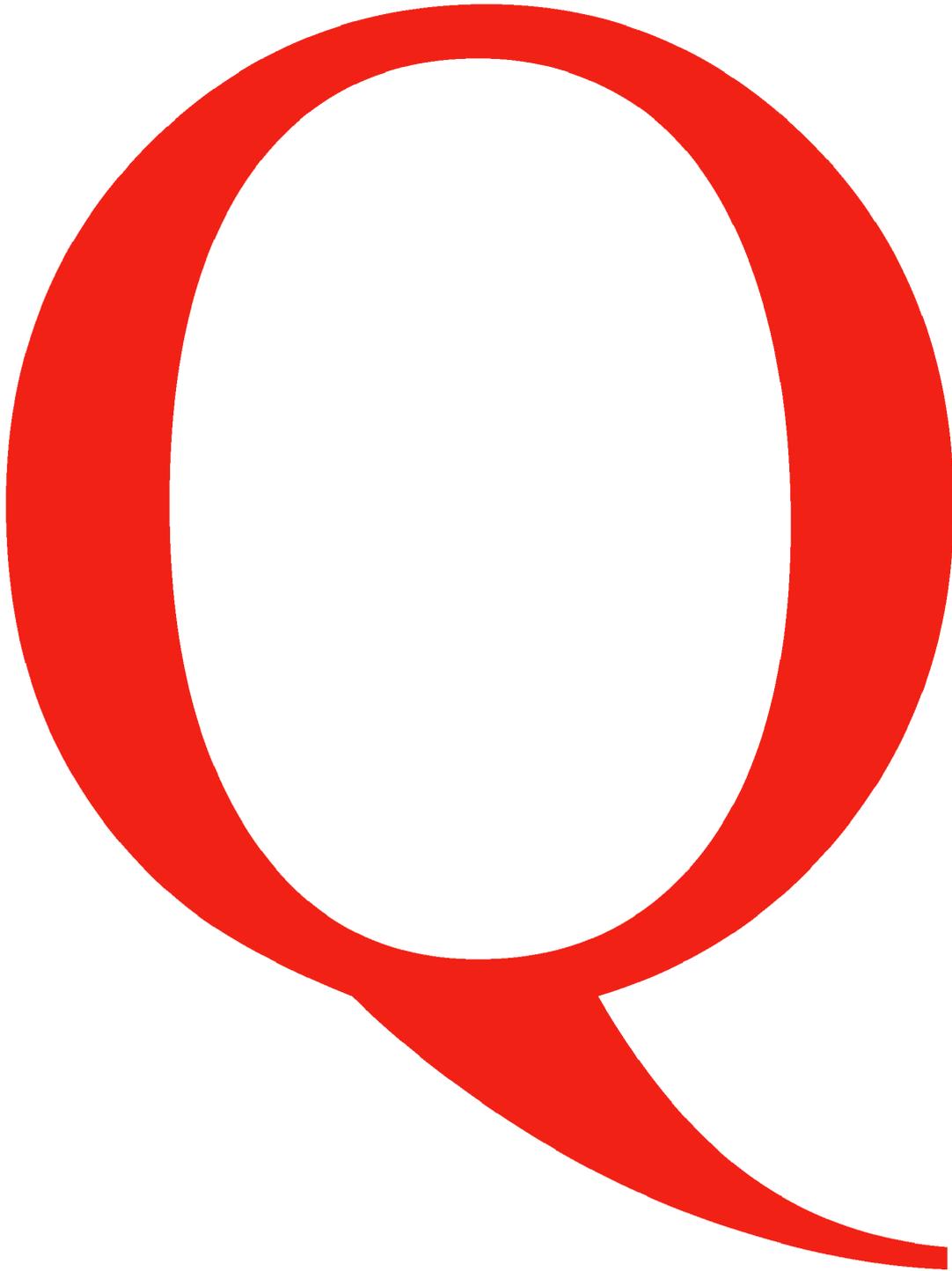


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Foreword

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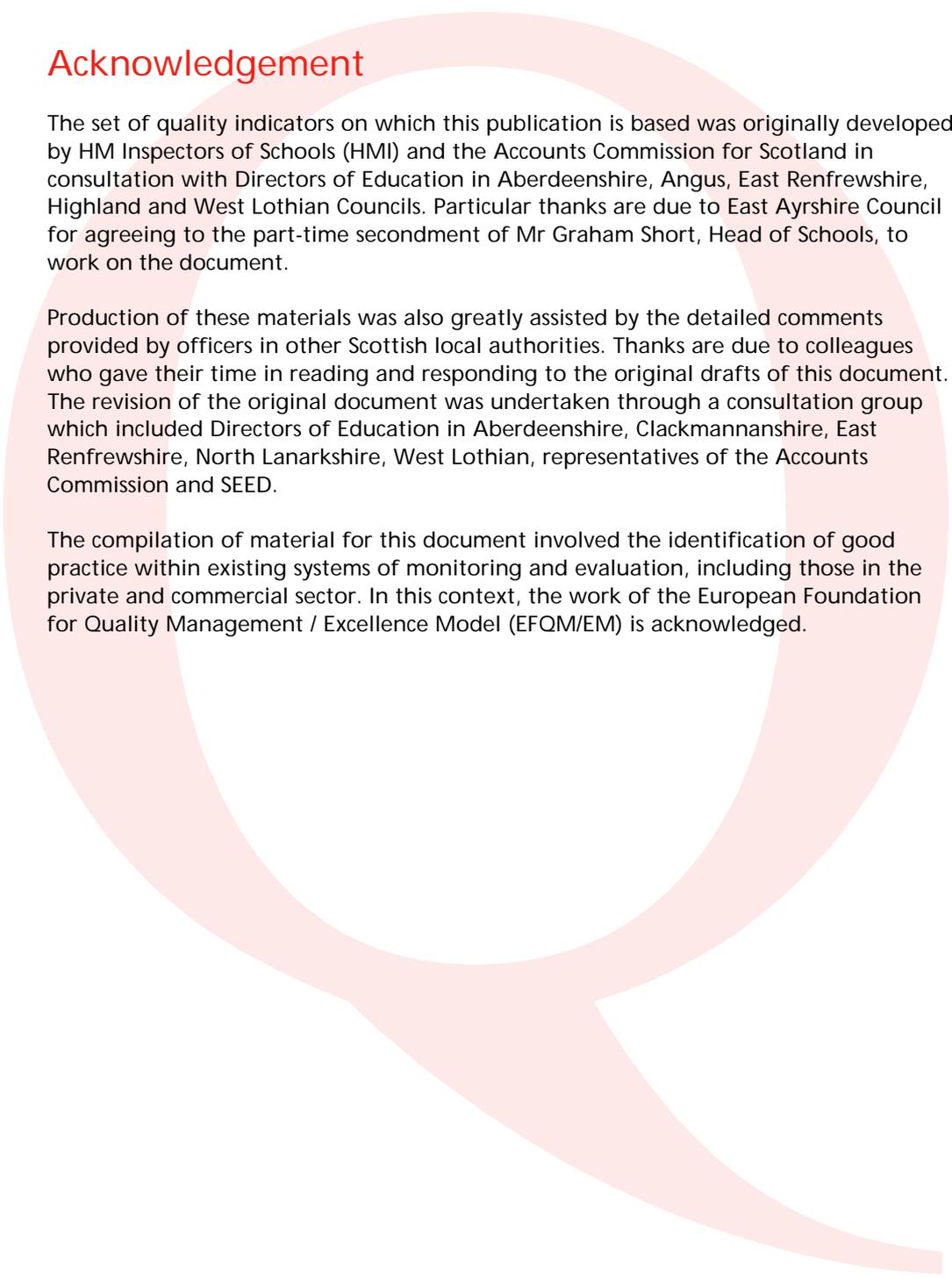
¹Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, to provide services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission.

²The Accounts Commission for Scotland is an independent statutory body which, through the audit process and value for money studies, assists Councils and fire and police boards to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources.

³The term 'quality development' is used throughout this document as shorthand for the range of activities used in association with quality assurance and the planning and delivery of continuous improvement in performance.



The quality indicators illustrate features of good practice in the management of the delivery of education. They have been derived through a collaborative process using examples of good practice supplied by senior management staff in the education service. This work has been supplemented by the identification of examples of good practice in public service management from a number of sources. The indicators and general approach have been tested and further developed during pilot exercises in the external evaluation of local authorities by HMI working with the Accounts Commission. The document was also subject to an extensive consultation process, and the current version reflects the comments received.



Acknowledgement

The set of quality indicators on which this publication is based was originally developed by HM Inspectors of Schools (HMI) and the Accounts Commission for Scotland in consultation with Directors of Education in Aberdeenshire, Angus, East Renfrewshire, Highland and West Lothian Councils. Particular thanks are due to East Ayrshire Council for agreeing to the part-time secondment of Mr Graham Short, Head of Schools, to work on the document.

Production of these materials was also greatly assisted by the detailed comments provided by officers in other Scottish local authorities. Thanks are due to colleagues who gave their time in reading and responding to the original drafts of this document. The revision of the original document was undertaken through a consultation group which included Directors of Education in Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, West Lothian, representatives of the Accounts Commission and SEED.

The compilation of material for this document involved the identification of good practice within existing systems of monitoring and evaluation, including those in the private and commercial sector. In this context, the work of the European Foundation for Quality Management / Excellence Model (EFQM/EM) is acknowledged.



Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this publication is two-fold. It is to assist local authorities⁴ in the evaluation of their own systems of quality assurance and educational development, or 'quality development' as it is increasingly known, and to set out the quality indicators which will provide the basis for external inspection and Best Value scrutiny of the education functions of local authorities.

Through self-evaluation, authorities will be supported in:

- providing continuously-improving services in their area
- meeting the responsibilities set out in the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act*
- meeting the requirements of the Best Value initiative.

The fact that the quality indicators will be used for inspection and other forms of external scrutiny removes any mystique from the inspection process. Although purposes and audiences may be different, the language and basis for self and external evaluation should be the same so that there can be an open and honest dialogue and consistency across different areas and different evaluators.

The Quality Indicators, Self-evaluation and Inspection

The *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act* provides a framework for improvement planning which requires authorities to set out and report on improvement objectives related to national priorities and associated measures of performance. National priorities will be set by Ministers following consultation. Consultation on national priorities commenced on 31 March 2000. The role of education authorities and the quality development function is central to continuous improvement. Agreed national priorities will be carried forward into schools through local improvement objectives and related targets. To achieve these ends, authorities and schools should work together in a culture of support and challenge.

⁴Varied terms are being used to describe organisations responsible within Councils for the management of education in local authorities. Here, local authority is used as the generic term. 'Education department' or 'education services' are also used to describe the department which carries out day-to-day management.

School self-evaluation will take place using the performance indicators in *How good is our school?* (HGIOS). The authority, for its part, will have to know its schools well and to be seen and accepted by schools and the community as adding value in promoting improvement in children's education. The key question for the authority will become 'What difference does the education authority make to the quality of education?'. The quality indicators here provide a similar framework of self-evaluation for authorities as HGIOS does for schools.

To 'close the circle' on the process of self-evaluation leading to continuous improvement, inspection of education authorities will have as its prime purpose the evaluation of local authorities' effectiveness in quality development. The Key Areas of work to be inspected in a local authority inspection, and the quality indicators used, will be those which are most clearly directed to this core business of a local authority. The emphasis in the framework set out in this document is on quality development and that should be by no means a narrow range of work.

However, local authorities perform many wide-ranging services, for example, to do with management of resources, health and safety and child protection, that may not be directly or specifically related to quality development. It is important that these services are delivering Best Value and can be subject to self-evaluation in their own right. Where they are seen to be significant in contributing directly to the core quality development function of a local authority, they should be covered in inspection. The framework and related quality indicators in this document provide for this. The Key Area categories describe effective management and delivery processes which can be customised to take account of many diverse services. In this way, the document provides a comprehensive framework for the rigorous evaluation of local authority management of education.

The approach taken is also capable of being applied flexibly and acknowledges that the structures, systems and local priorities of Scottish authorities vary considerably, and are likely to change and evolve over time. The intention is, therefore, that these materials, in turn, will be used flexibly both in self-evaluation and inspection, and in the context of the local situation, to support the authority's own priorities, approaches and planning systems. Again, the framework is generic enough to be used in, or customised to, different situations.

The Corporate Dimension

The management structures of local authorities are increasingly changing both to lead and to respond to changes in the way communities and individuals in communities wish services to be delivered. For example, departments or formerly discrete services such as education and social work may become children's services, or education and recreation may join together to promote life-long learning. The titles and job descriptions of managers change as a result. Specific responsibilities may be dispersed amongst officers or delegated to a different tier of management.

Nevertheless, as far as school education is concerned, the expectation of continuous improvement as laid down by the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act* will remain. The framework for self-evaluation and inspection may not be immediately usable in evaluating how well, for example, a recreation facility or a performing arts group will deliver to adults in the community but it can be used to evaluate how those kind of services are improving the quality of children's educational experiences. One crucial test for 'joined-up' services will be the synergies they create to impact on the achievement of children in schools, and the quality indicators provide a framework for self-evaluation and external inspection to evaluate this.

Local authorities' education departments also exist within the wider organisational setting of the corporate arrangements of the Council. Due account has therefore been taken of the need for education departments to play a role in the delivery of strategies, services or initiatives that have a strong corporate dimension. Equally, it is expected that staff from an education department will play an active part in the wider life and work of Councils. This involvement can extend to participation in corporate self-evaluation initiatives, such as EFQM/EM. The approaches to self-evaluation set out here can be used as evidence for a range of accreditation systems.

Self-evaluation, Inspection and Wider Education Functions

While the main area of responsibility for authorities is the school sector, quality development aspects of provision in other sectors are also very important. For this reason, a generic and inclusive approach has been used in the terminology so that services such as, for example, community education, psychological services, and outdoor education can also be considered. Whilst specific features exemplifying best practice may have to be provided by specialists themselves, the key areas, themes and related illustrations apply equally well to the local authority management, for example, of community education or psychological services.

As far as inspection of education authorities is concerned, the quality indicators will be used to evaluate the contribution particular services or aspects of services make directly to quality development in school education.

Self-evaluation, Inspection and Best Value

In 1997, the Scottish Office Development Department (SODD) introduced Best Value to all services of local government in Scotland through Circular 22/97. This required local authorities to prepare plans to demonstrate that they were securing approaches to service delivery that reflected the principles of Best Value. The central features, if not terminology, of Best Value were already familiar to the educational world. These included the key principles of:

- accountability
- transparency
- continuous improvement
- ownership.

SODD Circular 22/97 also identified a number of essential elements of Best Value:

- sound governance:
 - customer/citizen focus
 - sound strategic management
 - sound operational management
 - sound financial management.
- performance measurement and monitoring
- continuous improvement: competition and other tools
- long-term planning and budgeting.

The Second Report of the Best Value Task Force reaffirmed the importance of continuous improvement. It emphasised the need for a Performance Management and Planning (PMP) framework which would include Public Performance Reporting (PPR) to account for performance to stakeholders and to increase public accountability.

Best Value also emphasised the importance of rigorous reviews of services using the processes of the '4Cs' i.e. Challenge; Consult; Compare; Compete. In strategic planning of Service Reviews, authorities may wish to prioritise by choosing for review those services which are separate and distinct. Such reviews will give authorities the opportunity to look at the spread of services they offer or enable them to judge the extent to which these are effective in contributing significantly to its prime function of quality development.

The framework of this document and the quality indicators deliberately and explicitly



reflect Best Value principles, elements and processes. They are used as organising categories for the Key Areas while the illustrations and features of good practice seed in Best Value processes such as the '4Cs' and public performance reporting. The requirements of the 'Standards' Act and external inspections will themselves be a prime element of Challenge in the review of an education service.

Best Value is inherently based on self-evaluation. This document provides a Best Value self-evaluation structure for education. The Scottish Executive Best Value Task Group advised that self-evaluation should be backed up by external scrutiny. Inspection of the education functions of local authorities under the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act* will be the major contribution to Best Value external scrutiny.

The Accounts Commission for Scotland also has statutory responsibility to secure the audit of local authorities and to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources within a Best Value context. The external auditor also has separate statutory responsibilities once appointed by the Commission. Their audit framework is based closely on the Performance, Management and Planning (PMP) framework set out by the Best Value Task Group. The PMP audit includes scrutiny of a Council's Best Value Service Reviews and its approach to Public Performance Reporting (PPR). HMI and Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, have designed a partnership approach to scrutiny based on use of the Quality Indicator (QI) framework. An inspection will cover the requirements of the Education Act, and the Accounts Commission's statutory external scrutiny of PMP and PPR. Arrangements will be made to ensure that any additional work undertaken by the external auditor feeds in to the inspection and PMP scrutiny model.

Therefore, there will be a comprehensive and unified self-evaluation and scrutiny structure for education.

A comparison between the Key Principles and Essential Elements of Best Value on the one hand and Figure 1 (see page nine) on the other, demonstrates the compatibility between the already established and Best Value systems. References within illustrations and features of good practice show how Best Value is applied in practice in education.

Self-evaluation, Inspection and Public Performance Reporting

The *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act* sets out a statutory requirement for local authorities to publish an annual statement of national and local education improvement objectives, and a subsequent report on their success in meeting these objectives. This is consistent with the requirements for Public Performance Reporting under Best Value which suggested that stakeholders should receive reliable and easily understood information including:

- national and local education improvement objectives and the extent to which they have been achieved
- key projects/initiatives that are planned and what benefits are expected
- performance information (SPIs, and locally-determined indicators) including comparisons, where appropriate
- service standards (which may be local or national), and performance against those service standards
- annual and medium/longer-term targets for improved performance, derived from objectives
- what customer/stakeholder consultation has been carried out and how the results have been used.

An important part of guidance on PPR was that no one report could or should fulfil all the purposes set out above. It was advised that different types, media and timings of reports should be used for different purposes and different audiences.

Reporting on evaluations of quality development using the framework of this document should be a central part of the PPR framework of education departments of local authorities. The form of the report, whether a Standards and Quality type of report, or another, is for the authority to determine. Prior to an inspection of the education functions of a local authority, HMI will ask for a self-evaluation statement covering the Key Area framework in this document.

How this Document is Organised

Part 1 provides a guide to self-evaluation at local authority level. It links this guide to other systems of evaluation at school, corporate and national levels.

Part 2 provides guidance on the use of quality indicators within local authorities.

Part 3 contains the quality indicators themselves, provides illustrations of performance, questions and practical examples which can be used in self-evaluation.

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One What is Local Authority Self-evaluation?

What is Local Authority Self-evaluation?

[Link to *How good is our school?*](#)

How good is our school? established a concise and easily-used framework for self-evaluation which has been widely adopted by schools and extended to other services. Its structure and features are easily recognised by educators at all levels and for this reason a similar approach has been maintained at local authority level. The structure of this document therefore echoes the format and approach of *How good is our school?* and its associated family of documents. The intention is that it should be used in a similar way.

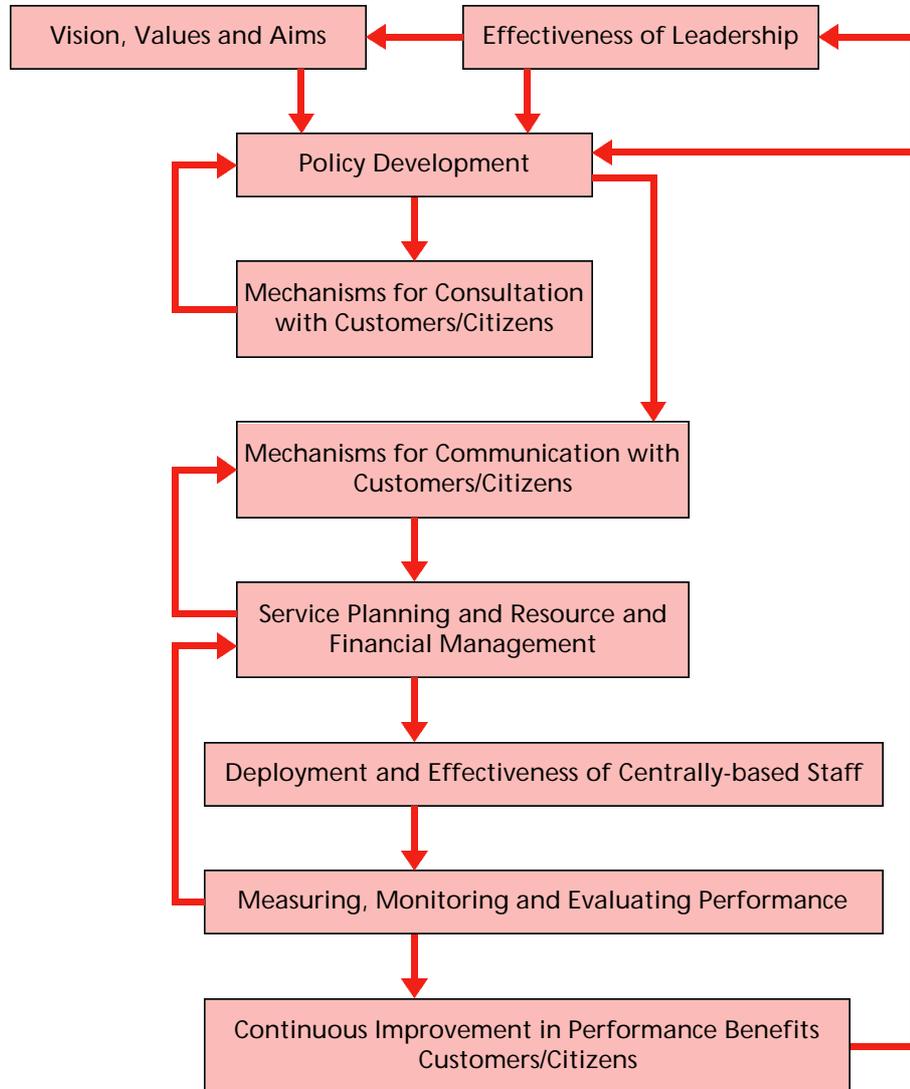
Quality Development and the Local Authority

Local authorities are faced with a major challenge. The environment in which they work is subject to an accelerating pace of change. The sources of change are linked to:

- the pace of development within society itself, for example, in information and communications technology (ICT)
- evolving public expectations of the education system
- increased levels of accountability in all areas of activity
- changes in legislation, or expectations at national level
- development of quality assurance systems at the level of establishments and services.

Local authorities need to have well-established quality development systems in order to reconcile these competing and strong forces into a rational, phased and achievable programme of service improvement. Although the detail of these may vary from authority to authority, all must be capable of securing a recognisable quality of provision that matches, or exceeds, the expectations of its stakeholders. Central to this provision will be a system that maintains a clear vision and set of values and translates these into a viable operational plan. It is the expectation within contemporary education systems that the stakeholders will be engaged effectively in this process and feel some ownership of it. Equally, it has become an established feature of provision that improvement planning systems are linked to effective quality assurance arrangements which themselves require a structured approach to service monitoring. Above all, these activities and systems should impact on better services to learners. This complex set of relationships is illustrated in simplified form in Figure 1 following.

Fig 1: Overview of the Model



How do we know?

The Indicators Used in this Document

As quality systems have developed, so too have systems and types of performance indicators. The indicators used in this document are **qualitative** in nature. They relate to broad areas of activity that are of fundamental importance in considering quality development and related activities at local authority level. Although described as aspects of provision, they can be broken down into detectable, or practical, features that will subsequently enable evidence to be gathered and evaluations made of whether provision is judged to be very good, good, fair or unsatisfactory, using the levels described below.

Level

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4 very good | – major strengths |
| 3 good | – more strengths than weaknesses |
| 2 fair | – some important weaknesses |
| 1 unsatisfactory | – major weaknesses |

Other Performance Indicators

The first sets of performance indicators to be introduced nationally into the education sector of local government were produced by HMI. Subsequently other performance indicators, generally of a quantitative nature, have been developed from different sources. Qualitative and quantitative evaluations work best where they are used together. Quantitative indicators may be limited because they rely on collectable data which might not fully reflect the complexity of performance. Qualitative indicators may be limited in that they may not have precise enough language to ensure total consistency across all evaluators. The quality indicators contained in this document should be used to complement other performance indicators to cross-check and validate evaluation.

Performance measures arising from the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act*

The framework of improvement planning set out in the Act will lead to authorities setting out and reporting on priorities with associated measures of performance. These will include quantitative and qualitative measures. This framework will apply from the school year beginning in August 2001.

Accounts Commission Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)

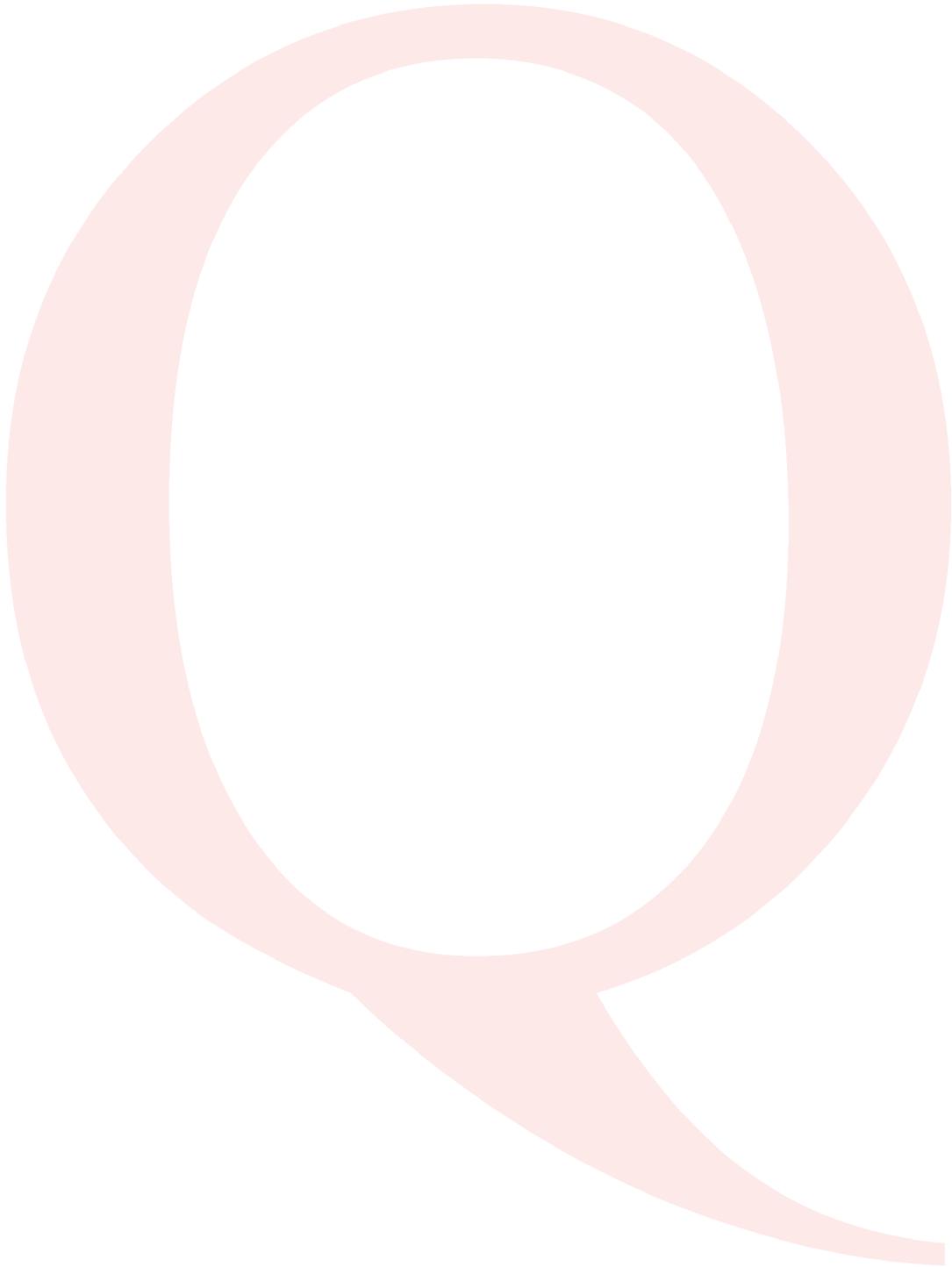
The Local Government Act, 1992 places an obligation on the Accounts Commission to issue an annual direction to local authorities to publish information relating to their activities in any financial year as will, in the Commission's opinion, 'facilitate the making of appropriate comparisons (by reference to cost, economy, efficiency and effectiveness) between:

- (a) the standards of quality achieved by different authorities in that financial year
- (b) the standards of quality achieved by such bodies in different financial years.'

The Act also lays a duty on each authority to ensure that it has in place such arrangements for collecting, recording and publishing the information, as are required to comply with the Direction as authorised by the Act.

For 1999-2000, the statutory performance indicators relate to:

- the pre-school experience of children
- class sizes in primary schools
- occupancy levels in primary schools
- occupancy levels in secondary schools
- average time to complete an assessment of special educational needs
- expenditure.



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Two Self-evaluation Using Quality Indicators

Self-evaluation Using Quality Indicators

How to Use the Quality Indicators

Aims, Processes and Outcomes

Quality indicators are an important management tool that assist an organisation in checking whether its aims and expectations are being met and allow measurement of a service. They can be used within exercises aimed at evaluating an organisation's overall performance, or to examine an aspect of performance in more detail. This helps the evaluators to make sense of the provision being made within complex organisations like educational establishments or local authorities. When used most effectively, therefore, the quality indicators become objective reference points against which judgements can be made by experienced practitioners. This is the essence of effective self-evaluation.

The prudent evaluator will always recognise the complexity of the system that is being reviewed, and the interplay of organisational factors, competing priorities and local circumstances. Quality indicators, or other quality systems, should not be used to supplant or distract from the organisation's mission or central purpose. For these reasons, the quality indicators should not be used as simple checklists, or in isolation from other evaluation management techniques. Indeed, the organisation's aims should be the key point of reference for contextualising the quality indicators and suggesting features to look for.

Organisations inevitably are more complex and dynamic than can be conveyed by descriptors classified in particular ways. The framework used here is not a neat, sequential one to be followed step-by-step. Some of the quality indicators relate to management processes and some relate to outcomes. The outcome indicators themselves will rely on the analysis of much quantitative data such as examination results or SPIs. It is important not to concentrate on one type of indicator at the expense of others. While good processes lead to good outcomes, the direct relationship may not be simple to observe. For example, there may be a time lag between improving processes and their impact on outcomes. Similarly, where outcomes are not good, it is important to evaluate what processes need to be improved to produce better outcomes. A further step in the evaluative process is to benchmark what inputs (costs, numbers, time) are being used in the processes so that performance can be compared with that of similar organisations and Best Value judgements can be made.

In short, it may be misleading to look at any one Key Area without corroborating, checking and cross-referencing. Processes should be linked to outcomes.

Evaluative Structure

The quality indicators are organised into an overall framework that classifies the central activities of the overall organisation that are being considered:

Key Areas	Five Key Areas have been identified – Strategic Management, Consultation and Communication, Operational Management, Resource and Financial Management, and Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement.
Quality Indicators	Each Key Area has been analysed in terms of a number of quality indicators relating to important areas of activity.
Themes	To further describe an indicator, a number of themes have been identified for each, relating to observable areas of activity.
Illustrations	To help in reaching summative evaluations for each indicator, the characteristics of quality are illustrated at two levels (Level 4 very good ; and Level 2 fair). Levels 3 and 1 can be extrapolated from illustrations at Levels 4 and 2.

Each theme is further expanded by practical examples in the ‘How do you know?’ section. These are detailed features of an organisation that may be present in whole or in part if that particular theme is being delivered effectively. The features support the evaluator in the search for evidence and are not intended to be either comprehensive or prescriptive. It is therefore very important to recognise that it is not necessary for an aspect of provision to exhibit all of the features in an illustration before it is deemed to be ‘good practice’. They are not intended to be a checklist. Equally, evaluators will always bring their own experience and knowledge to make an important contribution to the process of evaluation.

Doing a Full Review

This will be done through inspection of the education functions of each local authority as external scrutiny. It can also be done through a full process of self-evaluation, or within the ambit of an award system such as Charter Mark or EFQM/EM where evidence from Quality Management in Education (QMIE) can be used to support submissions.

Taking a Broad View

Every year, practitioners can scan across all the quality indicators, and assign one of the four levels to each on the basis of professional judgement, using evidence which has been gathered in the normal course of work. This will give an immediate impression of areas of major strength, or those where more attention is required. The importance of relating processes to outcomes should be borne in mind.

Taking a Closer Look

In addition to taking a **broad view**, a **closer look** should be taken at specific areas:

- those areas not so far covered within your regular audit cycle
- previously-identified areas of concern or success
- areas relating to local priorities.

Indicators should be selected in order to elicit measurable evidence and specific targets. They may be chosen from more than one Key Area, but over the specified review cycle for a Council it would be anticipated that all of them would be covered eventually. Again, the danger of isolated evaluation needs to be guarded against. For example, an evaluation of Strategic Management, without consideration of outcomes, may produce a result which is not totally valid. Above all, the approach should be manageable:

- limit the area of focus and select key features in advance
- do not expect to see everything or try to evaluate too much
- assess the evidence against the four levels.

Finding the Evidence

There is no essential difference between evidence gathering at the level of a local authority and that of an establishment. Clearly, however, there will be some differences in the sources of evidence that might be used, as the following examples show:

- Council committee papers
- Cross-departmental strategy papers
- Plans such as Children's Services or Community Learning Plan
- Individual discussions with personnel from other departments
- Minutes of partnership groups
- Public performance reports
- Group discussions, for example, with stakeholder focus groups
- Council publicity materials
- Council-wide survey results.

There should be a clear view on the extent and nature of any sampling. Here it may be helpful to consider the organisation in terms of the hierarchy of its structure (a **depth** issue) together with the other stakeholders with which it is linked (a **breadth** issue). In any event, there should be a clear view on the extent of the evidence collection in terms of a balanced approach to its depth and breadth, with selections being made, for example, from:

Depth

- Chief Executive
- Departmental staff
- Heads of establishments
- Staff in establishments
- Pupils and other learners

Breadth

- Elected members
- Other Council departments
- Partner organisations
- Parents and School Boards
- The wider community e.g. enterprise companies
- The public
- Professional associations

How to Reach an Evaluation

Part 3 contains examples of quality indicators in use. The illustrations and features to look for are drawn from examples of actual management practice in local government and specifically in the management of quality development in education.

How do you know?	Some features you might look for
Quality Indicator (QI) illustrations rewritten as open-ended questions designed to encourage discussion about what constitutes effective practice	Examples of possible features of good practice

The key features are a long rather than a short list because they are intended to exemplify many common features of good practice rather than be prescriptive. They should not be used as a checklist. Evaluators only need to collect enough evidence gathered around the ‘How do you know?’ questions to address the question rigorously.

Similarly, the illustrations are simply illustrations. They are not exhaustive in describing quality and do not necessarily lead through aggregation and averaging to a summative evaluation. For example, it is not necessary to have achieved every bullet point in a Level 4 illustration to reach a conclusion that performance is ‘very good’. However, ‘very good’ would be unlikely if only a few of the bullet points were met. In certain areas also, evaluations would be strengthened for achievements in regard to key priorities. The evidence and features of practice have to be discussed and reviewed to decide into which level the evaluation falls. It is of central importance that this becomes an evidence-generated decision-making process.

Adaptation to Local Circumstances

The Key Areas and quality indicators are generic categories of performance management and planning. The illustrations and features of practice have been derived primarily to enable evaluation of quality development in school education. It is possible to customise the illustrations and features of practice, or to select from within the format to suit local circumstances. For example, a review of the management of community education or psychological services could use each Key Area but customise features of practice to the distinctive characteristics of the service. The outcome indicators to be used would also be different from those used in relation to schools. Another possible approach might be to select particular QIs, such as Service Planning; Deployment and effectiveness of centrally-employed staff; and Measuring, monitoring and evaluating performance, and use these to look at how effectively a service such as community education or psychological service contributes to quality development of schools.

However, whatever approach is taken, the following principles should always apply:

- the process should be focused and manageable
- it should seek to give comprehensive coverage over time
- the approach should be objective and rigorous.

Although the quality indicators are primarily used for evaluation, they can also be used to:

- provide a structure for discussions about progress and priorities
- inform the design of research projects
- provide ideas for workshop and staff development activities.

Taking A Broad View

Self-evaluation Across all Key Areas

Periodically, senior managers will wish to consider the performance of the organisation as a whole. This will not necessitate an in-depth examination of every single activity, but should consider the main areas of activity. Discussion could take place using a senior staff meeting, a focus group, or another grouping or set of meetings. Whichever method is chosen, the aim should be to promote an objective and open discussion which is founded on evidence; hence the key question, 'How do we know?'. The grid in Part 3 can be used as a quick guide, for example:

No:	Quality Indicator:	Themes:	1	2	3	4
1.1	Vision, values and aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity and impact of vision and values • appropriateness and clarity of aims • coherence with corporate strategic management 				

Once the exercise is complete, those areas that have been assigned a Level 1 or a 2 should be immediately obvious. It is then possible to decide whether these should be regarded as areas of priority attention. This can be done through taking a **closer look** using the more specific examples in Part 3.

Taking A Closer Look

Self-evaluation Focused on a Particular Area

A more detailed evaluation of a particular aspect of the organisation may be considered worthwhile following a **broad view** scan, an external evaluation, or routine monitoring by management. The choice of such areas will relate to the overall aims, priorities and stage of development of the organisation.

Step 1: How are we doing?

- Identify the expectations that relate to the chosen area. For example, these may be found in national, Council or departmental statements.
- Define the area of focus, in other words the parts of the organisation or areas of activity which contribute to the aspect of provision that is being considered.

Step 2: How do we know?

- Identify the relevant Key Area and quality indicators. Depending on the area of activity which is being evaluated, it may be appropriate to use indicators from more than one Key Area.
- Decide who should be involved in carrying out the evaluation. This should always involve a team and may involve the use of consultants or peers. The individuals who comprise the team must have sufficient knowledge and experience, and participants must have confidence in their objectivity.
- If there are circumstances where evaluation is relatively restricted, it would be sufficient to select a theme from within a single quality indicator.
- Consider the statements within the illustration as questions which might be asked as part of the evaluation.
- Decide the features that might be looked for, referring to the illustration, policies and any other advice and guidance that is felt to be suitable.
- Decide where the evidence of these features might be located. For example, are there particular documents that should be examined, individuals who should be interviewed or groups with whom the issue should be discussed?
- If benchmarking is to be a part of the process, it will be important to decide what essential information should be compared and which organisations would be suitable benchmarking partners.

Step 3: What are we going to do now?

- Summarise the results, as far as possible reflecting on both quality and quantity. It is usual in any evaluation to find that certain aspects will be delivered well across the organisation while others will not. Equally, some aspects may be delivered well in some parts of the organisation while they have not made an impact in other parts. The evaluation should detect such differences and provide evidence-based management information which can be used to plan for improvement.
- At this stage, it would be appropriate to provide feedback to the department's staff with the invitation for further comment.
- Identify one or two targets. These should focus on the important issues that contribute most to the aims that have been set and which can be incorporated into the service planning framework.
- The results should be part of a Public Performance Reporting framework and may be incorporated into an overall report, for example, on Standards and Quality.

Now for the next steps

- Establish the mechanisms that are necessary to deliver the targets that have been identified.
- Monitor progress towards the achievement of the targets.



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Three The Quality Indicators with Practical Examples

The Quality Indicators with Practical Examples

No:	Quality Indicator:	Themes:				
KEY AREA 1 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT						
1.1	Vision, values and aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity and impact of vision and values • appropriateness and clarity of aims • coherence with corporate strategic management 				
1.2	Effectiveness of leadership and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership qualities • relationships with people and development of teamwork 				
1.3	Policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range, appropriateness and clarity of policies • coherence with corporate policy 				
KEY AREA 2 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION						
2.1	Mechanisms for consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to involving customers/citizens in shaping policies and services • range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to involving establishments and staff in shaping policies and services 				
2.2	Mechanisms for communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to communicating aims, policies, provision and performance to customers/citizens • range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to communicating aims, policies and performance to staff and establishments 				
KEY AREA 3 OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT						
3.1	Service Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisation and management of the performance management and planning framework • structure and content of the Service Plan • appropriateness of improvement objectives and related measures of performance • quality of planning for action to achieve improvement objectives and related measures of performance 				
3.2	Deployment and effectiveness of centrally-employed staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff deployment and remits • staff effectiveness in managing remits to achieve strategic aims and planned priorities 				
KEY AREA 4 RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT						
4.1	Resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic approach to the allocation of resources • systematic approach to the management of resources • strategies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources • evidence of improved resource management 				
4.2	Financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective budget management • range and deployment of financial procedures • processes for collecting, analysing and evaluating financial information 				
KEY AREA 5 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT						
5.1	Measuring, monitoring and evaluating performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range and rigour of processes for collecting information to measure establishment and authority performance • range and rigour of processes for analysing and evaluating establishment and authority performance 				
5.2	Continuous improvement in performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of improvement in standards of performance in areas targeted for improvement 				

Quality Indicator 1.1

Vision, Values and Aims

This indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- clarity and impact of vision and values
- appropriateness and clarity of aims
- coherence with corporate strategic management.

It refers to the way in which the activities of the authority are given a sense of unity. This will be expressed through the authority's effectiveness in establishing a sense of direction and purpose that articulates fully with the wider corporate framework. To demonstrate best practice, the authority will have to ensure that its wider vision is both clear and influences practice at the level of delivery.

Level 4 Illustration

- Clear and comprehensive statements of values and expectations inform the work of the department and indicate how the aims are to be implemented. They focus on improvement, relate to the full range of the authority's work and take very good account of the local and national context.
- The influence of these values on key departmental staff and their working practices can be clearly observed. Establishments have a very good awareness of the authority's vision and of their own role in its implementation.
- Where corporate values are established, education managers demonstrate commitment to them.
- The aims convey a distinctive picture of the aspirations of elected members for the authority. They demonstrate a clear commitment to improvement of all aspects of the authority's work in education, including its contribution to the Council as a whole and to the community.
- The aims are presented effectively, have been circulated to all relevant sections and stakeholders of the authority and are clearly understood.
- Links among the aims and values of the Council, of the education department and of individual establishments or services are clear. Education managers demonstrate commitment to corporate values, where these are established.
- Education managers work closely with managers of other departments and agencies in order to deliver a comprehensive service to learners in the community as a whole.

Level 2 Illustration

- Statements of values and expectations give a general or a partial picture of the range of the authority's work or the local or national context in which it operates. References to improvement of current provision are under-emphasised.
- The political content is such that officers find it difficult to give full attention to national priorities.
- It is difficult to discern the influence of values on the working practices of departmental staff. Establishments have only a general awareness of the authority's vision. It is generally seen to bear limited relation to their work.
- The authority and individual establishments develop their aims to some extent in isolation from each other and the corporate dimension. Education managers do not display full commitment to corporate values.
- While the aims are generally positive, they lack distinctiveness and may neglect some areas of the authority's work, or concentrate on maintaining existing provision rather than improvement.
- Presentation of the aims is low key and circulation is limited. Stakeholders tend to see the establishment of aims/values as a formal exercise with only limited relevance to the main activities of the department, establishments or community.
- There are some joint projects with other departments but these do not form part of an overall strategy.

KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.1
Quality Indicator:	Vision, values and aims
Theme:	Clarity and impact of vision and values
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Has the senior management set out a clear and comprehensive expectation for the service? Do the visions and aims give a clear message about the importance of improvement to the quality of education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear statements of vision and values relating to improvement • Inclusion of all establishments and services in the vision. • Attention to local circumstances and priorities, national priorities and the needs and expectations of a range of stakeholders. • Aims and values shown clearly in the working practices of key staff. • Clear definition of the respective partnership roles and responsibilities of establishments, services and the authority. • Clear definition to the role of the authority in providing support and challenge.

KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.1
Quality Indicator:	Vision, values and aims
Theme:	Appropriateness and clarity of aims
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Are the aims appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad perspective of the purposes of education. • A focus on improvements in learning. • Reference to inclusiveness: the needs and expectations of learners of all abilities and ages. • Reference to the contribution of education to local development and to society as a whole. • Reference to partnership with stakeholders, other services and agencies and community organisations.
Are the aims clear?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear presentation. • Wide dissemination. • Accessibility to the main stakeholders, who understand the central issues and share the overall vision. • Use in evaluation.

KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.1
Quality Indicator:	Vision, values and aims
Theme:	Coherence with corporate strategic management
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
What are the strategic links between the education department and corporate management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear link between aims and values at corporate, department and establishment or service level. The Head of Education is a member of the corporate management team. • Close liaison with elected members to inform them about performance and quality development in education. • Full involvement in corporate approaches to quality. • Full involvement in cross-service initiatives such as community planning and social inclusion. • Access to, and sharing of, a wide range of departmental and corporate information.
Are there effective systems for delivering authority strategy at establishment level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A systematic approach to resolving inter-service or inter-establishment issues inside the education department in relation to external partners. • Plans to deal with any mismatch between what the authority wants to achieve and what its current structures and personnel are able to deliver. • Joint delivery of services with other agencies and departments.

Quality Indicator 1.2

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

This indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- leadership qualities
- relationships with people and development of teamwork.

This indicator is fundamentally about the effectiveness of leadership within the education department. This will depend on a combination of the leadership skills, quality and style of the senior management team and how this has been translated into effective working relationships and successful outcomes. Such a quality indicator focuses on the most senior manager of the department but it is also about the style and success of the senior officers who comprise the management team of the department.

Level 4 Illustration

- The manager of the service has a very clear vision of what the authority is aiming to achieve and is successful in mobilising and focusing the commitment and enthusiasm of staff in both services and establishments to that vision.
- He or she demonstrates a wide range of effective leadership skills and takes an active role in corporate management and in establishing and participating in external partnerships. He or she has a very good understanding of educational issues and of the political context, a recognition of what are key priorities, the ability to make clear decisions, and a commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of provision.
- Stakeholders generally and staff in establishments and services believe that the senior management team demonstrates a high level of professional competence and commitment.
- The range and balance of abilities and skills make for a very effective team.
- The senior management team exemplifies the authority's approach to quality development through its active involvement in improvement, and its management and leadership of staff in services and establishments. It communicates clearly and promptly.
- There is a high quality working ethos across the department and establishments including recognition of achievement and celebration of success.
- Staff review and development is implemented effectively, providing staff with clear guidance about strengths and targets for improvement and appropriate training for their own roles, particularly in the promotion of quality (refer also to QI 3.2).
- The senior management team regularly reviews the effectiveness of its own management.

Level 2 Illustration

- The manager of the service has a vision of what the authority is aiming to achieve but is not always successful in conveying this to key staff in services and establishments so that they are fully committed to implementation. Conversely, he or she may be effective in the day-to-day running of the authority but lacking a positive vision of what could be achieved beyond this.
- He or she demonstrates leadership skills in several areas, but displays some important weaknesses in others which are key to the effective management of the authority. For example, strategic issues, review and/or high quality Service Planning are at times neglected at the expense of shorter-term activities.
- He or she is involved to some degree in corporate management. Although generally responsive to invitations to participate in partnerships, he or she rarely takes a leading role.
- There is evidence from stakeholders generally and from establishments of some inconsistent management of projects and services, and inconsistency in the handling of staff relationships. Delegation and accountability regarding important projects are not always sufficiently clear to produce consistent quality outcomes.
- There are some gaps in the range and balance of the abilities of the senior management team's abilities and skills, impacting on its overall effectiveness as a team.
- In its decision-making, the senior management team is not always able to balance effectively the local and national contexts.
- Although supportive of quality development activities, the senior management team tends not to be actively involved. The ethos, although positive, does not convey a full sense of challenge, change or progress. Communication is generally sound but too variable in speed and quality and too reliant on responding to requests for information.
- The senior management team does not systematically review its effectiveness, seek the views of stakeholders or consider practice in other authorities. It does not actively promote its public profile.
- Both individuals and teams in the department find staff development and review for their own skills and abilities patchy and not always consistent with their main quality development role.

KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.2
Quality Indicator:	Effectiveness of leadership and management
Theme:	Leadership qualities
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Does the senior management demonstrate an appropriate range and blend of leadership qualities and abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad knowledge and understanding of educational, political and corporate issues. • Recognition of key priorities and the ability to plan strategically. • Commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of provision. • Communication of operational expectations and effective management of individual and team performance across the department.
To what extent do stakeholders and staff within and beyond the department recognise the management team's abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to inspire, initiate and delegate. • Good communication with stakeholders and staff within and beyond the department. • Sound decision-making based on a very good knowledge of the local and national context. • Successful partnerships with other Council departments, agencies and stakeholders. • Establishment and maintenance of sound administrative and financial systems. • Effective leadership and management of staff, projects and services. • Ability to identify and solve problems. • Positive impact on provision.
What means does senior management use to demonstrate clear commitment to the promotion of quality improvement throughout the authority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling the department's values and expectations and promoting an appropriate ethos in all departments and establishments. • Active involvement in improvement activities. • Being accessible, listening and responding to people. • Deploying appropriate resources.
Has a positive ethos been established?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining improvement priorities. • Supporting learning, and improvement activities. • Using staff development and review. • Clear specification of management performance indicators available to stakeholders. • Effective communication to staff at all levels of commitment to quality improvement.

<p>How does senior management evaluate objectively the contribution staff make to quality development? (Cross-refer also to QI 3.2.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systems for review and development include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– clear and agreed remits with specified targets as a basis for on-going review– agreed success criteria for specific tasks and job objectives– dialogue to ensure identification of appropriate strengths and development needs– planned opportunities for feedback on individual performance based on a range of activities.
<p>How does senior management try to improve its own performance and leadership?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involvement in national initiatives and national groups such as the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES).• Access to good practice through links with other departments, local, national, international and union groups.• Feedback from stakeholders, corporate management and establishments.• Clear and open systems for regular review of leadership and performance in local improvement objectives.• Strong and varied links with stakeholders.

KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.2
Quality Indicator:	Effectiveness of leadership and management
Theme:	Relationships with people and development of teamwork
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
How does senior management recognise and support training and development of staff in the promotion of quality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to continuous professional development of all staff. • Encouragement to staff to take on responsibilities and to be innovative. • Recognition of the achievements of individuals and groups across the authority. • Working groups and meetings which encourage and enable staff to participate in improvement.
How is teamwork actively promoted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular senior management meetings to co-ordinate the work of the department, develop policy, monitor progress and manage communication with staff and elected members. • Complementary mechanisms for cross-departmental communication. • Effective procedures for managing the performance of individuals and teams. • Recognition of the contribution of stakeholders and partnerships.
To what extent does the ethos of the department enable all staff to make a significant contribution to quality development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness to the education department's values, mission, vision, policy and strategy. • A 'learning' organisation.
How are staff perceptions relating to motivation and satisfaction monitored?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring involvement in improvement teams and suggestion schemes. • Monitoring of levels of training and development. • Assessing the results of teamwork. • Recognition of individuals and teams. • Measuring response rates to people surveys. • Monitoring of absenteeism and sickness. • Monitoring of grievances. • Monitoring of recruitment trends and staff turnover. • Assessing use of facilities for recreation or childcare.

Quality Indicator 1.3

Policy Development

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- range, appropriateness and clarity of policies
- coherence with corporate policy.

A successful, modern organisation must have a systematic and well-documented approach to management. This will depend on the construction of a range of effective policies that inform and impact on practice throughout the department and which in turn are linked to the wider policies of the Council.

Level 4 Illustration

- The department's work is directed by a straightforward policy framework which covers all its main areas of activity and responsibility, is reflected in the structure and content of the strategic Service Plan, and is carried through into actions.
- The policy for quality development fits the context very well, is clearly perceived and understood by stakeholders, and provides a very good basis for related operational practice.
- Policies reflect national and local priorities and related improvement objectives.
- Individual policies give specific information about roles, responsibilities and procedures, expectations of quality and evaluation processes. They take into account all relevant contextual information.
- The links among cross-cutting initiatives, and education's contribution to these, are indicated clearly and are reflected in policy and practice at establishment level.

Level 2 Illustration

- The department has policies in most, but not all, of its main areas of activity and responsibility. Areas of the Service Plan have been developed independently from these policies and the links may not always be clearly perceived.
- The policy for quality development only partially reflects the context in which it is to be implemented. Key stakeholder awareness of the existence or significance of the policy is variable. Operational practice occasionally develops separately from the policy itself as a largely pragmatic response to individual situations, producing some inconsistency.
- Individual policies do not give a clear enough indication of their practical application and are uneven in terms of specific elements such as roles, responsibilities, procedures, and expectations of quality or evaluation process.
- Development of these policies has not taken fully into account important local and national priorities and improvement objectives.
- There is occasional lack of correspondence among Council, authority and establishment policies. Areas of joint actions are not always clearly defined.

KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.3
Quality Indicator:	Policy development
Theme:	Range, appropriateness and clarity of policies
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Is there a clear and coherent policy framework to guide the work of the authority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive coverage including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – quality development – establishment development planning – cross-service partnership – staff development and review – lifelong learning – devolved school management – safety and health, care and welfare. • A shared understanding of policy among the senior management team. • Clear presentation and ability to be interpreted at all levels of the service. • Provision of a clear framework for implementation within the department's Service Plan. • Expectations for individual establishments are adjusted to take account of their context, but reflect strategic priorities. • Challenging but attainable standards.
Is the policy framework systematically updated and improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to national and local improvement objectives and initiatives. • Revisions which reflect current partnerships and joint projects. • Flexibility and responsiveness. • Evaluation processes and evidence which involve stakeholders and staff in services and establishments.
Is policy and strategy based on information which is relevant and comprehensive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of stakeholders and staff. • Responses from community and external organisations. • Results of internal performance indicators. • Benchmarking activities relating to similar authorities or organisations. • Reference to social, environmental and legal issues. • Economic and demographic indicators. • Reference to new technologies. • Government initiatives, advice and standards. • Results of service reviews.

Are there clear links between policies and expected action?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifications of action expected. • Clear specification of staff roles and responsibilities for implementation. • Detailed working arrangements. • Cross-cutting initiatives show a clear allocation of responsibilities and a clear focus on how they will impact on education. • Arrangements for monitoring and clear success criteria to demonstrate policies in action.
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KEY AREA 1	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
No:	1.3
Quality Indicator:	Policy development
Theme:	Coherence with corporate policy
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Do the policies and priorities of the education department link clearly to those of the Council?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear statement of priorities that broadly follows the format of the Council’s strategic vision. • Clear links among Council values, local authority aims and the Service Plan priorities. • Clearly-expressed Council policies within the department’s key policies. • Centrally-employed staff, services and establishments hold a list or index of policies. • The authority samples establishment policies. • Establishment documentation such as establishment, service and staff handbooks shows quotations from, and reference to, authority policies.

Quality Indicator 2.1

Mechanisms for Consultation

This indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to involving customers/ citizens in shaping policies and services
- range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to involving establishments and staff in shaping policies and services.

To fulfil the requirements of Best Value, and to conform to accepted good practice in local government, there must be mechanisms to link management decisions to the needs of the community. There is, therefore, an expectation that all stakeholders, including customers/citizens, staff and, as appropriate, pupils, should be actively involved in service development. This will require a range of approaches and mechanisms that can be applied across the authority's areas of activity.

Level 4 Illustration

- The department has clearly identified its stakeholders and consults them as part of a regular cycle and within corporate policy. Stakeholders are involved in shaping strategic aims and priorities. The department seeks to ascertain perceptions of the quality of all major aspects of the department's work.
- The Education Committee, or equivalent, is fully involved and informed of consultation processes and their outcomes.
- A very good range of consultation mechanisms is used, differentiated to the needs of various stakeholders, e.g. pupils, parents and staff.
- There is an open ethos in which stakeholders feel encouraged to give views and provide feedback on services.
- Consultation exercises are efficiently run so that they give value for money, and very good feedback is given on the outcomes. Key recommendations for improvement result or clear feedback is provided as to why recommendations could not be implemented.
- Teaching and ancillary staff in establishments and staff in central services take active roles in consultation exercises and are fully involved in developing authority policies and planning for improvement.
- Where there is a legal requirement to consult, this is done effectively.
- School Boards, parent groups, pupils and other community interests are consulted on issues relating to their functions and interests.

Level 2 Illustration

- Identification of stakeholders omits some important groups. The views of some of the authority's stakeholders are sought but not on the full range of service, including aims.
- The process of consultation is not sustained beyond the early stages of a development or conversely is at too late a stage to have significant impact. It draws too heavily on the views of staff and does not take sufficient account of the perceptions other stakeholders may have of the quality of service.
- The Education Committee, or equivalent, has a general awareness of consultation being carried out but not necessarily of its significance for future action.
- While a number of consultation mechanisms are used, some of them are not well matched to the Council and service context or differentiated sufficiently to the needs of groups. The rationale for particular mechanisms is not always clear.
- Those being consulted have only an incomplete understanding of the rationale, intended outcomes or processes of the exercise. They have a general knowledge of the outcomes of consultation but have not had full feedback about how their views influenced the outcomes or why certain recommendations could not be implemented.
- There is generally a positive ethos of consultation but the perception that on some areas the outcome is cut and dried in advance.

KEY AREA 2	CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION
No:	2.1
Quality Indicator:	Mechanisms for consultation
Theme:	Range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to involving customers/citizens in shaping policies and services
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Was there consultation on the strategic aims of the authority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation exercises announced at, and/or are reported to, the Education Committee or its equivalent. • Changes or additions to strategic priorities include provision for consultation. • An appropriate range of stakeholders defined and then consulted on key strategic aims. • Opinions to ascertain customers' perceptions of the service sought on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – service accessibility – fairness and courtesy – reliability of service – availability of facilities – performance and response times – responsiveness and flexibility – complaints handling – accessibility of key staff – visibility and identification – service level performance – documentation – simplicity and accuracy – relevance of service – development of new services.
Are consultation exercises managed effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation and purpose of different types of consultation are clearly explained. • An adequate timescale is allowed for consultations. • Feedback on the results of consultation exercises. • Reasons for final decisions are explained. • Different mechanisms such as surveys, forums and citizens' juries are used appropriately to the needs of various groups.

KEY AREA 2	CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION
No:	2.1
Quality Indicator:	Mechanisms for consultation
Theme:	Range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to involving establishments and staff in shaping policies and services
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Does the ethos of the department promote effective consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that the Head of Service, senior management and their own line managers are approachable to staff at all levels. • An open and reflective approach to issues such as customer care and complaints procedures. • Clear evidence of two-way communication, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – open discussion of important issues at meetings – senior staff attend staff and team meetings – departmental staff attend School Board, community, parents' and other local meetings – correspondence and telephone calls are always answered. • A system of effective formal and informal contacts with trades unions. • A code of conduct which is observed and which clearly conveys the expected standards in relationships that will exist between and among: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – officers and the public – the levels of professional staff – elected members and staff. • Staff at all levels enjoy their work, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – they are committed to the department – there is low turnover and absence.
Are staff involved in policy development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancillary staff and their trade unions are consulted appropriately. • A structure of formal and informal Joint Consultative Committee meetings or equivalent. • Staff working groups convened and minutes of meetings are available. • Headteachers act effectively to include staff in the consultation process with the authorities. • Establishment-based staff involved in authority policy development. • Policies understood by staff and they feel some ownership. • Staff understand the need for policy development leading to performance improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2

Mechanisms for Communication

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to communicating aims, policies, provision and performance to customers/citizens
- range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to communicating aims, policies and performance to staff and establishments.

To complement consultative mechanisms, there needs to be an effective approach to communication. This will recognise that there are a number of different audiences which have a right to be informed of the authority's activities. There should also be a Public Performance Reporting (PPR) framework to communicate clearly and simply with various stakeholders. Again, this will require a variety of approaches that are suited to the audiences concerned and will therefore involve a range of communication media.

Level 4 Illustration

- The authority uses a wide range of appropriately-differentiated methods for communicating with its stakeholders as part of a well thought-out PPR framework.
- All stakeholders receive regular and accurate information about the main education outcomes in terms of local and national objectives. School Boards and parents are kept fully informed about strategic issues and department policies.
- Elected members are very well informed about performance. All reports to the Education Committee are clear and informative.
- Priorities in the Service Plan are communicated clearly to key stakeholders, especially establishments.
- The authority has a well-publicised and efficient system for responding to enquiries and complaints.
- Policies are accompanied by relevant supporting information to which establishments can refer during implementation.
- Communication with establishments is regular, structured, supportive and efficient. Appropriate use is made of ICT.
- Meetings give very good opportunities for discussion of educational issues and quality development in addition to business matters.

Level 2 Illustration

- There are a number of different types of public reports but they do not link together well as part of a PPR strategy. For example, there may be limited links between schools and authority Standards and Quality Reports.
- Information given to stakeholders about the outcomes of the authority is generally sound but irregular or partial. School Boards and parents have only a general awareness of how well their establishment and the authority as a whole are performing.
- Only a limited range of communication methods is used. Stakeholders and members of the public are not always sure of the system for making enquiries, or are put off by slow responses.
- Reports to Education Committee are not always clear or do not convey clear messages about performance.
- Centre staff and establishments are variable in their understanding of key Service Plan priorities relating to quality.
- Establishments are uncertain about the detail of some key authority policies and lack concrete information to refer to during planning for implementation.
- Communication with establishment managers is generally sound but not always efficient or supportive in nature. Senior staff differ in the extent of their awareness of key policies or issues and rely too much on informal contacts and networks to supplement their knowledge. There is frequently too little time for discussion of educational issues and quality development at meetings.

KEY AREA 2	CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION
No:	2.2
Quality Indicator:	Mechanisms for communication
Theme:	Range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to communicating aims, policies, provision and performance to customers/citizens
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
How well does the department disseminate information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear Public Performance Reporting strategy which links to corporate strategy and information disseminated on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – outcomes – progress – key processes – development needs. • Public Performance Reporting is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – organised to provide information at the optimal time – targeted appropriately for the designated audience – appropriate – in forms which are clear and easy to read. • Reports clearly evaluative and linked well to related performance information. • Aims, policies and plans disseminated to School Boards and parents. • Headteachers act effectively in the communication chain. • The Service Plan widely circulated and promoted. • Reports to the Education Committee, or its equivalent, informative, well presented and argued with clear evaluative recommendations. • The Education Committee, or equivalent, considers the performance of the authority as a whole, of individual establishments and of particular curriculum areas. • Mechanisms for the dissemination of information include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – leaflets on key areas of service provision – newsletters – e-mail, web-sites – one-stop-shops. • A well-publicised system for enquiries from parents, and members of the public.

KEY AREA 2	CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION
No:	2.2
Quality Indicator:	Mechanisms for communication
Theme:	Range, appropriateness and effectiveness of approaches to communicating aims, policies and performance to staff and establishments
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Does the authority communicate its views on establishment performance clearly, unequivocally and based on evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishments get open feedback on, and full discussion of, performance. • Establishments understand the basis for evaluations (e.g. performance data). • Agreement on the nature and contents of Standards and Quality Reports.
Does the authority ensure that the Service Plan is carried through to establishment level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and strategy communicated to all levels of the department. • Meetings of key establishment staff at different levels discuss developments and areas of concern. • Establishment plans show evidence of incorporation of authority priorities. • Monitoring of staff awareness of policy and strategy. • Understanding of employee views on what it is trying to achieve, what employees' concerns are and what it could do better.
Do establishments have access to all necessary information and guidance required to implement policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishments provided with copies of relevant policies, associated procedures and reference materials. • Minutes of meetings, copies of newsletters, leaflets, web-site data and posters.
Is there a systematic approach to communication with establishments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system of programmed meetings with headteachers and other senior staff. • Appropriate communications permeate to all levels of staff using the most efficient means including the role of headteachers as a communication link between authority and establishment staff. • Meetings have an agenda covering current educational and business issues. • Quality development, policy-making and self-evaluation issues regularly discussed at senior staff meetings. • Meetings involve open discussion. • Meetings supplemented by seminars or conferences on priorities. • Headteacher meetings open to other senior officers and key staff in support services such as Quality Development, Psychological Services, Outdoor Education, Finance, Property and Buildings and Health and Safety. • Senior staff play an active role in communication to all staff on authority policies and other information.

Quality Indicator 3.1

Service Planning

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- organisation and management of the performance management and planning framework
- structure and content of the Service Plan
- appropriateness of improvement objectives and related measures of performance
- quality of planning for action to achieve improvement objectives and related measures of performance.

At the heart of the authority's performance management and planning will be the Service Plan, its equivalent, or a series of mutually-consistent plans including joint plans with other departments. The existence of documents in themselves can only be a partial reflection of effective management and planning, however, since the processes that surround both the development of the plan and its implementation are of obvious and critical importance.

Level 4 Illustration

- Performance management and planning is integral to the work of the service as the key mechanism for putting into operation strategies and policies to achieve education improvement objectives. Where there are plans for different activities, or planning with other services, agencies or partners, these are internally consistent and cross-refer.
- The plan fully reflects local and national priorities.
- There is a very well-managed planning cycle which users recognise as fitting well with corporate and establishment work cycles and meets national requirements.
- The service rigorously evaluates delivery options taking account of challenge and competition.
- Plans are based on a rigorous audit which identifies major strengths and weaknesses and enables the service to concentrate resources on the most important priorities.
- Staff responsibilities for planning and reporting, and accountability lines, are clear and well defined.
- The presentation and structure of the plan (aims, audit, improvement objectives and outcomes), or different versions of the plan, are clear and precise and immediately accessible to various users. Action planning is very successful. It has measurable outcomes and success criteria which identify improvement in performance for service users.
- Where some of the service's objectives involve working with other services or organisations, partners are fully aware of each other's plans and their respective roles in implementation.
- A high priority is given to continuous professional development as a means of improvement. This will include advice and guidance to direct work; the provision and organisation/access to staff development; a focus on the specific needs of staff such as probationer teachers and school managers; support for school development planning and Standards and Quality Reporting; support for schools in following up points for action in HMI reports; and the creation of quality resources to support curriculum development.

Level 2 Illustration

- There is a process of performance management and planning but it has limited coherence. The plan may include too many or too few improvement objectives and it should be more central to the quality improvement work of the service. The planning cycle is unhelpful to some of the key users.
- The Service Plan only partly reflects national and local priorities in education or there may be some imbalance.
- When planning, delivery options have not been fully considered.
- Action planning is not always systematic, or it tends to focus too much on processes rather than the impact on service users. Planning varies in quality from project to project. Limited use may have been made of benchmarking to inform planning.
- Continuous professional development is good in what it does but not always clearly targeted to national and local improvement priorities or differentiated to the specific needs of establishments or groups of staff. It may not provide sufficiently for access to specialist expertise such as for subjects or school management.
- The presentation and structure of the plan or different versions of the plan lack clarity or detail and would discourage a number of readers.
- Where service objectives involve working with other departments or agencies, partners are not always fully aware of their respective roles in implementation.

KEY AREA 3	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
No:	3.1
Quality Indicator:	Service Planning
Theme:	Organisation and management of the performance management and planning framework
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Is Service Planning fully integrated into the management and planning arrangements of the authority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Service Plan or equivalent document(s) that clearly states education objectives and related standards and targets and how they will be achieved. • The Service Plan adopted by the senior management and appropriate Committees of the Council. • The Service Plan takes account of the full range of the work of the education service. • The Service Plan includes details of steps to be taken to consolidate previous initiatives and to maintain and improve established aspects of work as well as new initiatives to meet objectives. • Scope for the development of establishment-based priorities. • Integration into the authority's arrangements for Best Value implementation including the requirements of the Accounts Commission. • Identified planned improvements in service management and delivery. • Public Performance Reporting ensures citizens and stakeholders are aware of priorities, improvement objectives, standards of service and performance levels.

<p>Is the Service Planning process organised effectively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of Best Value service review for appropriate services/activities based on a five-year cycle or similar to support continuous improvement. • Rigorous evaluation of delivery options, taking account of competition and challenge, to ensure the delivery of high quality, cost-effective services. • An established planning cycle which harmonises Council, establishment cycles and national requirements. • Change managed by the use of pilot exercises with appropriate controls. • Benchmarking used to identify improvements in services. • Planning procedures are implemented effectively. • Objectives in plans operationalised into tasks for teams and individuals to undertake. • Evidence of incorporation of Plan priorities in establishment plans. • Service priorities and improvement objectives communicated clearly to all staff. • Staff fully aware of their tasks and responsibilities in achieving improvement objectives.
<p>Does the Service Planning process take account of changes in the operating environment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account taken of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – policies and initiatives at national and international levels – mechanisms for external regulation and monitoring – specific legislation, where appropriate – the local economic environment – environmental and ecological factors – the social environment – local demography such as age profiles and household size – technological opportunities – competitive environment in key areas – aims of partner organisations. • Account is taken of how stakeholders' needs and expectations may change in the future. The Service Planning process responds to these changing needs. • Appropriate emphasis to planning for day-to-day support services as well as improvement objectives.

KEY AREA 3	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
No:	3.1
Quality Indicator:	Service Planning
Theme:	Structure and content of the Service Plan
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Is there a clear link between the Service Plan and service and corporate aims?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims reflecting Council and national priorities. • Aims covering the seven Key Areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – curriculum – attainment – learning and teaching – support for pupils – ethos, including partnership with stakeholders – resources – leadership, management and quality assurance. • Assessment of the internal and external environment reflected in the aims. • Realistic aims given the resources available in terms of finance, staff and physical assets. • The priorities that must appear in establishment plans clearly communicated.
Is the Plan well structured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and logical links among aims and section plans, budget processes and the specific tasks allocated to senior management. • The Plan clearly sets out the resource implications of priorities and performance targets. • An audit section in the Plan, or reference to a Standards and Quality Report or equivalent document. • Service Plan reflecting a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. • The Plan following a similar format to establishment plans. • Responsibility for implementation when an action or strategy affects more than one department. • Clear arrangements for managing work with other partners and agencies covering responsibilities, budgets and reporting arrangements.
Does the Service Plan recognise issues related to working with other bodies and agencies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service Plan considers issues related to internal structures including working across departments and units. • The Service Plan considers how the authority works in partnership with other agencies. • Where goals and strategies involve working with other bodies on a partnership or multi-agency basis, the role of each body is clearly set out, understood and agreed.
Does the Service Plan contain a customer-citizen focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities and targets based on an understanding of the needs of local communities and stakeholders.

KEY AREA 3	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
No:	3.1
Quality Indicator:	Service Planning
Theme:	Appropriateness of improvement objectives and related measures of performance
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Is the authority's action for improvement appropriate and focused on need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement objectives clearly relate to national and local priorities in education. • A short time lag among identification of need for improvement, planning and implementation of action. • Action targeted differentially for example, on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – specific establishments or areas with development needs – problem areas in attainment, such as P7/S1 and pre-5/P1 transfer – major curriculum developments such as Higher Still or 5-14 – development needs identified by internal or external inspection and quality monitoring – areas of particular social disadvantage – appropriate staff development to support specific needs of staff – support for schools in development planning and follow-up to HMI inspection. • Clear statements indicating why the goals have to be achieved. • Plan outcomes as nearly as possible 'SMART' (specific, measurable, action-linked, realistic and time-linked).

KEY AREA 3	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
No:	3.1
Quality Indicator:	Service Planning
Theme:	Quality of planning for action to achieve improvement objectives and related measures of performance
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Do the actions for improvement reflect best current practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees at all levels involved in the improvement process, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – high priority given to continuous professional development – incentives used, such as employee awards and recognition in review processes – staff aware of the development opportunities open to them – information available on secondments, work shadowing, acting up, voluntary work and personal learning – staff trained in relevant techniques and, where appropriate, internal or external consultants used. • An ethos to support continuous improvement. • The service has identified the key performance areas it needs to benchmark. • Performance measures set for key service objectives, areas of operational performance and resource usage. • Benchmarking used to identify scope, planning and best practice for performance improvement. • Performance monitoring used at managerial and political levels. • Application of relevant national documents and publications. • Action for improvement is associated with service involvement in national initiatives. • Systematic approach to identifying and disseminating good practice. • Active support for specific innovative initiatives. • An effective system for accessing and deploying national improvement funds, such as the Excellence Fund.
Has appropriate collaboration taken place with other agencies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated action with other agencies such as police, medical services and social work. • An effective corporate framework of policy and procedures for inter-agency working. • Regular planning and liaison meetings between and among staff in different sectors or agencies at managerial and local levels.

Quality Indicator 3.2

Deployment and Effectiveness of Centrally-employed Staff

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- staff deployment and remits
- staff effectiveness in managing remits to achieve strategic aims and planned priorities.

The main asset of any education department is its people. This indicator refers primarily to staff who are deployed for all or part of their time, or bought in to deal with quality development. The emphasis of the evaluation is on effectiveness. In order to achieve its objectives and to operationalise the Service Plan, staff require to be deployed effectively. Their work should be focused on the achievement of the authority's improvement objectives. At the same time, staff should work effectively in their other support roles, responding to key stakeholders' needs.

Level 4 Illustration

- Staff management planning is of a high quality. Staff deployment is clearly aligned to support quality assurance and improvement priorities. Time allocations match those priorities and user expectations. Remits are clearly defined and specific enough to enable staff to understand what they are expected to achieve on current tasks. Objectives are translated into tasks that individuals and teams undertake. Line managers carry out effective, regular monitoring and periodic review. Central staff roles and expectations on quality development and support and response roles are communicated clearly to establishments.
- A high priority is given to continuous professional development.
- Staff are confident in their ability to carry out current tasks. Recruitment and staff development for central staff is well planned to meet service and individual needs. Provision is effective in improving skills and competencies.
- Feedback from establishments and other service users shows that staff are influential and fulfil their responsibilities well.
- There is effective teamwork among central staff. They work effectively with staff from establishments, other services and external agencies. Complementary skills are deployed effectively and imaginatively in a team approach. There is a proven system which provides opportunities for effective liaison between staff jointly involved in quality development and other support functions.

Level 2 Illustration

- Staff deployment is not fully matched to service priorities. Too much staff time is spent on responding to day-to-day matters, to administrative functions or to other tasks not directly related to achieving education improvement objectives.
- Remits are not sufficiently well defined or have not been updated to meet current needs. Monitoring and review by line managers are irregular and not based on clear expectations.
- Roles and expectations of central staff in relation to quality development and to support, pastoral care and problem solving are not clearly communicated to establishments.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality and nature of central staff implementation of roles and responsibilities across the authority.
- Some staff report a lack of confidence in their own skills to carry out stated remits. Staff development is organised, but is not always closely matched to individual needs, or action to address needs is slow.
- Central staff tend to work too much in isolation. There is inconsistent use of networks which bring together diverse skills of staff inside the authority and in other agencies.

KEY AREA 3	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
No:	3.2
Quality Indicator:	Deployment and effectiveness of centrally-employed staff
Theme:	Staff deployment and remits
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Does the deployment of central staff effectively reflect the priorities of the Service Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff effectively and efficiently deployed and managed to meet the needs of the Service Plan. • Time allocations appropriate to the range of priorities and tasks. • Deployment taking account of individual strengths, skills and experience. • Identified actions to achieve the number, skills and mix of staff that the service needs.
Are quality development remits clearly defined?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear remits setting out areas and scope of responsibility, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – monitoring the work of establishments – support for, and response to, establishment development plans – ensuring that staff development and review of headteachers is carried out efficiently – the results of these exercises result in targeted support to improve the management of establishments. • Listings of staff identify responsibilities across the work of the authority with associated charts of management structures. • Clear communication from senior management of service priorities and improvement objectives, translated into tasks that relate to staff remits.
Do centrally-employed staff fulfil support and response remits effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrally-based staff meet responsibilities within agreed timescales on issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – disciplinary referrals – budgetary decisions – transfers of funding – responses to documentation submitted e.g. development plans.

KEY AREA 3	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
No:	3.2
Quality Indicator:	Deployment and effectiveness of centrally-employed staff
Theme:	Staff effectiveness in managing remits to achieve strategic aims and planned priorities
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Do individual officers make an effective contribution to the management of the education service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective system of appraisal/job review and retained accurate and up-to-date evidence of effective performance in the job. • Staff knowing how their performance is assessed, by whom, and when. • Staff assisted in improving their performance.
Do officers work well together in teams?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of innovative work undertaken within the authority or in collaboration with other departments and agencies. • Minuted team meetings which attribute contributions and show responsibility for action agreed and discharged. • Positive evaluations of success of tasks undertaken by teams. • Positive ratings in evaluations completed by participants in events related to team activities in which central staff played a prominent role. • Written, positive responses by other staff of the authority and staff elsewhere to work undertaken by teams.
Do officers have up-to-date knowledge and skills? (Cross-refer to QI 1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good knowledge and understanding of key professional issues within their area of remit and beyond. • Staff capabilities sustained and developed by identification, classification and matching of staff competencies and their needs. • Effective management of recruitment and career development. • A review of the effectiveness of training. • A training and development needs analysis. • A clear indication of how training needs will be met at corporate or service level.

Quality Indicator 4.1

Resource Management

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- strategic approach to the allocation of resources
- systematic approach to the management of resources
- strategies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources
- evidence of improved resource management.

The management of finances is closely linked to the wider issue of management of resources. An authority will therefore need to know the resources at its disposal and how effectively these are being used, in order that management decisions can be taken to redirect, reinforce or replace them. An effective approach to resource management will support and facilitate an overall approach to service development.

Level 4 Illustration

- The authority as a whole has a clear rationale which meets national guidance on the allocation of resources to education from the local authority budget and specific grants such as the Excellence Fund.
- Senior management has accurate, up-to-date-information on the resources that are available to them to deliver strategic priorities. There are clearly-understood resource management systems providing current and accurate information.
- Resources are allocated to meet national and local improvement priorities at all levels of the organisation. Systems exist to identify areas of provision or establishments where there is over-resourcing or under-resourcing and to re-allocate or redirect resources accordingly.
- There is a clear and well-developed approach to management of resources that fully adopts current best practice approaches including considerations of environmental and waste management, security and health and safety. The possibilities offered by changes in technology are fully exploited.
- The concepts of efficiency and effectiveness are used in resource management approaches and are linked to Best Value programmes of review that use performance information linked to benchmarking or other relevant parameters.
- Clear evidence exists that the approach to resource management has yielded service improvements.

Level 2 Illustration

- The rationale for allocation of resources to education is not transparent or does not match closely national guidance.
- Senior management have a generalised view of the resources that are available within the department that is based on incomplete or informal information systems.
- Resource allocation is not closely enough linked to national and local improvement objectives. Information on resources is incomplete or variable in quality.
- Current best practice approaches in resource management are known and, to some degree, form part of the work of the department. They are not fully integrated into management systems and their importance is not fully acknowledged by staff.
- Resource management systems and priorities are not subject to a programme of review and the approach is not systematic so much as reactive to needs at any particular time.
- The evidence that the department's approach to resource management has produced service improvements is partial or incomplete.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.1
Quality Indicator:	Resource management
Themes:	Strategic approach to the allocation of resources
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Does the local authority have a strategic approach to the allocation of resources to education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rationale for allocation of general and specific targeted resources for education takes account of national and local priorities. • Elected members and officers have assessed the resources likely to be available over the next three years. • Evidence of a link between Service Planning and budget processes. • Evidence of a strategic approach to the prioritisation of resources to achieve service objectives. • Trends in the allocation of resources can be identified and reflect key priorities. • Clear procedures for managing budget reductions and surpluses and these reflect key policy priorities.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.1
Quality Indicator:	Resource management
Theme:	Systematic approach to the management of resources
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Is there a systematic approach to the management of resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Asset Management Plan. • Accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information on the resources it has available and its current resources performance. • Inventories optimised and consumption of utilities minimised. • Recycling of waste. • Buildings, equipment and other assets managed and assets optimised in line with policy and strategy. • Impact of assets on the community and employees considered (including health, safety and security). • Existing technology exploited. • Technology harnessed to support improvement in processes, information systems and other systems.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.1
Quality Indicator:	Resource management
Theme:	Strategies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Is there a strategic approach to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive Best Value service review programme covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – main areas of expenditure – how services are provided. • Benchmarking used throughout the department to identify scope for performance improvement. • Key quality measures identified in relation to resource utilisation. • 'Spend to Save' opportunities identified and supported. • Senior management regularly review performance and proposals for performance improvement. • Targets set for improving resource use.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.1
Quality Indicator:	Resource management
Theme:	Evidence of improved resource management
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Is there evidence of improved resource management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in ratio of running costs to service expenditure. • Improved use of resources. • Maintenance and utilisation of assets improved. • Improving performance in relation to key benchmark organisations.

Quality Indicator 4.2

Financial Management

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- effective budget management
- range and deployment of financial procedures
- processes for collecting, analysing and evaluating financial information.

The ability of an authority to deliver planned national and local priorities will require a rigorous and thorough approach to financial management. This will have to be, therefore, an integral aspect of the authority's managerial activities and needs to be based on procedures and systems that allow it to identify and deploy the financial resources that are at its disposal, coupled to procedures that allow effective monitoring to ensure financial efficiency is being maintained.

Level 4 Illustration

- Elected members are well informed of budgetary matters with financial reports and proposals having a financial implication being discussed at service and other relevant committees.
- Budgets and financial matters are regularly and rigorously discussed at all management levels.
- There is a systematic and well-organised approach to budgetary administration that provides senior staff with accurate and easily-interpreted data that allows key management decisions to be taken. This process is supported by the existence of regular budget reports that are easily read and analysed.
- The approach to financial management is aimed at the delivery of national and local priorities and objectives. Financial considerations are integral to the approach to Service Planning to the extent that all priorities are properly costed.
- There is an excellent and fully effective working relationship with the corporate department of finance or equivalent, including internal audit.
- The arrangements for financial planning are dynamic and fully utilise information on trends such as inflation and performance information.
- Financial strategies are themselves subject to review and continuous improvement.
- Financial procedures are well known to all relevant staff who are supported by the existence of clear and comprehensive procedures.
- There is a continuing and well-structured programme of staff development and training on financial issues.

Level 2 Illustration

- Reports to Elected Members and committees contain financial information but this is often general in nature and not precisely costed.
- There is regular discussion of financial issues by senior management, but such discussions often lack a clear focus and do not necessarily form a basis for well-informed decisions on financial matters.
- Regular financial reports are produced but these are of variable use through being not easily understood or interpreted, or because they provide information that is perceived as being unreliable.
- Financial management systems, while being well enough developed within themselves, are not fully integrated within the department's other management systems.
- There is a courteous working relationship with finance staff, but their work is not fully harmonised into the work of the education department.
- Financial models are thorough enough in their own right but lack an appreciation of financial trends or changes, and are not subject to a system of rigorous review.
- There is support for the delivery of financial systems in the form of operational manuals, documents and staff training but there is too much variation in comprehensiveness and detail.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.2
Quality Indicator:	Financial management
Theme:	Effective budget management
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Does the senior management effectively manage the department's budget to deliver key objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The senior management regularly review the budget position. • Detailed and accurate budgetary statements available to support this process. • Goals and strategies revised in the light of changing financial resources. • The total budget allocated across named budget holders. • Finances successfully targeted on key objectives. • Finances used meet budgets and senior management have identified and assessed any areas where this is not the case. • Financial information organised to support policy and strategy. • Clear links between the Service Planning process and budgetary processes. • The priorities within the Service Plan adequately costed. • Costings within plans take account of trends such as inflation, salary increases and changes in pricing. • Regular review of financial strategies and practices to secure improvement. • Progress in developing multi-year planning and budgeting.
Are planning, budgeting and performance review closely linked together as part of a Best Value process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning processes consider performance indicators that are related to economic efficiency such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – occupancy rates – pupil-staff ratios – relative costs/benefits of central services. • Planning processes use the principles of option appraisal in identifying possible alternatives. • The costs of proposals identified together with the implications for the budget and other aspects of provision. • Budgetary arrangements take account of the particular needs of small establishments. • Corporate and Service Planning cycles linked to human resource systems such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – flexible working – training and development – performance management – performance information systems. • Current analysis of factors in the planning process.

Are budgetary consultation mechanisms appropriate and adequate?

- Budgets regularly discussed by the corporate management team.
- An effective Cost of Current Level of Service (CCLS) exercise.
- Elected members consulted and involved.
- Budget proposals discussed at appropriate service committees and the Policy and Resources Committee, or their equivalents.
- School Boards consulted through organised meetings or by other means.
- Headteachers and other senior staff consulted on budget and strategic spending plans.
- The budget structure includes explicit provision for quality development and service improvement.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.2
Quality Indicator:	Financial management
Theme:	Range and deployment of financial procedures
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Does the authority have a range of clear financial procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of comprehensive, clear financial procedures. • Evidence that staff know, understand and use these procedures. • A clear set of responsibilities for budget holders who know to whom they are accountable. • A process to identify budget holders with non-financial backgrounds and provide support (e.g. training, manuals). • Budget holders clear what action is required on variances and in what timescale. • Arrangements to identify failure by a budget holder to take corrective action. • Virement levels have been set and authorised. • Senior management respond promptly to requests/reports by internal audit. • Senior management have reviewed financial procedures and controls and made any improvements necessary.

KEY AREA 4	RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
No:	4.2
Quality Indicator:	Financial management
Theme:	Processes for collecting, analysing and evaluating financial information
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Does the authority have a range of effective processes for collecting financial information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental procedures follow any corporate guidelines. • Each budget holder receives regular monitoring reports showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – committed expenditure and, where relevant, income to date – variance against projected spend/income to date using budget profiling, where appropriate – projected out-turn expenditure and, where relevant, income. • User-friendly budget reports. • Evidence that users have been consulted about their information needs. • Financial information reported to the senior management is complete, accurate and timely.
Does the senior management have effective processes in place for analysing and evaluating financial performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management review the department's overall financial position in each reporting period. • Reports highlight major variances (both over and under spends) and action taken to investigate variances.

Quality Indicator 5.1

Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating Performance

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- range and rigour of processes for collecting information to measure establishment and authority performance
- range and rigour of processes for analysing and evaluating establishment and authority performance.

The demands of quality assurance and the complementary aims of Best Value require a systematic approach to the collection and analysis of performance information. To be effective, such systems require to be both rigorous and comprehensive. They should be capable of generating a systematic flow of management information that will allow strategic decisions to be taken in support of the wider vision, values and aims. Such decisions themselves will rely on a well-developed approach to evaluation of information.

Level 4 Illustration

- There is a clear performance monitoring strategy in which the systems used for measurement and monitoring combine very well together to confirm and validate analyses and evaluations.
- A very good range of measurement and monitoring techniques is used efficiently and effectively. Monitoring and evaluation include rigorous application of the Best Value '4Cs' processes. Surveys and reviews are well designed and carried out rigorously.
- An ethos of support and challenge through acceptance of honest and open evaluation is apparent at officer and establishment levels.
- Officers and establishment senior promoted staff are confident and accurate in use of a wide range of performance data. Staff can demonstrate and justify specific evaluations and general trends through verifiable data. Conclusions flow from the data.
- Officers demonstrate accurate knowledge and evaluation of the authority's performance in relation to national and local improvement priorities within their own context and to national and other appropriate local benchmarks.
- Officers demonstrate very good knowledge and evaluation of the performance of specific establishments generally and in relation to the seven Key Areas of HGIOS. Staff in establishments are confident in authority evaluations.
- There is rigorous validation of establishment self-evaluation allied to a differentiated approach which delegates responsibilities or accredits establishments which demonstrate high capability in self-evaluation.

Level 2 Illustration

- There is a range of systems for monitoring and measuring performance but they do not always combine together effectively to provide comprehensive audit information. For example, the rationale for selection of Best Value service reviews is unclear.
- A good range of techniques is used but methods are not applied rigorously. For example, Challenge or Comparison may be neglected.
- The ethos of support and challenge is inconsistent. Some officers and/or establishments may have a sceptical or negative view about performance management or are unclear about the principles around which their system operates.
- Officers' evaluations of establishment performance are generally accurate but lack convincing detail, or knowledge of establishments is inconsistent. For example, there may be differences between HMI evaluations and the authority's or gaps in knowledge or conclusions from data can not always be demonstrated to be valid.
- The database of knowledge of authority overall performance is accurate as far as it goes, but some sources of evidence are not used or benchmarking is not always appropriate. Files are not up-to-date or knowledge is held too much in the head of an officer or with different aspects dispersed around too many officers.
- Establishment senior management are not convinced that authority staff know their establishment in appropriate detail and are not always convinced about the validity of evaluations.

KEY AREA 5	PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
No:	5.1
Quality Indicator:	Measuring, monitoring and evaluating performance
Theme:	Range and rigour of processes for collecting information to measure establishment and authority performance
How do you know?	Some features you might look for:
Is there an overall strategy and policy for performance monitoring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links evident among systems such as inspection, self-evaluation and Best Value service reviews.
Is there a good range of systems in place through which the authority can systematically collect data on: the authority as a whole; its individual services; and establishment performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems for monitoring the specific contribution of each department or agency to cross-cutting initiatives. • Collation and analysis of establishments' self-evaluation using <i>How good is our school?</i>. • Use made of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establishment profiles – officer visits and observation of learning and teaching – headteacher review and self-evaluation exercises by establishments – staff development and review – development planning – cross-authority thematic reviews – HMI reports and follow-up. • An effective procedure in place for managing HMI inspections together with associated action planning and follow-up. • Appropriate mechanisms for officers to build up knowledge of establishments. • Collation and analysis of letters of complaint and commendation about the authority and establishments. • Whole-authority surveys conducted relating to performance indicators including ethos indicators. • Systematic gathering of views from School Boards or through other mechanisms involving key stakeholders. • Information systems and ICT strategies support the production and use of performance information. • Systems for review of impact of services such as psychological services, outdoor education.

<p>Is the collection of information on establishment performance comprehensive in scope?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mechanism for systematically gathering statistical information, producing a collation of data and disseminating it to managers. • Monitoring procedures provide good, systematic information on each of the seven Key Areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – curriculum – attainment including 5-14, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and other aspects of performance – learning and teaching – support for pupils – ethos – resources – management, leadership and quality assurance. • Use made of a wide range of management information and outcome data (e.g. from SEED; benchmarking groups or clubs; Accounts Commission; and Best Value sources). • Information from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employees – service users and other stakeholders. • Qualitative data from direct observation of learning and teaching.
<p>Is there an ethos in which rigorous evaluation is seen as supportive as well as challenging?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of aims; open interchange of data and evaluation; open Standards and Quality Reporting; and regular open open discussion of performance at all levels.

<p>Are monitoring and review processes and methods used rigorously and consistently?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review processes use approaches such as the '4Cs,' appropriately customised to education, that have been developed to deliver Best Value. • Rigorous development of particular techniques such as surveys. • Clear advice to evaluators to promote consistency and rigour, e.g. interview schedules, proformas for data and evaluation recording. • A system of establishment and authority standards and quality reporting. • Mechanisms for monitoring progress clearly defined with a focus on targets and other performance indicators. • Regular progress checks and remedial action when targets are not being met. • Regular reports that contain an account of performance data. • Staff development and review linked to establishment and service unit planning. • Continuous professional development activities reviewed to assess impact in helping to achieve goals. • Where appropriate, benchmarking with reference to internal comparators, national or benchmark families. • System standards such as Investors in People, <i>How good is our school?</i>, Charter Mark and Health and Safety standards used in process management.
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KEY AREA 5	PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
No:	5.1
Quality Indicator:	Measuring, monitoring and evaluating performance
Theme:	Range and rigour of processes for analysing and evaluating establishment and authority performance
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
How well does the authority analyse and evaluate data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance standards and targets for all major service areas. • A clear analysis of performance across the authority making appropriate comparisons among establishments. • Appropriate account of the differing contexts of establishments to allow valid comparisons. • Benchmarking of establishment performance against national and whole-authority performance. • Clear evaluation of analyses made to identify how well, or otherwise, establishments and the authority are performing in relation to national, local and establishment improvement priorities. • Different sources of input and outcome data used for cross-checking, validation and evaluation. • Appropriate comparisons and benchmarks used for analysing whole-authority performance. • Senior staff at establishment level trained and confident in data analysis and evaluation. • Evaluation of statistical data integrated into establishment and authority self-evaluation processes. • Analysis and evaluation detect specific or particular features of performance, e.g. by gender, ethnic background and in curriculum areas such as modern languages.

Quality Indicator 5.2

Continuous Improvement in Performance

This quality indicator is concerned with the following theme:

- evidence of improvement in standards of performance in areas targeted for improvement.

Taken together, the management processes and activities should be shown to have had a positive effect on standards of performance (interpreted widely) in those areas where planning has been targeted and resources directed. Evidence should be available to link the activities to the achievement of quantitative and qualitative outcomes. This link should then be able to be used to demonstrate Best Value.

Level 4 Illustration

- Outcome indicators, including performance information and other benchmark data, show that targets in terms of national and local improvement objectives, and in support of particular aspects of under-achievement, or the achievement of particular groups of pupils, are being met or exceeded in almost all establishments, or that a strong trend of improvement is being demonstrated.
- Public Performance Reports (e.g. Standards and Quality Reports) for individual establishments and for the authority as a whole demonstrate very good progress in key processes for improving the quality of provision such as curriculum development, learning and teaching and management.
- Evidence from stakeholders such as parents, school staff and other service users shows a high degree of confidence in the local authority support for improving the performance of individual establishments, the continuous professional development of teaching staff, and groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs.
- HMI inspection and follow-up reports on individual establishments show significant examples of very good practice and successful implementation of almost all inspection main points of action.
- Service Plan success criteria and other milestones demonstrate a very good record of implementation of improvement projects.
- Service review improvements are implemented effectively, demonstrating Best Value.

Level 2 Illustration

- There are significant areas of non or partial achievement or no trend of improvement in outcome indicators set in respect of national and local improvement objectives and Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs). There is little discernible impact of action on under-performance of establishments or groups or curriculum areas.
- There is significant variation, unrelated to context, across establishments in respect of achievement of measures of improvement.
- Implementation of improvements from Best Value service reviews is patchy or does not have a significant impact on the cost/quality of service delivery.
- Action on improvement of key processes such as staff development for improvement of teaching and/or management is only partially effective.
- Service Plan actions are generally effective but take a long time to impact on the areas they are addressing. Some improvement projects miss their target dates for implementation.
- Service users are generally positive but not markedly so or vary a lot over different measures.
- Implementation of HMI inspection recommendations is inconsistent.

KEY AREA 5	PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
No:	5.2
Quality Indicator:	Continuous improvement in performance
Theme:	Evidence of improvement in standards of performance in areas targeted for improvement
How do you know?	Some features you might look for :
Is there evidence of improvement brought about by the authority's actions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends evident on direct, measurable indicators in aspects of performance targeted for action. • Evidence of improvement from national performance information including analysis of SQA data. • Excellence Fund reports and evaluations show successful implementation of projects/initiatives. • Evidence of turn-around or clear progress in specific areas of under-performance. • Evidence of improvement in performance of groups, for example, relating to gender or to special educational needs. • Evidence that cross-departmental or cross-cutting initiatives, such as those associated with new community schools or social inclusion, are improving pupils' achievements. • Staff, parents and pupils recognise qualitative and quantitative improvements. • Staff evaluations, correlated with other evidence, show improvements resulting from Continuous Professional Development (CPD). • Establishment self-evaluations collated by the authority reflect service improvements. • Performance Indicators demonstrate service improvement. • Evidence of improvement demonstrated through Standards and Quality Reports or other Public Performance Reports. • Service delivery improved in respect of quality/cost as a result of Best Value review. • Follow-up reports to HMI inspections and authority reviews indicate that recommendations have been overtaken effectively. • Other measures of success, such as satisfaction surveys of the public, reflect improvement. • Improvements evident from process monitoring, for example, on milestones in Service Plan actions, or evaluation of staff and curriculum development projects.

<p>Do effective mechanisms exist to disseminate good practice?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and Quality or similar reports disseminated. • The results of authority surveys well publicised. • Meetings and seminars used for practitioners to share experiences. • Working groups used to share good practice, together with the associated production of materials. • News-sheets, video and multi-media used effectively. • Systems of national awards such as Investors in People, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Awards and Charter Mark used to highlight best practice. • Successes publicised and celebrated through the Education Committee, or other means.
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Glossary

Aims	Provide general expectations, usually expressed in value terminology.
Accounts Commission	A statutory, independent body, which, through the audit process, assists local authorities to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources.
Benchmarking	The process of comparing the outcomes of an organisation or its processes to comparable organisations or other reference points such as national or regional data.
Customer/ Citizen Focus	The customer/citizen focus should ensure that a Council is addressing the real needs of its people and effectively influencing the work of partner bodies. To achieve this, people are to be involved effectively in shaping policies and services. This can be at the level of individuals, customers or potential customers, interest groups or members of a locality.
Policy	A definite course of action selected from alternatives. Policies are subordinate to strategy, being used to guide present and future decisions and may therefore include goals and procedures.
Planning	The process of producing a plan that considers the aims to be achieved, how they will be achieved, who is involved in achieving them and the necessary finances and resources. Outcomes of the plan must be specified together with relevant success criteria. Plans are described in different ways. Here Service Plan is used as the most important top level plan which sets out a programme of change/maintenance for a local authority service department. At establishment level, a similar type of plan is normally described as a Development Plan . The Service Planning process should encompass all key improvements and can also be seen as an Improvement Plan .
Plan: Action	A plan that will deliver the actual implementation of documents or processes that are more strategic in focus. Action plans will be part of the Service Plan but because of their detail may appear in a separate format.
Quality Development	The range of activities used in association with evaluation and service improvement.



Strategy	The overall framework within which plans and policies are developed. A strategy does not require to be fleshed out with logistical detail, although to be effective there should be a clear view of the strategic resources that will be devoted to its delivery.
Stakeholders	Those individuals or groups of people who have an interest in an organisation. Generally stakeholders will include groups such as service users (customers), employees, suppliers and the wider community.
Success Criterion	The measure that will be used as a parameter to gauge if a particular development has been implemented to a minimum standard. This measure is set a priori at the planning stage.
Target	A target is what has to be achieved within the timescale set by the plan of which it is part.
Vision	Sets the overall direction and organisational tone needed to achieve a desired end-point. To be effective, a vision will be closely associated with a developed set of values, philosophy or ideology.

Abbreviations

ADES	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
BV	Best Value
CCLS	Cost of Current Level of Service
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EFQM/EM	European Foundation for Quality Management / Excellence Model
HGIOS	How good is our school?
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
PI	Performance Indicator
PMP	Performance Management and Planning
PPR	Public Performance Reporting
QI	Quality Indicator
QISS	Quality Initiative in Scottish Schools
QMIE	Quality Management in Education
SEED	Scottish Executive Education Department
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SODD	Scottish Office Development Department
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SPI	Statutory Performance Indicator

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- fair
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We ensure that inspection activities include the full range of pupils or students in an education establishment, giving due regard, without unfair discrimination, to disability, gender, religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

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Quality Management in Education



Further information is available from:

Scottish Executive Education Department
HM Inspectors of Schools
Quality, Standards and Audit Division
Area 1-B
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Tel: 0131 244 0746
Fax: 0131 244 0653

Email: hmi.qsa@scotland.gov.uk

Visit the HMI Quality, Standards and
Audit Division website:
www.scotland.gov.uk/structure/hmi/

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