Information for teaching staff about the external review process

Education officers (EOs) within the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) will be reviewing the school in the coming weeks. The following information is a guideline detailing the process involved in the external review.

A. The purposes of the external review

All schools are expected to reach the required educational standards that ensure learners' entitlement (QAD standards for use in external reviews are available online). The external review aims to support schools to improve the quality of education and learner achievement. The review process will focus mainly on:

- · Educational leadership and management;
- · Learning and teaching.
- - School Ethos

B. The external review team

The external review is carried out by an external review team composed of one review leader and other EOs from the QAD and/or Associate Assessors. The number of review team members depends on the school population. During the external review, the review team will take into account the school context.

C. Six weeks before the external review

- · The assistant director external review holds a meeting with the head of school (HoS) to explain the purpose and process of the external review.
- · The HoS disseminates a letter and a questionnaire, devised by the QAD, to teaching staff and parents.

D. Three weeks before the external review

- · Review leader phones the HoS and sets date for school meeting.

E. Two weeks to one week before review

- · The HoS is interviewed by the review team.
- · The reviewer explains the purpose and process of the external review to all teachers and LSAs.

F. During the external review days, reviewers:

- · interview different stakeholders;
- · are present during school assembly, break time and other activities held during review days;
- · observe lessons;
- · may also talk with groups of learners in class while their teacher is being interviewed by another reviewer;
- · gather evidence from different sources so as to triangulate data;
- · are available to discuss any issues related to the school or the external review.

G. Classroom observations

Reviewers may observe a part of or a full lesson. At the discretion of the review team, teaching and learning processes of the same teacher may be observed more than once. In larger schools a representative sample of classes will be observed.

H. During classroom observations reviewers:

- · evaluate teachers' lesson planning, register, resources and/or displays in a way that does not interfere with the learning process;
- · review IEPs of learners with a statement of needs, LSAs' forecast and daily schedule, modified resources endorsed by the teacher, and communication book or printed communication between the LSA and parent;
- · observe interaction between teacher/KGA and LSAs;
- · observe group work and/or individual work assigned during the lesson;
- · may interview learners and go through their work without disrupting the learning process;
- · may ask for the teachers' file/s or homework copybooks to review at a later stage;
- · give verbal feedback on the lesson observed upon request.

I. On the last day of the external review
- The review leader outlines the main findings to the HoS.
- A post review questionnaire is distributed to the teaching staff and LSAs. The QAD will collect these a week after the review. These questionnaires assist the review team in monitoring and reviewing the external review procedures.

J. The external review report
- The HoS will receive a draft of the external review report. This report is finalised after giving due consideration to the head's feedback.
- The director for Quality Assurance endorses the full report, which is then sent to the HoS and College Principal. The full report includes the review findings, areas of strength and a way forward related to each of the QAD standards for the external review and five or six recommendations the school would be expected to tackle effectively for school improvement.
- Members of staff who have been identified in the report as giving outstanding or unsatisfactory service are to be informed confidentially by the HoS and given the opportunity to give their views. These members of staff are to be shown only that part of the report which concerns them.
- The HoS disseminates the report summary to all teaching staff members. This report includes the areas of strength and a way forward related to each of the QAD standards for the external review and the main recommendations. All teaching staff members are involved in the development of an action plan to address the report's recommendations.
- The HoS disseminates the main findings of the report to parents in writing, after consulting with QAD.

K. The post review meeting
    The review leader sets up a post review meeting. The Director QAD and/or Assistant Director, the Head of School and the College Principal or equivalent, representative/s from the Secretariat for Catholic Education (in case of church schools) or equivalent (in independent schools) are invited to this meeting. The Head of School may consider inviting the key person contributing to the internal review process. During the meeting the Head of School explains how the school agreed to address the recommendations listed in the report, which actions would have been recorded in the post-review template.

L. The Follow-Up visit
The QAD will carry out an unannounced follow-up visit at the reviewed school. This will take place during the scholastic year following the external review. This visit is held to validate the external review and to ensure that the school is implementing the recommendations identified in the external review report.

Summary
Teachers are encouraged to:
- fill in a pre-external review questionnaire anonymously;
- hand in scheme of work of the term to the HoS;
- inform the learners that reviewers might observe a lesson;
- provide any requested information and/or documentation;
- conduct their lesson as usual;
- ask for feedback on the lesson observed, should they wish to;
- fill in a post-review questionnaire anonymously.

Director Quality Assurance