practical in one subject  Vocational educational programme: All students shall have an interdisciplinary practical examination in a programme subject and approx. 20% of the students are drawn for a centrally given examination or a locally given oral examination or oral-practical in one subject common core subject		
	Vg3	Education programme qualifying for higher education: All students have centrally given examination in <i>Norwegian first choice</i> or <i>Sami as the first language</i> . In addition, all students are drawn for a centrally given written examination in two subjects and for a locally given oral, practical or oral-practical examination in one subject <sup>20</sup>		

<sup>20</sup> This scheme of drawing students for examinations applies for programme areas in the sciences and the programme area for languages, social studies and business economics. The scheme for the programme areas for arts and crafts and the education programmes for sports and music, dance and drama is somewhat different.

Mapping tests	Vg1 Autumn	- Reading (compulsory) - Maths (compulsory) - English (voluntary)	Uncover students who have low skills and who need extra supervision and adaptation on the individual and school level	External
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### 6.2.1 Formative assessment

The objective of formative assessment during the education is to promote learning, develop student competence and form the basis for adapted education. Formative assessment shall occur on an on-going basis as guidance for the student and shall contain well-grounded information on the student's competence, and shall provide feedback with a view to development in the subject.

The work with formative assessment is based on the following principles:

The students learn best when they:

- understand what they are to learn and what is expected of them
- receive feedback that tells them about the quality of their work or performance
- receive advice on how they can improve
- are involved in their own learning by, for example, assessing their own work and development

Formative assessment is understood as both assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning and covers such areas as:

- Formative assessment in the classroom in form of continuous feedback to the student
- Follow-up of results from different types of tests, i.e. national tests and mapping tests
- Six-month evaluations:

Students shall be given six-month evaluations for each subject and for order and conduct, i.e. twice during the school year.

- Self-assessment:

The students' self-assessment is a part of the formative assessment. The regulations establish that the student shall participate actively in the assessment of his or her own work, own competence and own academic development.

### 6.2.2 The national tests and mapping tests

The Directorate develops national tests and mapping tests that all schools must implement on set year levels. There are also mapping tests which are voluntary.

#### *The national tests*

The national tests are designed to provide information on the degree to which the students' skills are in accordance with the objectives and goals in the curriculum, and the students' results are distributed to one of the mastery levels according to the number of points they score on the tests (at three levels for year 5 and five levels for years 8 and 9). The tests have a duration of 60 to 90 minutes depending on level. The tests provide useful information about groups of students (school and municipal level), but not detailed information on individual students.

Even though the national tests were developed to give guiding information for the different levels (see Chapter 3), emphasis has been placed on the tests also being useful as educational tools. For example, guidance and information material has been developed for each test to provide support for following up the results from the tests with educational measures. There are descriptions of what the mastering levels mean for, respectively, reading, maths and English. In the guidance and information material a strong focus is put on explaining what the tests provide information on and how students can be followed up on the different levels of mastery.

### *The mapping tests*

The objective of the mapping tests is to pinpoint the 20% of students who have low skills and therefore need extra follow-up and adapted teaching at the student and school level. The tests are designed so that they indicate a so-called intervention benchmark, and the students who score under this benchmark will be followed up more closely. The intervention benchmark is based on the approximately 20% lowest student results of a representative sample of students on a national basis. To support the follow-up work with the students, guidance material for the tests has been made available.

Some school owners ask their own schools to register the student results in their local registration system as a part of the local assessment and development work. There is no national registration of results from the mapping tests.

### **6.2.3 Final assessment**

*Final assessment* comprises overall achievement and the examination, and is made at the end of compulsory education and at the end of each subject in upper secondary education. Overall achievement marks and examination marks constitute the basis for admission to higher education

#### *Overall achievement marks*

Overall achievement marks in subjects for years when marks are awarded, starting with year 8, are set by the teacher when teaching in subjects are completed and are entered on the students' school leaving certificates. Overall achievement marks shall be based on broad assessment grounds that as a whole show the competence the student has achieved in the subject.

In addition to an overall achievement mark for a subject, students shall be given an overall achievement mark for order and conduct at the end of year 10 and when they complete their upper secondary education. The mark for order and conduct is also entered on the student's school leaving certificate.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that the subject teachers give overall achievement marks for their subjects and that overall achievement marks for order and conduct are set after a grade meeting is held where the student's teachers are present.

There is little knowledge on how Norwegian teachers set overall achievement marks. This is why a research-based review of this practice was started in 2009. Findings from this report are referred to in Chapter 6.5 *Implementation and challenges*.

#### *Examinations*

At year 10 and in Vg1, Vg2 and Vg3 students shall be given examinations in school subjects. Examination marks are registered on the student's certificate separately in a column adjacent to the overall achievement marks. Examinations are marked by external examiners.

Both in lower secondary and upper secondary education, each student shall sit for a limited number of examinations. Some subjects have compulsory examinations (for example the subject of Norwegian at Vg3), but for the majority of subjects, students are drawn (selected) for the examination according to rules governing how many examinations are needed per level (see the table above). Examinations are held in most of the subjects each year.

The subject curriculum establishes when during the course of studies the student shall take or may be selected in for an examination in a subject, the type of examination and whether an examination will be set locally or centrally.

On the basis of the students' total marks on the school leaving certificate, competition marks are calculated that will have an effect on admission to further schooling and education. When calculating points, an examination mark shall have the same value as an overall achievement mark. There are few examination marks on the school leaving certificate compared to the number of overall achievement marks. On the school leaving certificate after completing compulsory school there will generally be overall achievement marks in 16 subjects and, in addition, examination marks in two of these subjects. Two of the overall achievement marks are not entered as number marks, but rather as "Participated"/"Did not participate". On the school leaving certificate after completing an education programme in upper secondary education that qualifies for higher education, there will be just over 20 overall achievement marks and five or six examination marks.

Examinations are often understood as having an external quality assurance function compared to the overall achievement marks because external examiners are used. Nothing is specified in the regulations that require the objective of an examination to be different from the objective of the overall achievement assessment.

The examination tasks are designed so that they test competence as this is expressed in the curricula for the subject in question. The examination mark shall be set on individual grounds and should reflect the student or external candidate's competence as it is displayed on the examination.

Assessment guides are given for all the centrally set written examinations. The guides contain the descriptions and characteristics of what is meant by achievement of competence for the examination in question. The characteristics of goal attainment describe what the students should be able to master for the marks that are awarded.

For centrally set examinations, a yearly comprehensive examiner seminar is held, as well as a general meeting for the examination boards in all subjects that have centrally set examinations under the Knowledge Promotion Reform. All external examiners are practising teachers that are recommended to the County Governor by the principals from their own schools. The teachers take on this examination assignment as voluntary extra work. The goal of the examiners' seminar is to professionalise the assessment of the examination tasks and to contribute to a common interpretation of fair assessments. This type of schooling of examiners also provides the Directorate with valuable information about how the examination and the schemes around it are understood and function in the education sector as a whole. It is also thought that the examination can have a regulating effect on the overall achievement mark.

An evaluation is made every year of a sample of the central examinations. This evaluation is a combination of questionnaires and interviews among students, teachers and examiners, but is also an academic evaluation of the examination in question. There are discussions on parts of the current examination scheme, for example the use of an oral project examination with two day's preparation and use of all aids for the written examination in some subjects.

#### **6.2.4 The relationship between different types of student assessment**

The regulations governing assessment were amended in the autumn of 2009. This was done to clarify that assessment has different objectives and to set quality requirements for how formative assessment is to be carried out. The comments on the amendments to the regulations from various interest organisations gave broad support to this.

Formative and final assessment should be seen in conjunction. For example, the teacher must be able to specify at an early point in time what characterises the competence that is required for each of the overall achievement marks. Teachers and students should constantly be evaluating the need to make adjustments to the teaching and learning to attain the objectives.



Formative assessment contributes to development and academic progression, while the overall achievement mark provides information on how far the student has reached.

When it comes to the relationship between final assessment and the examination, they have common objectives. However, there is a significant difference between overall achievement marks and examination marks because they are based on different assessment situations and have different assessment grounds. The overall achievement marks should include all the competence goals in a subject, whilst a five-hour written examination or an oral examination of 20-30 minutes will never test such a wide area. See Chapter 6.5 *Implementation and challenges* for a more detailed discussion on the relation between examinations and overall achievement.

As the examination uses external examiners, it also has an element of external quality assurance. Another point is that teachers do not get to know the examination mark in a subject before the overall achievement mark has been set, so the examination will not have any effect on a student's marks. There are examples of schools whose administrators look at any discrepancies between the examination and overall achievement marks as a way of ascertaining the accuracy of the school's own marking. Seen in this way, the examinations can be said to have a calibrating role (Prøitz and Spord Borgen 2010).

If a student in upper secondary education has received the mark 1 as the overall achievement mark and fails the examination, the student will not pass the subject and thus will not receive a school leaving certificate. If the student has received the mark 2 or higher on the examination, the student will pass the subject, even if the overall achievement mark is 1. In such cases the examination mark has more weight than the overall achievement mark.

### **6.3 Using the results**

Students and their parents will be told the results from their mapping tests and national tests and the results will be used to follow up the students.

The results from the mapping tests provide information on the students who score under the intervention benchmark and are used to follow-up these students more closely.

The results from the national tests are not presented in a way that they might be "translated" into marks. These are not tests in a subject itself. Firstly, they are rather a test of basic skills that are needed in all subjects, and the results therefore have no bearing on student competence in any one subject. Secondly, it has been stressed that the aim of the use of the results is as a formative basis for further development of the students' skills. This was an important aspect of how the results from the tests are to be presented.

The results from the final assessment (examination and overall achievement) are entered on the student's school leaving certificate, and will have consequences for each student when applying for admission to upper secondary and higher education.

Students' test results that shall also form the basis for local assessment and development work in the way the school owner and principal organise assessment and follow-up of results (see Chapter 4). For example, the evaluation of NKVS shows that the results from the national tests are followed up by most municipalities (see Chapter 4). However, there are great variations as to *how* the students' test results are used.

The evaluation of NKVS shows that the national tests have contributed to greater awareness and attention being placed on the basic skills (Allerup et al. 2009). Consequentially, the reports from the evaluation of Knowledge Promotion (Hodgson et al. 2010, Møller et al. 2009) show that formal planning both by the school owners and at the school level does not include the problem of how the school should work on developing basic skills.

Another finding from the evaluation is that there is little educational application of the national tests in relation to their controlling use. The reason for this seems to be related to the fact that feedback from the tests is very general (Allerup et al. 2009). This finding is in line with the fact that the tests are not primarily made as educational tools for the teachers, even though they are designed so that they can use the test results in the educational follow-up of the students.

The evaluation also shows that the results from the mapping tests are used formatively for learning to a larger degree than the national tests. Teachers and principals find the mapping tests to be very useful in locating the students who need extra help. However, a significantly lower number of teachers answer that the tests have to a large degree increased the learning outcome of the weakest students. Researchers refer to the challenge of converting the results from the tests into educational measures that will then have consequences for the students' learning (Allerup et al. 2009).

At the national level, the results from student assessment are used for research, evaluating the Norwegian education system and as indicators for future policy development (see Chapter 3).

## **6.4 Competence**

Processes used by the national authorities to develop competence within prioritised areas are connected to the allocation of funds for continuing and further education, and to the financing of national efforts, annual short-term training measures and to the development of information and guidance material.

Competence in assessment is understood as the use of methods, assessment forms and assessment results, the development of assessment terminology, and as the relationship between objectives/aims and assessments. Developing assessment competence also involves establishing an assessment culture with focus on students' and apprentices' learning with room for trial and error and for giving each other constructive feedback.

The evaluation of the strategies for competence-raising of selected parts of the examination field and of state-initiated research and development work provides important knowledge to the national level about the need for the development of competence in the area of student assessment.

The Norwegian Network for Student and Apprentice Assessment (NELVU) is the national network that works actively to promote competence-raising in student assessment in the school and university and university college institutions. Their mandate covers promoting a more knowledge-based practice within teacher education and basic education, contributing to quality assurance and quality development of continuing education and training programmes, and stimulating co-operation, development and research in the university and university college sector.

Experience from the national efforts indicate that competence-raising within the field of student assessment in the university and university college sector is generally individualised and interest-based, rather than being collective and part of the institutions' own organisational development.

In the autumn of 2010, a new teacher training programme was introduced in Norway. A new framework plan and national guidelines have already been established for teacher training institutions in connection with this. This plan provides guidelines that will help in the development teachers' assessment competence through the teachers' basic training.

A recent Norwegian study shows that school evaluation functions best at schools that, over time, have focused on both the formative and the summative aspects of student assessment. It appears that raising competence in student assessment is a suitable strategy both because the schools can use external assessment to a larger degree and because it affects the work on quality assessment at the organisational level (Roald 2010).

## 6.5 Implementation and challenges

### 6.5.1 Assessment practice

It is well documented that Norwegian primary and secondary education and training needs to develop its assessment culture and practice, bearing in mind that assessment shall be a tool for learning and development. Many students do not get good enough feedback as to where they stand in relation to their learning goals and how they can improve in the subjects (Pupil Surveys 2009<sup>21</sup>). Both research from the beginning of the 2000s and more recent research have pointed out that other conditions are often emphasised than the purely academic ones when Norwegian students are evaluated in a subject. Schools have different views on whether commitment and activity in the classroom should be included in subject assessment. For primary school in particular (years 1 - 7), assessment culture and practice have had little signs of clear standards for the students' learning work and concrete academic feedback. Norwegian teachers set clear learning goals and follow up the students' learning work systematically to a lesser degree when compared to other countries (Klette 2003, Haugstveit et al. 2006, OECD 2009, Throndsen et al. 2009, Vibe et al. 2009).

Norway used to have content and process-oriented subject curricula with specific guidelines for content and working methods, provided by the national education authorities, but the current subject curricula contain competence aims that do not provide many descriptions of content or method. This presumes that curricula are developed locally to define learning content, subject matter, methods and the assessment scheme. The competence aims for primary and secondary education are only at the completion of some school years (years 2, 4, 7, and 10), which implies that more specific learning goals and objectives must be formulated on the way to the competence aims. There are no national guidelines for what subject curricula designed at the local level should contain.

Some schools and school owners express uncertainty as to how they should proceed in formulating more specific aims and assessment criteria where the point of departure is the competence aims at the end of some school years (e.g. year 7). Experience from the *Better Assessment Practices Project*, along with experience from the school development programme *Knowledge Promotion – From Word to Deed*, and research from the evaluations of Knowledge Promotion, show that teachers find it challenging to assess students with a point of departure in the competence aims in the subject curricula. Some schools and school owners are worried that a lack of standards for what is required to be awarded a mark will lead to greater differences in the overall achievement marks (cf. reports from school owners in the *Better Assessment Practices Project*).

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<sup>21</sup> Oxford Research (2009): *The Pupils are answering! Analysis from Pupil Surveys 2009*. Kristiansand, Norway.

To support the schools in their local subject curricula development work, the Directorate has since 2009 developed guidelines for local curricula development and more guidelines are being prepared for the curricula in the common core subjects in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary subjects, in addition to some other subjects. These stress the importance of understanding the competence aims and the relationship between the competence aims and assessment. Feedback from the sector shows that problems related to the competence aims and assessment need further attention.

Analyses show that there are variations in the overall achievement marks between comparable schools, and these differences are not always stable from year to year (see for example Gravaas et al. 2008). There is also a tendency for that the overall achievement marks in subjects that do not have examinations are higher compared with subjects that do have examinations (Grøgaard 2010). Student appeals of their overall achievement marks show that there are greater challenges to the practical-aesthetic subjects and physical education than in the traditional examination subjects.

One study on teachers' final assessment practices at the lower secondary level and upper secondary education (Prøitz and Spord Borgen 2010) showed that there are great variations in how overall achievement marks are set, and that teachers at lower secondary school and upper secondary school feel there is a need for a more common assessment basis than what exists today. The teachers in the study primarily emphasised their students' performance and knowledge when awarding the overall achievement marks, but for students with the poorest performance participation, effort and attitude were also considered.

Feedback from the sector indicates that many are uncertain as to how they are to award overall achievement marks. Before the changes in the regulations in 2006, half-term marks would count towards the final assessment in upper secondary education. Now that the objectives of formative and final assessment have been elucidated in the Knowledge Promotion curriculum, it seems to be a challenge to implement teaching practices where the students are given the opportunity to develop their competence right up until the end of the school year. In connection with the introduction of the new regulations in August 2009, the Directorate stressed the importance of informing the county governors, school owners and schools about the reasons for the different objectives of formative and final assessment. Feedback from the sector and from research for the Directorate implied that there is a need to continue clarifying the relationship between overall achievement marks as an expression for a broader competence and competence at the end of learning, in accordance with the provisions in the Education Act regulations (Prøitz and Spord Borgen 2010).

Assessment of examinations receive much more guidance and is discussed and regulated more through centrally given regulations and assessment guidelines than overall assessment. The report suggests that the possible causes of this can be that the overall achievement marks are not considered to be equally important by the national authorities, or that this is managed well enough by the profession itself. The report also states that there seems to be a need to clarify just what the examination's role is in relation to the overall achievement mark (Prøitz and Spord Borgen 2010).

There are systematic differences between the schools' overall achievement marks and their examination marks (Grøgaard 2010). For example, there is a discussion on whether this is the way it should be because the overall achievement marks are based on a broader learning base than the examinations (which means being based on all the competence aims in the subject) or whether there are systematic differences between how assessments are undertaken for the examinations and overall achievement.

### **6.5.2 Documenting assessment**

Discussions revolving around the increased focus on reporting and documentation in Norwegian schools continue, as can be seen in Report to the Storting no. 19 (2009-2010) *Time for Learning*. For example, it must be documented that formative assessment is being practised. The Directorate for Education and Training has been told by schools and school owners that they need help to interpret this requirement, and the schools and school owners are hoping for some examples of how they can best carry out this in practice.

The statutory requirement to document assessment in the Regulations does not mean that a long explanatory report on a student's competence is required, but that it must be documented that the student has *received* assessment. In practice, this requires some written documentation, but a simple checklist that shows when the assessment was given for each student is strictly speaking enough to comply with the regulations. The amount of written documentation needed for continuous assessment must be balanced in relation to what is necessary, what is useful for students in educational terms and how much work this involves for teachers. The Directorate is creating an idea bank with examples of different ways of documenting formative assessment as support for teachers.

### **6.5.3 The objectives of the different types of tests**

The evaluation of NKVS showed that teachers feel the results from the national tests provide almost no new information about their students. Both principals and teachers want the practice of measuring results to be useful, which means it must help in facilitating the teaching practices (Møller et al. 2009). The evaluation indicates that teachers, principals and school owners expect the test results in themselves to give good information that can be used to follow-up on their students' learning.

It might appear that the tests try to provide too much information for so many levels in the system that this causes confusion as to what the primary objective of the tests is and what kind of information the tests are able to give.

The evaluation of NKVS (Allerup et al. 2009) recommends that further development and more focus be placed on the tests' educational objectives. Even though the Directorate has organised so that the national tests can be used in the follow-up of a student, the Directorate has also stated that the tests do not provide detailed information on individual students. If the tests are to provide even more detailed information than what is the case today, in the form of partial scales or academic profiles as two examples, then the tests must be expanded with more tasks and longer testing sessions. In recent years emphasis has been placed on developing more mapping tests as the educational grounds for following up students who score under the intervention benchmark.

The mapping tests provide some information about the weakest group of students but, as these tests generally contain easy assignments, they will not provide information on the students capable of solving most of the tasks in the tests. This is why these tests are not suited as a reporting tool at the system level and do not provide information on comprehensive student competence at the school or on the school's quality.

In the Directorate's experience, many schools, teachers and also school owners do not understand what the differences between the tests are, what kind of information they can provide on students or what the results can be used for.

One and the same test may not necessarily satisfy all the objectives and provide enough relevant information to all levels at the same time. If the tests are to give more detailed information on each student's competence, the results can, for example, be presented as qualitative descriptions, which may not necessarily provide any relevant controlling information for the national authorities.

Schools and teachers want the test tasks to be available for use in following up the students. But at the same time, the national and municipal authorities want the results to be useful to make comparisons over time, which presupposes that the same tasks be given several times, and that they therefore have to be kept secret. To measure trends, what is being measured must also be clearly defined and delimited, which conflicts with the goal of the tests to provide broad-based information on the students' competence.

#### 6.5.4 Indicators of student learning outcome

An important discussion in Norway has revolved around the way in which the national tests have contributed to narrowing the concept of *learning outcome*, and how the national tests overshadow the other tools for and approaches to quality assessment (PricewaterhouseCoopers and KS 2009, Roald 2010). An important question in this regard is which indicators for learning outcome is a part of NKVS today, and if these provide sufficient information for the different levels as a basis for improvement work.

On *Skoleporten*, the indicators for the students' learning outcomes are gathered in the indicator area called *Results* and cover examination marks and overall achievement marks, the results from the national tests and points earned in primary and lower secondary education. As overall achievement marks are meant to reflect a student's attainment of goals for all the competence aims in a subject, it is reasonable to say that together with the examination marks this indicator covers a broad range of a student's competence in a subject. The national tests as an indicator of learning outcome measure two of the students' basic skills that are integrated across the subject curricula (reading and maths). Due to validation and reliability requirements for this type of large-scale testing, the tests measure a limited part of reading and arithmetic skills.<sup>22</sup>

The indicators for learning outcome and quality of results must be seen in connection with the other quality areas in *Skoleporten*, such as the students' *learning environment*. For example, it is relevant to consider the results from the Pupil Survey in connection with students' learning outcome.

Schools that find the results constructive use them for educational discussions with colleagues (Roald 2010). This may imply that the results from NKVS are related to a broader information base on student competence and school practice.

### 6.6 Measures already in place

In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on developing assessment competence and practice in the basic education and as a part of teacher education. For the school owners, most focus has been placed on knowledge of the rules and regulations for assessment and how the school owners can use the results from student assessment in the controlling dialogue with their schools. For the schools, emphasis has been placed on knowledge on the rules and regulations, and on creating a good assessment culture and assessment practice. The national authorities have facilitated for competence development in the use of the results from the national tests and mapping tests to some degree as a part of good assessment practice for teachers and school leaders.

The strategy *Competence for Development 2005-2008* (the Directorate for Education and Training 2005), was focused on the continuing education of school leaders, teachers in primary, lower and upper secondary school and department heads and instructors at in-service training companies. Student assessment was one of the national authorities' prioritised areas for continuing education since this time, and was also one of the five prioritised areas in 2009 and 2010. Student assessment is not a prioritised area for the

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<sup>22</sup> A construct has been prepared for each of the skills, with the point of departure in the subject curricula.

2009 continuing education strategy *Competence for Quality – A Strategy for Continuing Education of Teachers*. The main emphasis is on formal qualifications in a subject, but assessment of a subject will be included in the continuing education programmes being prepared by the universities and university colleges.

Furthermore, the national authorities have begun to implement measures to improve the assessment competence of the teachers training new teachers, with an emphasis on formative assessment, by allocating funds to develop more courses on student assessment at the ten universities and university colleges.

In 2007, the Directorate for Education and Training implemented a package of measures on the national level that all in all are intended to clarify the rules and regulations, increase assessment competence at all levels, make assessment practice more relevant and fair and improve the system for documenting formative and final assessment.

The project, entitled *Better Assessment Practices*, was part of the package of measures implemented for the period 2007-2009. The project included writing the amendments to the regulation on student assessment and a national pilot project on the characteristics of competence attainment in subjects at 77 participating schools.

All documentation for this project points in the same direction. Feedback is persistently the same; that systematic work with subject curricula and assessment makes it easier to understand the curricula and carry out assessments based on the competence aims. Nevertheless, it is challenging to evaluate a student's *competence*, and it is important to improve the quality of feedback students receive and to bolster student participation in assessment work. Pilot projects as a part of the national project have helped teachers, and teacher educators at teaching schools, to gain more competence and more awareness on what assessment is under the Knowledge Promotion Reform.

The *Better Assessment Practices Project* is being followed by a four-year national campaign directed at assessment for learning, which began in 2010. The objective of this campaign is to improve assessment practices and competence among teachers and instructors by working with assessment as a tool for learning. Moreover, examples of characteristics of goal attainment are being made as part of the guides to the subject curricula.

The school development programme called *Knowledge Promotion - From Word to Deed* (2006-2010) has also helped develop competence in assessment. Student assessment has been the primary theme of 10 of the 100 projects in the programme.

These two campaigns, *Better Assessment Practices* and *Knowledge Promotion - From Word to Deed*, have inspired work focused on improving assessment practice by bringing schools, school owners, the university and university college sector and private stakeholders together, and by developing information and guidance material. Work on amendments to the regulations and the national pilot project on the characteristics of goal attainment have led to more attention being focused on assessment as a tool for learning.

## 6.7 The viewpoints of the special interest groups

<b>Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)</b>	KS believes that the new regulations for assessment that focus on assessment for learning should be more firmly integrated into NKVS. A focus on learning must become more evident in all the elements of NKVS, at the same time as the need for control must be respected at all levels.
<b>The Union of Education Norway</b>	The Union of Education Norway believes that the goal of assessment must be to promote learning, develop student competence and form the basis for adapted education.  They also think it is unfortunate that the same marks or expressions of

	<p>assessment are significantly different from school to school, and from teacher to teacher, but it is not enough simply to design criteria for goal attainment at a national level if the aim is to remedy this situation. They believe that the best way to ensure the most uniform support for assessment and support for learning is to strengthen the teachers' assessment competence and the schools' assessment culture.</p> <p>A unilateral focus on the use of written assessment tools and documentation will not necessarily improve formative assessment. They are worried about developments at the local level where their flexibility is stifled by local orders to create written documentation on assessment work because they believe the decisions on assessment tools and documentation must have an academic and professional base.</p> <p>The Union of Education Norway feels that the national tests must primarily be an aid for schools in their work in developing and improving teaching, and that the results from the tests must not be published at the school level.</p> <p>They are worried about the effects a more complex testing regime at the national and municipal levels can have on teaching practice; for example, "teaching to the test" and a narrowing of the teaching in relation to the competence aims in the subject curricula.</p>
<p><b>Norwegian Association of School Leaders</b></p>	<p>The Norwegian Association of School Leaders points out that the teachers and leaders at the schools and on a municipal and county level use a great deal of time on mapping, assessing and documenting work beyond that described in the national quality assessment system. The reason for this is that, among other things, the national system is not considered adequate to give the information needed to actually follow up each student.</p>
<p><b>Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers</b></p>	<p>The Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers believes that the students' essential rights to a final assessment in today's regulations on assessment have had an unintended effect which, in reality, has weakened the assessment system. They believe that the regulations must be evaluated with a view to whether they function according to the purposes for which they were intended, and if they contribute to improving student learning outcome.</p> <p>The Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers wants national tests developed for all subjects and for basic skills in the use of ICT for lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools, that such tests should be voluntary for the schools and that they are linked to national standards and criteria.</p> <p>The main problem with today's system for student assessment is that it lacks common national assessment criteria. The assessment system has to a large degree mixed together social and academic learning goals into a so-called "holistic assessment" of the students. This holistic assessment, together with a lack of indicators of academic levels and academic progression make it difficult to establish an assessment system that ensures equal and fair treatment when it comes to the final assessment.</p> <p>The Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers is critical to integrating the assessment system throughout all 13 years of schooling, and they believe that different educational assessment systems are needed for the different kinds of schools to safeguard quality.</p>
<p><b>The Waldorf School Association</b></p>	<p>The Waldorf schools have their own curriculum, own assessment scheme, and do not have examinations. In spite of the many stated objections to NKVS in the document itself, they are left with the feeling that the heavy reality will be a huge focus on what can be measured, or what one convinces oneself can be measured in the school. It should not surprise anyone that the Waldorf School Association is very critical to this. The system is based on a model of a society that resembles a machine, and of people as parts or elements of the machine, where individuals and different development are seen as rust in the machine.</p> <p>The national tests measure the results on the basis of the Knowledge Promotion reform. The place given to result measures in NKVS is quite big, and mainly connected to national tests and examination results. The Directorate appears to be aware of this when it says in the document that "... the storm around the national tests and the large focus they have received, have contributed to the fact that other elements in the system have received less attention, and it has been a challenge to communicate how the results from the tests are to be seen in connection with other parts of the quality assessment system."</p> <p>The Waldorf School Association wishes to state that the description of students'</p>



	<p>learning from and with Knowledge Promotion is connected to the competence concept. The use of measures in connection with the national tests is then connected to a more narrowly defined part of the concept, what could be called subject competence. The methodology is primarily connected to the use of multiple-choice tasks, which do not have any other advantage than that they are easier to correct. This raises major issues of methodological shortcomings, e.g. many students develop good guessing strategies without having the vital understanding of the important academic material. This has been well documented in the available scientific literature.</p> <p>All other aspects of the competence concept are more or less missing in the national tests. Methodological competence is about being able to use knowledge within several areas, and it will be much harder to test this. Social competence is about sharing knowledge or being able to cooperate on solving tasks. Own competence is about having developed faith in one's own ability and the will to succeed.</p>
<b>Norwegian Montessori Association</b>	<p>The Norwegian Montessori Association believes that the national tests, mapping tests and other tests have little or no significance for the comprehensive assessment that takes place through daily follow-ups of students in the classroom.</p> <p>The national tests are a challenge because they are based on progression in the national curriculum. The Montessori school's curriculum already facilitates for student to work according to their own progression. This does not necessarily coincide with progression in the state schools, and therefore the national tests do not necessarily suit Montessori students to the same extent that these tests help students in the state schools.</p> <p>They also believe that publishing the results is a problem because small schools feel stigmatised by the results.</p>
<b>National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education</b>	<p>The National Parents' Committee for Primary and Lower Secondary Education is focused on the parents receiving good information from the school as to the objective of the tests and how these are followed up, and on the parents being given access to the students' results.</p> <p>To be able to cooperate with the school on the students' learning and development, according to the Act and the curriculum, parents shall have information on the goals and objectives of the learning in the subjects, the student's academic development in relation to the goals and how the home can help to enhance the student's goals attainment. Moreover, the home shall have information in how the teaching is planned and set up and which work methods and types of assessment are used.</p>

## 6.8 Policy initiatives

The Ministry of Education and Research has decided that more guidance material will be developed for the subject curricula, more tests will be developed to help in work with formative assessment and that a four-year broad ranging commitment will be made to assessment for learning. The Ministry of Education and Research's performance criteria for 2010 related to student assessment was:<sup>23</sup>

- That the Directorate shall categorise the sector's use and experience of guidance for the curricula in all subjects and guidance on local work on curricula
- New mapping tests will be prepared and given to students, according to plans
- New tests will be developed as a part of systematic work in mapping and documenting the quality and effectiveness of learning
- Sampling tests in writing as a basic skill (years 5 and 8) and sampling tests in the subjects social studies and natural science (year 10) shall be introduced in 2012
- It shall be facilitated for the calculating of trends in tests in English and arithmetic from 2011

<sup>23</sup> Letter of Allotment (Tildelingsbrev) 2010 to the Directorate for Education and Training 2009, and Assignment letter 29-10 from the Ministry of Education and Research 2010.

- That the Directorate will begin to development work as a follow-up to *Better Assessment Practices*
- That the Directorate has facilitated for and begun a trial period using new types of assessments and examinations
- That characteristics for competence attainment will be included in the guidance material for the subject curricula
- That the Directorate will arrange an international assessment conference
- That the assessment competence of schools, teachers, companies/instructors will be improved
- That some selected examinations, craft and journeyman's examinations from the spring of 2010 will be evaluated

Performance criteria for the Directorate for Education and Training, in addition to the above-mentioned, are:

- More knowledge on the practices of teachers related to the overall achievement marks

In 2010, national appropriations have been granted to develop continuing education programmes in class management, curriculum analysis and evaluation of overall achievement assessment in 2011.

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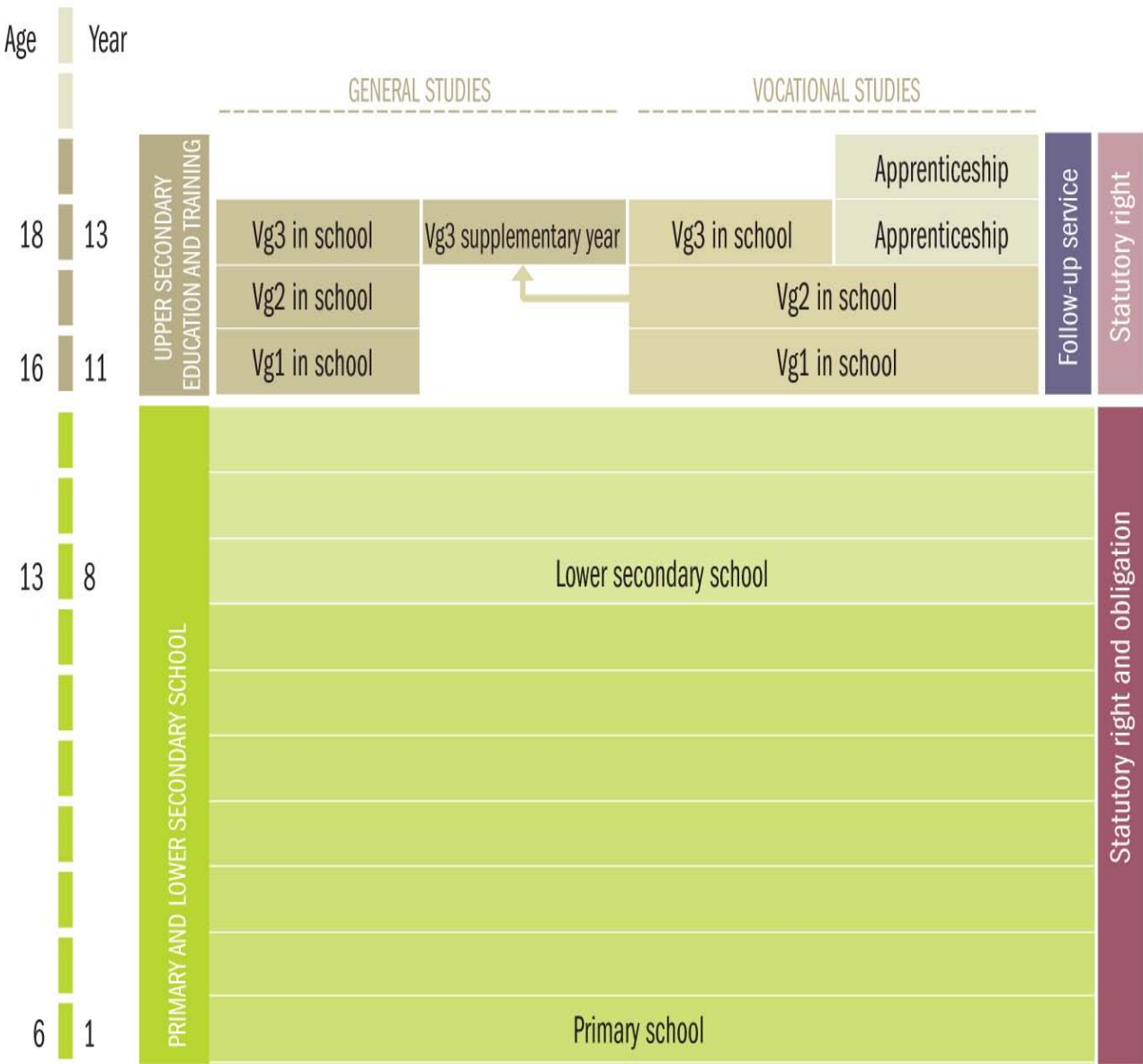
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# APPENDIX A: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Primary and secondary education and training in Norway



## APPENDIX B: SUBJECT CURRICULA EXAMPLES

### NORWEGIAN SUBJECT CURRICULUM

#### The objectives of the subject

Norwegian is an important school subject for cultural understanding, communication, education and development of identity. Through active use of the Norwegian language when working with their own texts and in the encounter with the texts of others, children and young people are introduced to culture and social life. The Norwegian subject curriculum opens an area where they can find their own voices, learn to express themselves, be heard and receive feedback. Thus the subject represents a democratic public arena that equips pupils with the necessary background for participation in social life and working life. More than ever before, society needs individuals who master language and texts.

The Norwegian subject curriculum establishes itself in the field of tension between the historical and the contemporary and the national and the global. Seeing Norwegian language and culture in a historical and national perspective can give the pupils insight into and understanding of the community they are a part of. Including international perspectives in the Norwegian subject curriculum can help to develop cultural understanding, tolerance and respect for individuals from other cultures. The international situation today is dominated by cultural exchange and communication across former borders – linguistically, culturally, socially and geographically. In this context, Norwegian cultural heritage offers a great store of texts that may find new and unexpected importance precisely in a situation where communication takes on new forms and perspectives are expanded. Hence, cultural heritage is a living tradition that changes and is recreated, and the Norwegian subject will encourage pupils to become active contributors in this process.

In Norway there are three official languages, "bokmål", "nynorsk" and Sami, in addition to many dialects and sociolects, and other languages than Norwegian. Norwegian language and culture are developing in a situation characterised by cultural diversity and internationalisation, in interaction with the neighbouring Nordic languages and with impulses from English. It is within this linguistic and cultural diversity that children and young people develop their linguistic competence. Bearing this language situation in mind we must lay the groundwork so that children and young people can acquire awareness of linguistic diversity and learn to write both the official forms of the Norwegian language, "hovedmål" (the first-choice language, which can be either "bokmål" or "nynorsk") and "sidemål" (the second-choice language, which will then be the opposite of the first choice).

The Norwegian subject deals with a wide range of texts, spoken, written and composite texts, where text, sound and pictures interact. A Norwegian subject curriculum for our contemporary times is based upon an extended text concept that includes all these types of text. The subject is meant to help pupils orient themselves in the diversity of texts and provide them with the opportunity to experience, reflect and assess. Good learning strategies and the ability to reflect critically should also be stimulated, in addition to motivating the desire to read and write as well as developing and instilling good reading and writing habits.

The Norwegian subject curriculum will help each pupil to develop language and text competence based on his or her abilities and aptitudes. Through reading and writing, children may develop thoughts, explore new worlds and voice their personal opinions and judgements at an early age. They will eventually orientate themselves in and interpret fiction and factual prose from the past and present, and they will immerse themselves in topics they select themselves. Thus they will have the opportunity to develop their own perspectives on the long development lines, breaks in and conflicts of the history of texts.

A major aim for teaching Norwegian throughout the 13 years of schooling is linguistic confidence and a belief in one's own culture as the basis for development of identity, respect for other cultures, active social participation and lifelong learning.



## Main subject areas

The subject has been structured into main subject areas for which competence aims have been formulated. These main subject areas supplement each other and must be considered together.

Norwegian has competence goals after the second, fourth, seventh and tenth years in primary/lower secondary school and after Vg1, Vg2 and Vg3 (the first, second and third years) in upper secondary programmes for general studies. In vocational education programmes the competence aims come after Vg2 and after the supplementary studies qualifying for higher education.

Competence aims concerning the second-choice official Norwegian language do not apply to vocational education programmes after Vg2.

### Overview of main subject areas:

Year of school	Main subject areas			
1–10 Vg1-Vg3	Oral texts	Written texts	Composite texts	Language and culture

#### Oral texts

The main subject area *oral texts* focuses on spoken communication, i.e. listening, speaking and exploring spoken texts. A key element is developing various linguistic roles language varieties and genres and understanding how language and form are adapted to the recipients and to the purpose of the text. Listening and speaking are part of day-to-day socialising and are key elements for social and cultural competence and for aesthetic development and appreciation.

#### Written texts

The main subject area *written texts* focuses on written communication, i.e. reading and writing Norwegian. Reading and writing are parallel processes in each pupil's learning process. The pupil develops writing competence by reading, and reading competence by writing. This is accomplished through work in various genres in both official languages, and the pupils are met with increasing demands as to their understanding of the relationship between the form and function of the text. Pupils are stimulated to enjoy reading and writing and to developing their reading and writing strategies in continuous progression throughout the 13 years of schooling. Attention is also paid to the pupils' own understanding of their development as readers and writers.

#### Composite texts

The main subject area *composite texts* focuses on an extended text concept where texts may be composed of writing, sound and pictures in a composite expression. This means working with texts such as picture books, cartoons, newspapers, advertising, web sites, lyrics, film and theatre. This main subject area includes pupils' text production and perceptions, critical assessment and analysis of composite texts.

#### Language and culture

The main subject area *language and culture* focuses on Norwegian and Nordic language and text culture but with international perspectives. Emphasis is placed on enabling the pupils to develop an independent understanding of Norwegian language and literature and an insight into how language and texts have changed over time and continue to change. The pupils must acquire knowledge about language as a system and the language as used in a number of old and new text forms. They are given the opportunity to explore and experience good Norwegian authors and world literature authors. They also deal with traditions in Norwegian text history in a comparative perspective where the present and the past are also viewed in relation to external impulses.

## Teaching hours

Teaching hours are given in 60-minute units:

Primary school:  
Years 1 to 7: 1296 teaching hours

Lower secondary school:  
Years 8 to 10: 398 teaching hours

Upper secondary school:  
Programmes for general studies  
Vg1: 113 teaching hours  
Vg2: 112 teaching hours  
Vg3: 168 teaching hours

Upper secondary school:  
Vocational education programmes  
Vg1: 56 teaching hours  
Vg2: 56 teaching hours

Supplementary studies qualifying for higher education for vocational education programmes  
Vg3: 280 teaching hours

## Basic skills

Basic skills are integrated in the competence aims where they contribute to development of the competence in the subject, while also being part of this competence. In the Norwegian subject the basic skills are understood as follows:

*Being able to express oneself orally* in Norwegian means having the ability to listen and speak and to evaluate the elements in a complex verbal situation. This is the requirement for communicating with others when it comes to socialising, working life and participation in public life. Speaking and listening are fundamental human activities, which in the Norwegian subject curriculum are developed through systematic learning activities in various oral genres

*Being able to express oneself in writing in Norwegian* is also of the Norwegian subject curriculum, from initial teaching in writing and through the 13 years of schooling. The use of written language in society is increasing, not least through the development of digital communication forms, and the demand for the mastering of written production in various genres has increased. Writing is a way of developing and structuring ideas and thoughts, but is also a communication form and a method of learning.

*Being able to read Norwegian* is a basic skill that the Norwegian subject curriculum takes special responsibility for through initial reading training and then continuing this training throughout all the 13 years of schooling. Reading is both a skill and cultural competence. Reading depends on cultural understanding, and reading also develops cultural understanding. Through reading pupils take part in textual culture and may thus develop the ability to interpret and understand various texts. Thus they gain experiences which enable pupils to learn and perceive and to understand themselves and society.

*Being able to do mathematics* in the Norwegian language is a skill that assumes command of another language than the verbal one. These languages nevertheless have a common knowledge base relating to concept development, logical reasoning and problem solving. This also applies to the understanding of form, system and composition. When pupils read composite texts and factual prose their understanding is enhanced by graphs, tables and statistics.

*Being able to use digital tools* in the Norwegian subject curriculum is necessary to master new text forms and ways of expressing oneself. This opens up new learning arenas and allows new possibilities in teaching reading and writing, as well as the production, composition and editing of texts. In this context it is vital to develop the ability to critically assess and use sources. Using digital tools may support and develop the pupils' communication and presentation skills.

# Competence aims in the subject

## Competence aims after Year 2

### Oral texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- play, improvise and experiment with rhyme, rhythm, phonological sounds and meaning-bearing elements
- express his or her own feelings and opinions
- tell others about perceptions and experiences in a coherent manner
- talk about how the choice of words, the use of one's voice and intonation create different meaning in a text
- listen and give response to others in conversations, during presentations and when reading out loud
- talk about characters and plots in fairytales and stories

### Written texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- apply simple strategies for understanding what he or she is reading and reflect on texts he or she has read
- speak about the relationship between phonological sounds and letters and between spoken and written language
- use letters and experiment with words, in both handwriting and when using a keyboard
- use a word processor to create texts
- find fiction and factual books for his or her own reading in the library

### Composite texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- work creatively by drawing and writing in connection with reading
- express his or her own text experiences through words, drawings, pictures, music and movements
- talk about how words and pictures interact in picture books and other picture media

### Language and culture

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- discuss content and form in old and new songs, nursery rhymes and poems
- express how we understand some familiar proverbs and idioms and explain the origin of common words and expressions

## Competence aims after Year 4

### Oral texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- interact with others through play, dramatisation, conversation and discussions, and by practising the rules of group conversations
- tell stories, explain, give and receive messages
- explain how a person may offend others through language usage
- express his or her own thoughts and perceptions relating to children's literature, drama, films, computer games and TV shows
- present texts to fellow pupils

### Written texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- read literature for children and factual prose for children fluently, with coherent understanding of the content, and describe personal literature choices
- write with a flowing and functional handwriting
- write stories, poems, letters and factual prose
- lay out text with a heading, an introduction and a conclusion
- master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions

- recognise and use linguistic techniques such as repetition, contrast and simple metaphors and images
- assess and compare his or her own texts and those of others
- undertake information searches, create, store and retrieve texts using digital tools
- find source material for his or her own tasks in the library or on the internet

### **Composite texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- create stories by combining words, sounds and pictures
- discuss and elaborate on some aesthetic techniques in composite texts

### **Language and culture**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- talk about a selection of songs, nursery rhymes, poems, stories and fairytales from the past and the present, in both the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages, in translation from the Sami language and from other cultures
- express thoughts on language, characters and plots in texts from daily life and from fiction from various times and cultures
- describe similarities and differences between a selection of spoken varieties of the Norwegian language
- understand some spoken Danish and Swedish
- describe language and the use of language, parts of speech and their functions
- vary syntax

### **Competence aims after Year 7**

#### **Oral texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- perform in various language roles through role play and drama, reading aloud, interviews and presentations
- listen to others, express and give rationales for his or her own points of view and show respect for the ideas of others
- discuss and elaborate on how language can express and create attitudes in relation to individuals and groups
- discuss, elaborate on and assess fiction based on personal experiences and with understanding of language and content
- give a reasoned opinion on other people's oral presentations
- present subject-matter orally with awareness of recipients, with or without aids

#### **Written texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- read long translated and Norwegian fiction texts, children's literature and factual texts in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages and express understanding and personal response
- use a number of reading strategies to read various types of text at varied speeds
- give accounts of and summarise texts
- present personal responses from fiction and factual books orally and in writing
- recognise and pronounce the letters of the Sami alphabet
- write cohesively with personal and functional handwriting
- use personal reading experiences when writing fiction and factual prose
- experiment with different language styles when writing in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages, dialects and group language
- structure text chronologically and according to themes and make text cohesive between sentences and paragraphs
- master orthography, punctuation, a varied vocabulary and the use of varied sentence syntax
- assess strong and weak sides of his or her texts and those of others
- use encyclopaedias and dictionaries
- use digital writing tools in writing processes and in production of interactive texts
- use a library and digital information channels in a focused manner

- explain copyright rules relating to the use of texts taken from the internet

### **Composite texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- create composite texts with images, illustrations etc. and varied fonts into a larger whole, manually and using digital tools
- use songs, music and images in performances and presentations
- use aesthetic techniques in his or her own text productions
- evaluate texts, TV shows, advertising, music, drama and films and give grounds for personal media habits
- process digital texts and discuss the effects

### **Language and culture**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- present personal interpretations of characters, plots and themes in a varied selection of children's and young people's literature in first-choice and second-choice Norwegian and in translation from the Sami language
- find linguistic characteristics in his or her community and compare with other dialects
- explain some similarities and differences between spoken and written language, relating to both the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- explain how texts are made, using terms from grammar and text analysis
- read and reproduce the content of simple literary texts in Danish and Swedish

## **Competence aims after Year 10**

### **Oral texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- express personal opinions in discussions and assess what is unbiased argumentation
- discuss and elaborate on how language can have discriminatory and injurious effects
- participate in exploratory conversations on literature, drama and film
- understand and reproduce information from Swedish and Danish everyday language
- chair and take minutes from meetings and discussions
- assess his or her own and other people's oral presentations
- give simple lectures, presentations and readings with interpretations, and participate in role play and dramatisation, adapted to different recipients

### **Written texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- read and write texts in various genres, including fiction and factual texts in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages, such as articles, discussion input, formal letters, short stories, narratives, poems, drama texts and informal talks
- give grounds for personal choices of literature and reading material based on knowledge of reading strategies
- read and reproduce the content of a selection of texts in Swedish and Danish
- present personal response and perceptions in writing based on interpretation and reflection
- recognise literary techniques such as humour, irony, contrasts and comparisons, symbols and metaphors and use these in his or her own texts
- express himself or herself precisely and with a varied vocabulary with nuances in various texts in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- show how texts in various genres can be constructed in various ways
- assess his or her own texts and personal writing development using knowledge of language and texts
- use word processing tools for filing his or her own work and systematising it
- use texts taken from libraries, the internet and mass media in a critical manner, discuss and elaborate on the texts and acknowledge the sources used

### **Composite texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- use various media, sources and aesthetic expressions in personal texts relating to the Norwegian subject curriculum and interdisciplinary texts
- assess aesthetic techniques in composite texts taken from information and entertainment media, advertising and art and reflect upon how we are influenced by sounds, language and images
- elaborate on the fundamental principles of protecting personal privacy and copyright in connection with the publication and use of texts of others

### **Language and culture**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- present important themes and expressions in significant contemporary texts and compare them with presentations in classical works from the Norwegian literary heritage, such as love and gender roles, hero and anti-hero, reality and fantasy, power and counter power, lies and truth, break-up and responsibility
- elaborate on how social conditions, values and ways of thinking are presented in texts translated from Sami and other languages
- present results of in-depth studies on three selected topics: an author, a literary theme and a language topic
- elaborate on some characteristics of main groups of Norwegian dialects
- explain the background for the two Norwegian written languages with equal status and elaborate on language debates and linguistic variation in Norway today
- explain the rights relating to the Sami language and on the extent to which the Sami languages are used in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia
- explain how meaning and expression are rendered and changed when simple stories, cartoons and pop lyrics are translated into Norwegian

**Competence aims after Vg1 –programmes for general studies**

**Competence aims after Vg2 – vocational education programmes**

### **Oral texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- master various oral roles in group discussions, lectures, dramatisations and presentations as actor and listener
- use relevant and unbiased arguments in discussions and demonstrate an open attitude to the arguments of others
- use knowledge of language and text in exploratory and assessing conversations on literature based on personal response
- use specialised knowledge from various subjects to discuss and elaborate on issues relating to school, society and working life.

### **Written texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- interpret and reflect upon content, form and purpose in a representative selection of contemporary texts, fiction and factual prose in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages and in translation from the Sami language
- elaborate on a broad register of linguistic techniques and explain their functions
- use a broad register of linguistic techniques when writing, in fiction and factual prose, in first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- explain the argumentation found in factual prose
- master various writing roles found in the public functions of school, and in social and working life
- write texts in various creative genres
- use computer technology for filing texts and systematising them

### **Composite texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- combine oral, written, visual and auditory forms of expressions in presentations
- interpret and assess the interaction between oral and written language, images, sounds and music, movement, graphics and design, and show the relationship between content, form and purpose

- describe aesthetic expressions in drama, film, music video, newspapers and advertising and discuss and elaborate on various functions of language and images
- use digital tools for presentation and publication of his or her own texts

### **Language and culture**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- assess narrative techniques and values in a representative selection of contemporary texts from Norse and Sami literature, myths and popular fiction from several countries
- explain multilingualism and give examples of how linguistic and cultural interaction may contribute to linguistic changes and cultural awareness
- elaborate on similarities and differences between the Nordic languages and between the Norse and modern Norwegian languages
- explain grammatical characteristics of the Norwegian language compared to other languages
- elaborate on the diversity of oral, written and composite genres and media in current Norwegian society, and the role they play in the general public
- describe and assess how language and genres are used by representatives of various vocations and professions and in various social contexts
- collect, assess and apply subject material from digital sources in spoken and written work

### **Competence aims after Vg2 –programmes for general studies**

#### **Oral texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- assess and give feedback on oral presentations of others
- assess his or her oral development
- use specialised knowledge from his or her own programme subjects in lectures and discussions on school, society and working life
- present themes from the Norwegian subject curriculum and give a critical review of the material presented

#### **Written texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- read a selection of significant Norwegian texts from the middle ages up to 1870 in the original language and reflect upon the language and content
- analyse texts in various genres in order to be able to relate to the issues raised by the texts and their values
- describe and assess his or her own reading and writing strategies
- write essays, literary interpretations and other reasoning texts in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages based on literary texts and Norwegian text and language history
- elaborate on a selection of Nordic texts in translation and in the original language

#### **Composite texts**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- analyse and assess various genres in texts taken from TV, films and the internet
- use various media to interpret and present texts from various epochs
- assess the use of aesthetic techniques in various media

### **Language and culture**

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- elaborate on important development lines and some significant authors in Norwegian and European literature from the middle ages up through the Romantic period and the relationship between this literature and other European cultural history
- explain how various concepts of what was typically *Norwegian* were created in major texts from 1800 to 1870
- explain how literature and other art expressions in and outside Norway have influenced each other during recent centuries
- discuss and elaborate on community and diversity, cultural encounters and cultural conflicts based on a broad selection of Norwegian and foreign contemporary texts in various genres



- discuss and elaborate on aspects of Norwegian language policy and cultural development in a globalisation perspective
- assess linguistic nuances in translations from other languages that the pupil masters

### Competence aims after Vg3 – programmes for general studies

#### Oral texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- put together and present a delimited literary programme
- analyse and assess the relationship between content, techniques and purpose in oral genres

#### Written texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- read and interpret experimental and modernist texts and use these as the basis for his or her own text production
- give grounds for reading choices and formulate issues relating to the texts
- master grammar and text connectors in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- write technical texts according to common norms for technical writing in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- write texts with a clear structure and a clear focus and argumentation based on facts
- use knowledge about texts, genres and literary techniques when producing fiction in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- use terminology from rhetoric to analyse and assess texts from various genres
- assess the argumentation in texts of others and support his or her own claims through arguments based on fact
- describe the development of his or her own texts

#### Composite texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- compare and assess texts that are transferred from one medium to another
- analyse and assess argumentation in and influence from texts in newspapers, on TV and the internet using terms from rhetoric

#### Language and culture

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- discuss and elaborate on the modern project as expressed in texts by major authors from the Age of Enlightenment via Realism to the present
- elaborate on the modernist tradition in Norwegian and international literature from the final half of the 1800s until the present
- talk about the development of the Sami language and culture in view of the Norwegian policy of *Norwegianization*
- elaborate on Norwegian language discussions and language policy from the 1830s to the present
- describe and compare the language situation and language policy in the Nordic countries
- elaborate on the relationship between spoken and written language and on characteristics of a selection of Norwegian dialects
- use the central database of the library and other sources, both traditional ones and electronic ones, in his or her own work
- complete the work on an independent task of in-depth studies and present this as an oral, written or composite text on a linguistic, literary or other topic from the Norwegian subject curriculum

### Competence aims after the supplementary studies qualifying for higher education – vocational education programme

#### Oral texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- provide concrete, insightful and relevant feedback on the oral presentations of others
- assess his or her own oral development
- use specialised knowledge from his or her own education programmes in presentations and discussions on school, society and working life



- analyse and assess the relationship between content, techniques and purpose in oral genres
- present topics from the Norwegian subject curriculum with the ability to critically review what is presented
- compose and present a delimited literary programme

### Written texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- read a selection of significant Norwegian texts from the middle ages up to 1870 in the original language and reflect upon the language and content
- read and interpret experimental and modernist texts and be able to use these as the basis for his or her own text production
- give grounds for his or her own reading choices and present problems for solutions related to the texts
- elaborate on a selection of Nordic texts in translation and in the original language
- describe and assess his or her own reading and writing strategies
- master grammar and text connectors in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- write essays, literary analyses and other reasoning texts in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages based on literary texts and the history of Norwegian texts and language
- write technical texts according to common norms for technical writing in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- write texts with a clear structure and a clear focus and argumentation based on facts
- use knowledge of texts, genres and literary techniques when producing fiction in the first-choice and second-choice Norwegian languages
- describe the development of his or her own texts
- assess the argumentation in texts of others and support his or her own claims through arguments based on fact
- use terminology from rhetoric to analyse and assess texts from various genres

### Composite texts

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- analyse and assess argumentation in and impact of texts in newspapers, on TV and the internet using terms from rhetoric
- assess the use of aesthetic techniques in various media
- compare and assess texts that are transferred from one medium to another
- use various media to interpret and present texts from various epochs

### Language and culture

*The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to*

- elaborate on important lines of development and some major authors in Norwegian and European literature from the middle ages to the Romantic period and the relationship between this literature and other European cultural history
- explain how various concepts of what was typically *Norwegian* were created in major texts from 1800 to 1870
- explain how literature and other art expressions in and outside of Norway have mutually influenced each other in recent centuries
- discuss and elaborate on fellowship and diversity, cultural encounters and cultural conflicts based on a broad selection of Norwegian and foreign contemporary texts in various genres
- discuss and elaborate on aspects of Norwegian language policy and cultural development in a globalisation perspective
- assess linguistic nuances in translations from other languages mastered by the pupil
- discuss and elaborate on the modern project as expressed in texts by important authors from the Age of Enlightenment via Realism to the present
- elaborate on the modernist tradition in Norwegian and international literature from the final half of the 1800s until the present
- talk about the development of the Sami language and culture in view of the Norwegian policy of *Norwegianization*
- elaborate on Norwegian language discussions and language policy from the 1830s to the present
- describe and compare the language situation and language policy in the Nordic countries

- elaborate on the relationship between spoken and written language and characteristics of a selection of Norwegian dialects
- use the central database of the library and other sources, both traditional ones and electronic ones, in his or her own work
- complete the work on an independent task of in-depth studies and present this as an oral, written or composite text on a linguistic, literary or other topic from the Norwegian subject curriculum

## Subject assessment

Provisions for final assessment:

### *Overall achievement grade*

Year	Provision
Year 10	The pupils shall have three overall achievement grades, one in written first-choice Norwegian, one in written second-choice Norwegian, and one in oral Norwegian.
Vg1 programme for general education Vg2 vocational education programme	The pupils shall have two overall achievement grades, one in written first-choice Norwegian, and one in oral Norwegian.
Vg2 programme for general education Vg3 programme for general education Supplementary studies qualifying for higher education	The pupils shall have three overall achievement grades, one in written first-choice Norwegian, one in written second-choice Norwegian, and one in oral Norwegian.

When the subject continues over a number of years, only the overall achievement grade from the highest level the pupil has taken in the subject shall be entered on the competence certificate or school leaving certificate.

### *Examinations for pupils*

Year	Provision
Year 10	The pupils may be selected for one written examination comprising first-choice Norwegian and second-choice Norwegian. Written examinations are prepared and graded centrally. The pupils may also be selected for oral examinations in Norwegian. The oral examination is prepared and graded locally.
Vg2 vocational education programme	The pupils may be selected for one written examination in Norwegian. Written exams are prepared and graded locally. The pupils may also be selected for the oral examination in Norwegian. The oral examination is prepared and graded locally. The examination covers the entire subject (112 teaching hours).

Vg3 programmes for general studies Supplementary studies qualifying for higher education	The pupils shall sit for a written examination in first-choice Norwegian. The pupils may be selected for a written examination in second-choice Norwegian. The written examination is prepared and graded centrally. The pupils may also be selected for an oral examination in Norwegian. The oral examination is prepared and graded locally. The examination covers the entire subject (393 teaching hours).
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***Examinations for external candidates***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Provision</b>
Year 10	See the provisions in force for primary school education for adults.
Vg2 vocational education programme	External candidates shall sit for written and oral examinations in Norwegian. The written exam is prepared and graded locally. The oral examination is prepared and graded locally. The examination covers the entire subject (112 teaching hours).
Vg3 programme for general education Supplementary studies qualifying for higher education	External candidates shall sit for written examinations in first-choice and second-choice Norwegian. The written exam is prepared and graded centrally. External candidates shall also sit for an oral examination in Norwegian. The oral examination is prepared and graded locally. The examination covers the entire subject (393 teaching hours).

The general provisions on assessment have been laid down in the Regulations relating to the Norwegian Education Act.

## APPENDIX B: SUBJECT CURRICULA EXAMPLES

### HEALTH WORK – CURRICULUM FOR COMMON PROGRAMME SUBJECT IN VG2

Laid down as a regulation by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training on 5 January 2006 as delegated in a letter of 26 September 2005 from the Ministry of Education and Research pursuant to the Act of 17 July 1998 no. 61 relating to primary and secondary education (Education Act) Section 3-4 first paragraph.

Applicable from 1 August 2007

#### The objectives of the subject

*Health work* shall help meet the need for competent health workers who can handle patients, users and relatives in a professional manner, and help ensure that society's needs for healthcare services are satisfied both in the municipal health and social services and in the specialist health service. The programme subjects shall help train health workers who interact with other occupational groups, promote well-being and physical and mental health, and who can safeguard user-influence and patient rights. Through health-promoting work, the health worker shall prevent social isolation and arrange for a more active life.

Training in the subject shall develop an ability to accommodate people of different cultural backgrounds to interact with others in their different life situations and with their different abilities and opportunities for communication. Training shall also help the health worker observe and use his or her knowledge about different ailments, injuries and complaints, and to initiate preventive measures or treatment within his or her own area of responsibility and competence. It shall help develop professional vocational practitioners who possess empathy and the ability to interact with people with different needs. The programme subjects shall train health workers who can actively participate in health, environment and safety work.

The programme subjects constitute a general study course, and the training shall be interdisciplinary and practice-oriented. The course shall involve varied assignments which can help promote the specific creativity and general competence that is useful in the health and social sector.

#### Structure

The programme area for *Health work* consists of three programme subjects. The programme subjects complement each other, and should be viewed in relation to one another.

##### Overview of the programme subjects:

Year level	Programme subject		
Vg2	Health-promoting work	Communication and interaction	Practice of occupation

#### Description of the programme subjects

##### Health-promoting work

*Health-promoting work* deals with the significance of lifestyles, physical activity and diet for the prevention of illness and the promoting of good health. The subject deals with professional health care and activities that promote health, well-being and quality of life. It also treats basic nursing, practical hygiene and the

prevention of infection. The programme subject also deals with the connection between the body's anatomical build-up, and functions and the study of illness and disease. It includes health, environment and safety work, the prevention of repetitive strain injuries, and first aid.

### **Communication and interaction**

The programme subject deals with the significance of communication and interaction to people with different needs for health care and social help. Empathy, respect and tolerance seen as fundamental values for the individual's self-esteem and integrity are central to the programme subject.. It also includes different communication techniques and different types of conflict management. The programme subject also comprises objective observation, correct feedback and relevant regulations concerning confidentiality and the protection of personal information.

### **Practice of occupation**

*Practice of occupation* deals with how to look after and stimulate a holistic view of man. The planning, implementation, documentation and assessment of one's work are included in the subject as are relevant regulations and ethical guidelines. The health worker's role and responsibility when he or she cooperates with other occupational groups are central. The programme subject deals with the various plans used in the health and social sectors, documentation and implementation of measures related to health, care and social help..

## **Teaching hours**

Teaching hours are given in 60-minute units.

Vg2

Health-promoting work	197 teaching hours per year
Communication and interaction	140 teaching hours per year
Practice of occupation	140 teaching hours per year

## **Basic skills**

Basic skills are integrated into the competence aims of this course in areas where they contribute to the development of and are part of the subject competence. In Health Work, basic skills are understood as follows:

*Being able to express oneself orally and in writing in Health work* involves reporting to and informing others in a correct and purposeful manner. It also means being able to fill out forms and draw up plans. Furthermore, it means being able to communicate and stimulate dialogue with patients, users, relatives and colleagues.

*Being able to read in Health work* involves understanding the content of various texts and forms, patient journals and plans, statistics and relevant regulations. Being able to read also means being able to study and understand technical literature in order to keep oneself professionally updated.

*Numeracy in Health work* involves working out and assessing costs related to various activities in homes and institutions. It also involves being able to assess amounts, measures and weights when preparing meals.

*Being able to use digital tools in Health work* involves exchanging documentation and information in technical work. This means being able to communicate with others and carrying out technical office routines.

# Competence aims

## After Vg2

### Health-promoting work

#### The aims of the studies are to enable pupils to

- give an account of the connection between physical activity and health, and how physical activity can help prevent the most common lifestyle ailments
- give examples of activities that promote health, well-being and quality of life
- plan and justify the composition of diets for different users based on their level of functionality, age and needs, and in line with Norwegian nutrition recommendations
- prepare safe and healthy meals for different users, in line with Norwegian nutrition recommendations
- give an account of the symptoms of different illnesses and complaints which have to do with a patient's general condition, nutritional intake, discharge of waste products and allergies, and propose measures
- give an account of and demonstrate basic nursing skills
- discuss and elaborate on the significance of good hygiene to prevent illness and infection inside of and outside of institutions while observing relevant regulations
- describe the services provided by voluntary organisations and interest organisations in the local community, and discuss their significance for social networks and in preventing isolation
- discuss and elaborate on the connection between standard of living and quality of life
- explain what "*habilitation*" and "*rehabilitation*" mean, and give examples of preventive and health-promoting measures
- demonstrate aids that can help promote independence and maintain functions in daily life, and describe application procedures for users
- give an account of measures that prevent accidents and fires in the home and in institutions
- demonstrate first aid relevant to the health work
- give an account of the most common medicines and explain their effects and side-effects
- account for how health, environment and safety measures are organized, and describe the health worker's role in taking care of the client's physical and mental health

### Communication and interaction

#### The aims of the studies are to enable pupils to

- discuss and elaborate on what it means to be compassionate, and how interaction between people can be promoted
- discuss and elaborate on what respect and tolerance for the cultures and traditions, philosophy and social status of other people mean, and discuss what this means for the promotion of physical and mental health
- discuss and elaborate on how empathy can be used to solve or prevent social problems and how it can promote mental and somatic health
- account for what a therapeutic environment is, and propose means that can promote a good therapeutic environment
- discuss and elaborate on different forms of communication and account for how communication can promote a sense of safety and confidence
- explain the difference between subjective and objective observation and reporting and discuss the significance of correct reporting, patient protection and anonymity
- discuss the health worker's role as a spokesperson for patient and user
- give an account of regulations relating to confidentiality and the protection of personal information in the health and social sectors
- discuss and elaborate on a health worker's advisory role and what it means to be able to receive counselling
- discuss and elaborate on different strategies for conflict management and to try out some strategies in practice

## Practice of occupation

The aims of the studies are to enable pupils to

- discuss what professional practice of occupation implies for the health worker
- give an account of regulations relating to quality in the healthcare sector, and discuss what professional and considerate healthcare implies
- discuss the significance of interdisciplinary cooperation and give examples of occupational groups with which the health worker cooperates
- discuss and elaborate on what user-influence means
- give an account of different plans of action used in the nursing and health care sectors, and propose their own plans
- give an account of relevant regulations in the health and social sectors, and give examples of how they are worded to give people the right to an overall health and social service, including a right to individual attention
- explain what professional ethics are and discuss this in relation to relevant regulations within the health sector and in relation to international human rights
- discuss the significance of internal control in the nursing and care sectors and the pupils' own role in this work
- give an account of relevant regulations for handling medicines and the health worker's responsibility and role in connection with this
- explain the principles of universal design
- give an account of and apply ergonomic principles in their practice of occupation

## Assessment

### Vg2 Health Work

Provisions for final assessment:

#### *Overall achievement marks*

Programme subject	Provision
Health-promoting work Communication and interaction Practice of occupation	The pupils shall have an overall achievement mark in each programme subject.

#### *Examination for pupils*

Programme subject	Provision
Health-promoting work Communication and interaction Practice of occupation	The pupils shall sit for an interdisciplinary practical exam covering the common programme subjects. The exam is prepared and marked locally.

#### *Examination for external candidates*

Programme subject	Provision
Health-promoting work Communication and interaction Practice of occupation	The external candidates shall sit for a written exam in each programme subject. The external candidates shall also sit for an interdisciplinary practical exam covering the common programme subjects. The exam is prepared and marked locally.

The provisions for assessment are stipulated in the regulations of the Norwegian Education Act.

## APPENDIX B: SUBJECT CURRICULA EXAMPLES

### CURRICULUM FOR HEALTH WORK VG3/IN-SERVICE TRAINING AT A TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT

Laid down as a regulation by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training on 26 September 2005 as delegated in a letter of 26 September 2005 from the Ministry of Education and Research pursuant to the Act of 17 July 1998 no. 61 relating to primary and secondary education (Education Act) Section 3-4 first paragraph.

Applicable from 1 August 2007

#### The objectives of the subject

Health workers perform care, basic nursing and milieu therapy for patients and users of health and social services. Health work shall contribute to covering the need for competent health workers who can meet patients, users and affected family members and friends in a professional manner, and contribute to society's need for health and care services being seen to in the health and social services in municipalities and in specialised health services. The subject shall contribute to educating health workers who can cooperate with other occupational groups, promote enjoyment, physical and mental health and see to user involvement and patient rights.

Learning in the subject shall develop the ability to meet people from numerous cultural backgrounds in different circumstances in life, with different ability levels and opportunities for communication. Furthermore, learning in the subject shall contribute to developing professional workers who are able to show empathy and interact with people who have different needs for assistance. Health workers should learn to observe and use knowledge about different kinds of illnesses, injuries and suffering, and to implement preventive or treatment measures within their own area of responsibility and competence. Through health-promotion work, the health worker shall contribute to prevent isolation and arrange for a more active life. Learning in the subject shall help health workers learn to participate actively in environment, health and safety work and contribute to a good working environment.

The main subject areas amount to a total study program. Learning in the subject shall arrange for varied tasks in different areas of service that can help promote creativity and broad competence applicable to health and social services in municipalities and in specialised health services. Training completed and passed in the subject will lead to a Craft Certificate. The professional title is Health worker.

#### Structure

Health work consists of three main subject areas. The main subject areas complement each other, and should be viewed in relation to one another.

##### Overview of the main subject areas:

Year level	Main subject areas		
Vg3 / In-service training at a training establishment	Health-promoting work	Communication and interaction	Practice of vocation

#### Description of main subject areas

##### Health-promoting work

The main subject area is concerned with what habits, physical activity and diets mean for preventing illness and promoting physical and mental health. It also deals with professional health assistance work, health



care and activities that promote a sense of mastery, good health, enjoyment and quality of life. The main subject area includes basic nursing, practical hygiene measures and preventing transmission of disease and infections. Furthermore, the main subject area deals with the relationship between the body's make-up and functions and learning about illness. Culture as a health-promoting and mobilising measure, and environment, health and safety along with first aid and prevention of repetitive strain injuries are included in the main subject area.

### **Communication and interaction**

The main subject area deals with interpersonal communication and how this can promote health and social development. Empathy, respect and tolerance are fundamental values for an individual's self-esteem and integrity. These are central themes in the subject. Furthermore, various communication techniques to handle conflicts are also included. Objective observation, correct ways of responding to patients and relevant rules concerning confidentiality and protection of personal information are included in the main subject area.

### **Practice of vocation**

The main subject area is concerned with viewing and caring for the human being as a whole person. Planning, doing, documenting and assessing one's own work is included in the main subject area. It also deals with relevant regulations and guidelines for work ethics. The health worker's role and responsibility to cooperate with other occupational groups is a central theme in the subject. Furthermore, the main subject area deals with the superior plans used by the health and social services sector, also documentation and implementing health-related, care-related and social measures.

## **Basic skills**

Basic skills are integrated into the competence aims for this course in areas where they contribute to the development of and are a part of the basic subject competence. In Health work, basic skills are understood as follows:

*Being able to express oneself orally and in writing in Health work* involves reporting and informing others in a correct and purposeful manner. It also means being able to fill in forms and schedules, and prepare plans. Furthermore, it involves being able to communicate and arrange dialogues when meeting with patients, users, colleagues and affected family members and friends.

*Being able to read in Health work* involves understanding the content of different texts and forms, patient documents, plans, statistics and relevant regulations. Being able to read also involves understanding and staying updated using professional literature.

*Numeracy in Health work* involves calculating and evaluating costs related to different activities in private homes and institutions. An understanding of numbers and figures also involves being able to reckon amounts, measurements, weights and meal times.

*Digital and computer literacy in Health work* involves exchange documentation and information in professional work. This means being able to communicate with others and performing technical office routines.

# Competence aims

## After Vg3

### Health-promoting work

#### The aims of the studies are to enable the apprentice to

- prepare meals that care for the users' health and enjoyment, and substantiate your suggestions based on official Norwegian recommendations for nutrition
- plan, carry out and evaluate prevention and rehabilitation in nursing and care work
- implement and give reasons for measures chosen for illnesses and injuries, together with other occupational groups
- perform basic nursing care
- care for the seriously ill and dying
- comply with current existing rules and regulations for hygiene at the workplace
- plan and carry out measures that promote enjoyment and contribute to better quality of life
- evaluate the factors that can encourage physical and mental health
- plan and carry out activities based on the users' daily lives and functional levels
- use culture and cultural experiences as health-promoting measures
- guide users in how to use available aids and assistance
- evaluate the risk of fire and other home accidents, and suggest preventive measures
- perform first aid and follow routines to notify the correct authorities about accidents and injuries
- observe and report on the influences and side effects of medication
- follow ergonomic principles when practicing your occupation
- comply with current legislation for environment, health and safety

### Communication and interaction

#### *The aims of the studies are to enable the apprentice to*

- perform work in a manner that communicates trust, establishes credibility and positive dialogue with users, patients and affected family members and friends
- communicate with users and patients using various communication skills
- observe and report on the individual user's overall needs
- comply with current rules and regulations for confidentiality and personal information protection related to the health and social sector
- guide users, patients and affected family members and friends in health-related questions
- orient users and affected family members and friends about their basic rights in health and social services
- use different strategies for handling conflicts
- handle aggressive and threatening persons
- perform work in line with the goals of an environmental therapist

### Practice of vocation

#### The aims of the studies are to enable the apprentice to

- plan, carry out, document and evaluate own work, and recommend measures for improvement
- identify undernutrition and malnutrition, and recommend measures to prevent and handle these
- give professional care in line with current rules and regulations for the health care sector
- perform work according to guidelines for work ethics
- discuss and elaborate on the ethical problems related to practicing this occupation
- perform work in a manner that cares for the individual's independence, equality and belonging
- comply with current rules related to the use of force
- participate in interdisciplinary collaborations
- work toward user involvement
- map out user functional level and need for assistance, and implement measures together with the user
- recommend and implement measures that promote mastery, health, enjoyment and stimulate an

- active life
- perform work in accordance with current regulations and plans and routines for the workplace
- comply with existing rules and regulations for workplace routines for handling medication
- give an account of the idea of *authorised co-workers*

## Assessment

### Vg3 Health work

Provisions for final assessment:

Main subject areas	Provision
Health-promoting work Communication and interaction Practice of vocation	All apprentices shall sit for a Craft Examination, which is normally carried out over a period of five working days.

The provisions for assessment are stipulated in the regulations of the Norwegian Education Act.