

Outline Indicators for Inclusive Assessment

Preamble

Inclusive assessment is an approach to assessment in mainstream settings where policy and practice are designed to promote the learning of all pupils as far as possible. The overall goal of inclusive assessment is that all assessment policies and procedures should support and enhance the successful participation and inclusion of all pupils.

Presented below are a series of 'outline' indicators and associated preconditions that have been agreed upon as being crucial for inclusive assessment by representatives from 25 countries taking part in the Agency's 3-year project *Assessment in Inclusive Settings*:
<http://www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment/index.shtml>

Seven levels of outline indicators have been identified covering people, structures and policy frameworks. These levels are: pupils, parents, teachers, schools, multi-disciplinary assessment teams, policies and legislation. For each of these levels, an outline indicator is proposed – a higher order statement that essentially describes a key condition for the implementation of inclusive assessment.

As well as the outline indicator, a number of 'preconditions' have been identified. These are lower order conditions that must be fulfilled if the outline indicator is being genuinely implemented.

These outline indicators have been developed as a guide to ensuring assessment policies, procedures and practice are as inclusive as possible. As they currently stand, they are intended to be used as a tool for reflection and review rather than data gathering for monitoring purposes.

It is felt that these indicators can be potentially useful in monitoring of developments and trends. However, each of the outline indicators as well as preconditions will require further operationalisation so that the necessary evidence for demonstrating progress towards goals for inclusive assessment is made clear.

Outline Indicator for Pupils

All pupils are involved in and have opportunities to influence their own assessment and the development, implementation and evaluation of their own learning targets.

Preconditions

- There are a range of strategies and tools used in classrooms to engage pupils in self-assessment, setting their own targets and developing meta-cognitive skills and strategies.
- All stakeholders agree that the aim of pupil assessment is focussed upon setting specific and realistic targets that lead to improvements in learning.
- Teachers use methods for giving feedback on learning in a way that is appropriate and motivating for individual pupils.
- There are structures/mechanisms in place that allow pupils to contribute to classroom and school level assessment work and planning as well as the work of multi-disciplinary assessment teams.

Outline Indicator for Parents

Parents are involved in and have opportunities to influence all assessment procedures involving their child.

Preconditions

- Parents have clear rights to request assessment procedures be conducted with their child, as well as then refuse or accept the results of those assessments.
- Parents are involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of their child's learning targets.
- There are structures/mechanisms in place that involve parents in contributing to classroom and school level assessment work and planning, as well as the work of multi-disciplinary assessment teams.
- The role of parents in maximising the factors supporting the inclusion of their child should be clearly understood and recognised at the teacher, school and policy levels.

Outline Indicator for Teachers

Teachers use assessment as a means of improving learning opportunities by setting goals/targets for the pupil and for themselves (in relation to effective teaching strategies for a specific pupil) and providing feedback on learning to the pupil, as well as to themselves.

Preconditions

- On-going assessment for learning for all pupils is the class teacher's responsibility.
- Teachers understand the main purpose of assessment is to determine next steps in learning and not only to compare pupils against externally set norms or other pupils.
- Teachers use a range of assessment strategies that allow them to provide motivating and effective feedback on learning to pupils and others in a meaningful way.
- Teachers receive suitable training and support in using assessment plans, methods and approaches that link into a pupil's IEP, personalised plan or other target setting tool.
- There are a variety of assessment tools and methods available to teachers.
- Teachers take a holistic/ecological view of pupils' learning that considers academic, behavioural, social and emotional aspects of learning. This view should take into account the range of learning contexts within the pupil's home and school environments, as well as the context in which the assessment takes place.
- Classroom assessment takes a team approach – involving pupils themselves, parents, families, their peers, other school teachers and support staff, as well as multi-disciplinary assessment teams as appropriate.

Outline Indicator for Schools

Schools implement an assessment plan that describes the purposes and use, roles and responsibilities for assessment, as well as presents a clear statement on how assessment is used to support the diverse needs of all pupils.

Preconditions

- School leaders are responsible for monitoring the learning of all pupils using appropriate assessment evidence.
- The school has autonomy to organise itself in the best ways to promote inclusion and inclusive assessment.
- There is clear school leadership for inclusive assessment.
- School leaders take the responsibility for achieving a balance of assessment procedures that fulfil a range of purposes: informing individual learning as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- The school has common language used by pupils, parents, teachers and other professionals for understanding assessment. This is linked to school systems for recording and monitoring learning in such a way that it enhances the overall quality and effectiveness of the school.
- There is school based planning for all pupils' learning (academic and social) and assessment that is – if necessary – individually adapted to the specific needs of all pupils.
- All school based planning takes a team approach that actively involves pupils, parents and other professionals.
- School leaders monitor assessment processes in order to support teachers' assessment work.
- School managers provide support, time and flexibility for teachers to implement assessment for learning and to translate the results of assessment processes into their daily teaching practice.
- School leaders organise and support the co-operation and teamwork necessary for assessment among teachers.

- School leaders work to develop co-operative relationships with other schools and organisations such as universities or research institutes that support the sharing of information regarding best assessment practice.

Outline Indicator for Multi-disciplinary Assessment Teams

Multi-disciplinary assessment teams – no matter what their professional composition or team membership – work to support inclusion and teaching and learning processes for all pupils.

Preconditions

- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams are responsible for supporting the work of class teachers in promoting teaching and learning and inclusion.
- At all times the responsibility for pupils' learning and educational assessment remains with class teachers and schools.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams work with all pupils to support teaching and learning and inclusion, not just pupils identified as having SEN.
- All assessment conducted by multi-disciplinary assessment teams directly informs teaching and learning.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams work to the principles of teamwork and participation with pupils, parents, teachers and other professionals.
- All assessment conducted by multi-disciplinary assessment teams considers the pupil's whole learning environment, as well as takes account of the context in which the assessment takes place.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams act as 'multipliers' of best practice by sharing examples of innovative assessment methods and tools, etc.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams work within schools assessment plans.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams consider 'assessment through intervention' approaches.

- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams use a diverse range of approaches and techniques.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment teams use assessment instruments that support the inter-disciplinary work of experts from different fields by providing a shared language and co-operative strategy.

Outline Indicator for Assessment Policy

Assessment policies and procedures support and enhance the successful inclusion and participation of all pupils vulnerable to under-achievement and exclusion, including those with SEN.

Preconditions

- Policy makers are responsible for developing assessment policies that maximise the factors supporting inclusion for the individual pupil and their parents at the teacher and school levels.
- Policy makers are responsible for providing flexible funding structures that support the implementation of assessment policies that maximise the factors supporting inclusion.
- All policy statements concerning pupils with SEN are integrated within general educational policies.
- Policies are guided by regional assessment plans, which are developed by all assessment stakeholders.
- The ultimate goal for assessment procedures specified in all policies is that of supporting teaching, learning and progression for all pupils.
- Assessment policies ensure assessment methods are 'fit for purpose' and the appropriate use of methods should be monitored.
- Assessment policies outline teacher, school and multi-disciplinary team level responsibilities.
- Assessment policies outline the support and training that will be provided for teacher, school and multi-disciplinary team level responsibilities to be fulfilled.

- The support and resources made available to schools and teachers as a result of assessment policies are varied and flexible.
- Monitoring of educational standards makes use of a variety of evidence, not just pupil assessment information.
- Assessment policies support the principle of inclusion of pupils with SEN within the least restrictive environment.
- All assessment policies promote a holistic/ecological view of pupil learning considering environmental factors (within the school and family) and social and emotional skills as well as academic learning goals.
- All assessment procedures are available for and accessible to all pupils in ways that are adapted to their particular needs (e.g. Braille, via interpreters etc).
- On-going assessment is linked to content and learning goals specified in curriculum programmes and documents.
- Assessment policies follow as far as possible a 'universal design' building in flexibility and options that cater for as wide a range of diverse needs as possible.
- Assessment policies provide recognition of 'alternative' summative assessments and qualifications that give access to the labour market for pupils with specific SEN.
- Assessment policies account for and aim to facilitate necessary co-operation with other service sectors (i.e. health and social services).
- Assessment policies facilitate sharing of good practice and support research and development of new assessment methods and tools.
- Assessment policies are monitored in relation to their impact upon equality opportunity for all pupils.
- Modifications to assessment policies are minimised by evaluating the impact of any new assessment policy and practice at the planning stage.

Outline Indicator for Educational Legislation

Assessment legislation promotes the effective implementation of inclusive assessment at all times.

Preconditions

- All legislation concerning pupils with SEN is integrated within general educational legislation.
- The stated purpose of the system of assessment is inclusive assessment for all pupils.
- Whilst legislation may cover assessment for a number of purposes – informing individual learning as well as monitoring and evaluation – assessment legislation promotes a view of assessment as a tool for teaching and learning, not as a tool for classification, accountability or resource allocation.
- All pupils are entitled to take part in all assessment procedures in a way that meets their individual needs.
- Pupils have an entitlement to on-going assessment that informs teaching and learning.
- Procedures for the initial identification of SEN prescribed in legislation are structured in order to inform teaching and learning and intervention.
- Parents and/or carers have an entitlement to be involved in all their child's assessment.
- Legislation ensures that policy, provision and support are consistent across geographical areas of a country/region.