Managing Teacher Performance
in Government Schools

VICTORIA

Victorian
Auditor-General

Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools

Ordered to be printed

VAGO
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Auditing in the Public Interest

The Hon. Robert Smith MLC
President
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Melbourne

The Hon. Jenny Lindell MP
Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Melbourne

Dear Presiding Officers

Under the provisions of section 16AB of the *Audit Act 1994*, I transmit my performance report on *Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools.*

Yours faithfully

D D R PEARSON
Auditor-General

26 May 2010

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Audit summary

Research shows that teaching quality is the largest in-school factor affecting student learning at about 30 per cent. Managing teachers' performance and their development is critical both for helping teachers to improve their skills and for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to achieve its goal to improve the quality of teaching in government schools.

Victoria's 1 555 schools operate in a highly devolved environment in which principals are primarily responsible for day-to-day operations. This includes administering DEECD's teacher performance assessment and development arrangements which comprise:

- the performance and development culture (the culture), which sets out how schools can support teachers to teach to their potential
- an annual performance and development cycle (the cycle), which assesses teachers against DEECD's professional standards, summarised in Appendix A.

The audit sought to determine whether the quality of teaching in government schools has improved as a consequence of the culture and the cycle. We examined the design of the culture and the cycle and how DEECD's central and regional offices implemented and managed them. For schools we surveyed a representative sample of teachers, their performance assessors and principals for their views on the culture and cycle's impact on teaching practice and how schools manage the cycle.

Overall conclusion

DEECD continues to address limitations with its current performance cycle principally through its school improvement program. This includes trialling new ways to describe and measure teacher capabilities, and piloting performance pay. These are all positive measures.

However, unless further action is taken it will still not be possible to assess and reliably demonstrate whether the quality of teaching has improved. Currently there is insufficient evidence to reliably demonstrate this.

There are encouraging indications from both DEECD's, and our own survey of principals and teachers, which show that the majority believe the quality of teaching is improving. However, this is not sufficient and cannot be solely relied upon. Survey responses are perceptions which are not substantiated by verifiable data. DEECD also needs to compile better data that shows how well teachers are performing against the skills and knowledge expectations DEECD sets for teachers and how performance has changed over time.

For the school improvement initiatives to be demonstrably effective they will need to be integrated into the cycle of performance feedback to teachers. Definitive milestones and timelines for implementation of these further initiatives also need to be set.

Findings

Integration of continuous improvement efforts

Since 2003 DEECD has undertaken an ambitious school improvement program to improve the teaching and learning environment in schools and address identified weakness in teacher performance management. Its strategy has been to give school leaders the skills to create an environment for teachers to teach as well as they can, and for students to improve their learning outcomes. DEECD has introduced this environment into schools through its Performance and Development Culture Accreditation Scheme. DEECD accredited 98 per cent schools between 2005 and 2009.

More recently, DEECD has introduced or is trialling new ways to describe and measure teacher capabilities. It introduced the e^5 *instructional model* (e^5 model) in 2009 to describe the capabilities that teachers need to be effective in the classroom. DEECD expects teachers and school leaders to use these capabilities as the basis for helping teachers improve their classroom practice. Its current *Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning* trial (Disciplined Approach trial) involves teachers self-assessing improvements in their classroom practice as a result of targeted professional development.

DEECD is also running a performance pay trial in 2010 and 2011, which strengthens the governance around performance assessments and gives all teachers at a school the opportunity to receive a salary bonus.

DEECD's new teacher performance initiatives are positive developments which should help to better measure teacher skills and knowledge. However, it is too early to tell what effect the e^5 model will have on schools, and it is unclear if or when DEECD will roll-out its current trials across the school system.

Although these initiatives have the intention of improving teacher performance, they are not well integrated with one another, or with the performance and development cycle where teachers are assessed.

DEECD's e^5 model and Disciplined Approach trial are part of an encouraging effort to describe teacher skills in terms of their classroom practice and to measure whether teachers improve following targeted professional development. However, they differ in their descriptions of teacher skills, knowledge and the professional standards under the cycle. Further, neither is integrated into the requirement under the cycle for teachers to identify professional learning activities based on their previous performance assessment.

The culture and cycle share similarities such as the need for teachers to have a performance and development plan, and for teachers to receive feedback on their performance. However, DEECD does not require schools to link what schools must do under the culture to what they must do under the cycle. For example, under the culture, teachers must receive multiple sources of feedback on their performance, but there is no actual requirement for this feedback to form the basis of their performance assessment. Schools may do this, but it is their choice rather than mandated practice.

Performance assessments

Currently, principals assess teachers against the professional standards in the cycle, only in terms of whether they have met or not met the standards, not how well they have been met using an assessment scale. DEECD suggests indicators against each standard to help principals do this, but their use is not mandatory.

A core set of mandatory indicators would give DEECD a base to more reliably measure teacher skills and knowledge, both as part of the cycle and also any future trials relating to teacher performance. The indicators should be used as part of a teacher's annual assessment and in conjunction with an assessment scale to rate how well teachers meet these indicators. Collecting such data would strengthen and more reliably demonstrate how teachers are performing in classrooms.

Operation of the performance culture and cycle

DEECD's arrangements for managing teacher performance compare well against the 12 elements we identified as best practice. DEECD fully met eight elements and partially met three. These elements covered preparing for teacher improvement, professional development, review and feedback and assessor training. The only best practice element not met is that DEECD and its regional offices do not routinely assess how well schools evaluate teachers under the cycle.

In these circumstances DEECD's central office cannot be assured that:
• schools are conducting the steps in the cycle in line with requirements
• it can identify any significant inconsistencies in how schools assess teachers.

DEECD central office also does not routinely evaluate the impact of the culture or cycle on teachers. As a result, it cannot be certain they are achieving their aims. DEECD central office reviewed the culture in 2009, the first review of the impact of its approach to teacher performance management since 2003.

The lack of monitoring and evaluation has likely contributed to DEECD not identifying three aspects of the culture and cycle that are not operating as intended. While most principals, assessors and teachers were satisfied with the operation of the cycle and culture, our survey results indicate that:
• around 25 per cent of teachers (about 9 300 teachers) are not identifying professional development activities, which is a requirement under the culture and cycle

- around 25 per cent of principals and assessors (about 400 principals) feel either unprepared or, very unprepared, to address underperformance constructively. This is concerning given the critical responsibility principals have in managing the cycle and in identifying teachers' professional development needs
- around 5 per cent of teachers (about 2 000) did not participate in a performance assessment because their cycle was concluded without them or their school does not use the cycle at all.

Further, in relation to teachers' knowledge of the cycle, one in three did not know how underperformance is assessed or how to use the results of their performance assessment to inform development of their next performance plan. This suggests that these teachers do not necessarily see their assessment as being relevant to improving their teaching performance from one year to the next, and that the value they get from the cycle is questionable.

More generally, teachers reported lower levels of knowledge than assessors about how they are assessed against the professional standards, and their responsibility and those of their assessor in preparing for their performance assessment.

However, our survey results also indicate that the majority of teachers, assessors and principals believe the culture and cycle have improved teacher knowledge and skills. The main areas of perceived improvement were in teaching strategies, teacher confidence and participation in professional development activities. In relation to the latter, 79 per cent of teachers (about 29 500) were satisfied with the opportunities from their school to meet their professional learning and development needs, and 74 per cent of teachers (about 27 600) were satisfied with the support from their school to meet these needs.

Recommendations

Number	Recommendation	Page
	The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should:	
1.	Mandate a set of core performance indicators and an assessment scale against which schools can:	16
	• assess and grade teacher classroom skills and knowledge against expected requirements	
	• monitor change over time in teacher performance.	
2.	Review how it can effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes to optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance.	16
3.	Obtain regular and reliable assurance that schools are managing the performance and development cycle in line with its requirements particularly for teacher underperformance.	16
4.	Identify and address why some teachers know little or nothing about how they are assessed, and how to use the cycle to improve their teaching from one year to the next.	27
5.	Define underperformance so that schools share an understanding of what it is.	27
6.	Identify what principals and assessors need to address teacher underperformance constructively, provide that support and assess its effectiveness.	27
7.	Remind schools of its requirements for teacher performance assessments and participation in professional development activities.	27

Audit Act 1994 section 16—submissions and comments

Introduction

In accordance with section 16(3) of the *Audit Act 1994* a copy of this report, or relevant extracts from the report, was provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with a request for comments or submissions.

The comments and submissions provided are not subject to audit nor the evidentiary standards required to reach an audit conclusion. Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Submissions and comments received

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

The following is an extract of the response by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The full response is provided in Appendix D.

The department welcomes the opportunity to comment on the audit report and in general accepts most of the key findings and recommendations. As the report acknowledges, we are close to best practice in relation to teacher performance and our system has international recognition through the OECD.

Our current intentions around the e^5 Instructional model, the Disciplined Approach to Whole of School Planning, Rewarding Teacher Excellence and Effective Schools Model, which are discussed in this audit report, are directed at improving teacher quality within Victoria and provide the context for overall school improvement.

The department's specific management response for each recommendation is outlined below.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

Recommendation

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should:

1. • Mandate a set of core performance indicators and an assessment scale against which schools can:

   • assess and grade teacher classroom skills and knowledge against expected requirements

   • monitor change over time in teacher performance.

   <u>**DEECD response**</u>: *Recommendation is rejected*

   <u>*Comments*</u>: *The department has a commitment to monitoring student outcomes to measure changes in teacher performance over time rather than using input measures as recommended by VAGO. Student outcome data provides a robust source of evidence to reliably demonstrate changes in teacher performance over time. DEECD uses this evidence as well as value-add measures of school performance to routinely assess how well individual schools are performing and to identify where teacher quality can be improved.*

2. • Review how it can effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes to optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance.

   <u>**DEECD response**</u>: *Recommendation is accepted*

   <u>*Comments*</u>: *VAGO has recognised DEECD performance as generally best practice. The Department recognises the need to fully and effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes.*

3. • Obtain regular and reliable assurance that schools are managing the performance and development cycle in line with its requirements particularly for teacher underperformance.

   <u>**DEECD response**</u>: *Recommendation is accepted*

   <u>*Comments:*</u> *The department will examine some strengthening of current monitoring through existing mechanisms.*

4. • Identify and address why some teachers know little or nothing about how they are assessed, and how to use the cycle to improve their teaching from one year to the next.

   <u>**DEECD response:**</u> *Recommendation is accepted*

   Comments: The department will be addressing this issue in the context of implementing recommendations 2 and 3.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

Recommendation

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should:

5.   • Define underperformance so that schools share an understanding of what it is

DEECD response: Recommendation is accepted

Comments: The Department will continue to improve the quality of teaching through rolling out the e[5] Instructional Model, the Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning, Rewarding Teaching Excellence and Effective Schools Model which are all covered by the audit report, to improve quality and share understanding of high quality teaching.

6.   • Identify what principals and assessors need to be prepared to address teacher underperformance constructively, provide that support as necessary and assess its effectiveness.

DEECD response: Recommendation is accepted

Comments: The Department will continue to support principals and assessors to implement the e[5] Instructional Model, the Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning, the Bastow Leadership Program and Performance and Development Culture to drive improvements in teacher quality. The assessment of individual teacher performance will continue to be in accordance with the Department's industrial obligations.

7.   • Remind schools of its requirements regarding the conduct of teacher performance assessments and participation in professional development activities.

DEECD response: Recommendation is accepted.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

At January 2010, Victoria's 1 555 schools employed 35 500 full time equivalent teachers. Their salaries accounted for 54 per cent of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD's) annual budget. For 2007–08 and 2008–09 teacher salaries were $3.46 billion and $3.85 billion, respectively.

Teaching quality has a significant influence on whether students achieve their potential. Research indicates that teachers have the largest in-school effect on student learning at about 30 per cent. The quality of teaching depends on the calibre of people entering the profession, how each teacher's performance is managed and their access to high quality professional development.

Managing teacher performance effectively helps teachers continuously improve their skills, and helps DEECD to improve teacher performance.

Principals are responsible for managing teacher performance and development in line with DEECD requirements. They are required to assess teacher performance annually, allocate time and resources for their professional development, and develop and sustain a performance and development culture. This highly devolved approach creates the potential for schools to manage their responsibilities in various ways. Therefore it is important that DEECD exercises effective management of its school accountability mechanisms.

1.2 Performance and development in schools

DEECD expects schools to manage teacher performance and development using:
- an annual performance and development cycle (the cycle), which assesses teachers against professional standards
- a performance and development culture (the culture), which sets out how schools can support teachers to teach to their potential.

DEECD intended that the cycle and culture would:
- link teacher performance to school and government policies, priorities and targets
- suggest ongoing learning and development for teachers that focuses on ways they can improve student learning to meet school priorities
- increase school leadership and management competence
- recognise individual performance by raising salaries
- support improvement where individuals are underperforming.

1.2.1 Annual performance and development cycle

The cycle was introduced in 1996 in a workforce reform linking teacher pay increments to performance. It requires the principal or the principal's nominee to assess a teacher's performance annually using a performance and development plan developed with the teacher. Teachers receive a pay increment if they meet DEECD's professional standards and if they are not already paid at the highest salary for classroom teachers.

This performance-based approach to teacher pay increments is part of the Victorian Government Schools Agreement (VGSA) between DEECD, school staff and the Australian Education Union, which sets out a common pay structure for the teaching profession.

The VGSA sets out three levels of classroom teacher:
- graduate
- accomplished
- expert.

DEECD sets the professional standards (refer to Appendix A). The standards for graduate teachers focus on classroom teaching, professional development and working effectively with colleagues and parents. The standards for accomplished and expert teachers demand greater teaching expertise and involvement in school activities such as developing and evaluating policies or goals.

Principals decide the result of a teacher's end-of-year assessment but may delegate parts of the cycle to senior staff. DEECD suggests performance indicators for each standard to guide assessors as to whether a teacher has met the required standards, but the indicators are discretionary.

2003 school workforce review

DEECD reviewed its management of teacher performance in a 2003 school workforce review. It showed that while some schools excelled in managing performance, most did not and schools and teachers did not see performance management as valuable or constructive. It showed that:
- teachers did not get constructive and objective feedback on their performance
- professional development was not targeted towards teacher needs
- the cycle was theoretically sound, but did not work in practice in most schools.

DEECD then adopted a three phase school improvement strategy:
- Phase 1: introducing a performance and development culture, and improving the ability of school leaders to change their school's culture
- Phase 2: introducing differentiated awards for teachers based on performance and trialling different workplace models, including more community involvement, a broader mix of professionals in schools, more flexible approaches to class formats and timetabling, and the creative use of information and communication technology
- Phase 3: introducing different workplace models into all schools.

DEECD is currently implementing Phase 2.

1.2.2 Performance and development culture

DEECD designed the culture to:

- identify ways to improve individual teachers' professional practices and target their professional development to help improve student results
- create a more enriching, supportive and motivating environment for staff.

The culture has three elements that directly affect the quality of teaching:

- schools use of multiple sources of feedback on teacher effectiveness for individual teachers and teams of teachers
- teachers have customised individual development plans based on individual development needs, student learning and school priorities
- teachers participate in a structured professional learning program and have access to high quality professional development to meet individual development needs.

DEECD recognised schools as having a performance and development culture through its *Performance and Development Culture Accreditation Scheme*, which ran from 2005 to 2009. To achieve accreditation schools had to:

- have an effective induction program for new teachers
- ensure teachers have at least three sources of feedback on their teaching and use it for development
- ensure teachers have individual teacher performance and development plans based on feedback, aligned with school goals, and regularly reviewed
- ensure teachers take part in a professional learning program clearly linked to their needs and school goals
- support each teacher's professional growth.

School accreditation had the following four steps:

1. Registration and self assessment

Schools registered, assessed their readiness to apply for accreditation against the criteria, and improved where necessary.

2. Online teacher survey

Teachers filled out a confidential on-line survey for an external verifier. It asked whether schools were meeting the accreditation standard in the culture self-assessment framework.

3. Written application

Schools applied in writing to the external verifier if they got a satisfactory result from the survey.

4. External verification and decision

An external agency assessed the application and decided whether to visit the school or to recommend to DEECD to approve or reject accreditation. DEECD central office then decided whether to accredit.

Post accreditation, DEECD expects schools to continue to improve their performance and development culture. DEECD had accredited 98 per cent of schools by 2009. DEECD's Regional Network Leaders are working with the remaining 2 per cent to meet the accreditation standard.

The OECD has recognised the culture as one part of a highly effective approach to school improvement across the education system.[1]

1.3   Departmental initiatives—teaching quality

Following the 2003 review, DEECD initiated projects to improve the quality of teaching in government schools. These initiatives emphasise the need to improve the ability of principals and other school leaders (e.g., assistant principals) to support teachers and to improve teachers' classroom practice.

1.3.1 *Blueprint for Government Schools*

The 2003 *Blueprint for Government Schools* identified enhancing the teaching-learning relationship as one of three priority areas, along with recognising and responding to diverse student needs and continuously improving schools.

Updated in 2008, the *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform* emphasises building teacher capacity through the workforce reform strategy, which covers career development, school leadership and professional learning opportunities.

1.3.2 *Effective Schools Model*

In 2003 DEECD developed the *Effective Schools Model* for its school improvement program. The model has eight characteristics of effective schools, including leadership, a focus on teaching and learning, and purposeful teaching. It recognises that leadership is a critical component of an effective school and that principals have a direct influence on teachers and the effectiveness of the teaching-learning relationship.

1.3.3 *e^5 Instructional Model*

In 2009 DEECD launched its *e^5 Instructional Model* to help teachers, principals and other school leaders understand and improve teaching practice. It describes five phases of instructional practice for teachers to:

- engage with students
- encourage inquiry
- explain concepts
- develop students' conceptual thinking and skills
- evaluate student performance.

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[1] Matthews P, Moorman H & Nusche D, 'School leadership development strategies: building leadership capacity in Victoria Australia', in B Pont, D Nusche & D Hopkins (eds), *Improving School Leadership*, vol. 2, Case Studies on Systems Leadership, Paris, 2008 pp 179–213.

For each of these phases the model sets out:

- capabilities of effective teaching
- indicators with four levels of proficiency showing teachers how well they meet the competencies.

1.3.4 *Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning*

DEECD's *Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning* is a professional learning program being trialled by about 800 teachers in 50 schools across two regions in 2009 and 2010. Teachers trialling the program monitor whether they are improving their teaching by self-assessing and recording their knowledge, skills and teaching practice against three criteria which show how they:

- base curriculum and learning programs on current knowledge of how students learn at each developmental stage
- collect and use data to identify students' preferred learning styles
- assess individual student learning needs and use personalised learning plans to identify learning needs, plan activities and set goals and targets.

After this self-assessment:

- teachers identify and prioritise their learning needs and how to meet them
- principals and the school leadership team arrange professional development based on a school-level report of individual teachers' needs and proposed actions
- teams of teachers prepare learning and development plans and negotiate their professional learning priorities with the school leadership team
- teachers do the activities then assess their progress to see if they have improved.

1.3.5 *Rewarding Teaching Excellence*

In 2010 and 2011 DEECD is trialling two models for paying teachers on performance as part of its *Rewarding Teaching Excellence* initiative:

- **Teacher Rewards**—in which schools pay their highest performing teachers a salary bonus based on a panel assessment of their classroom excellence, teamwork and leadership, and their participation in professional development.
- **School Reward**s—in which schools are paid a bonus based on their improvement against indicators from one year to the next. Schools may then allocate their bonus within DEECD parameters.

1.4   The audit

1.4.1   Objective

The audit objective was to determine whether DEECD's teacher performance and development cycle and performance and development culture are improving the quality of teaching in government primary and secondary schools.

1.4.2   Scope and approach

The audit examined the role of DEECD's central and regional offices and schools, in implementing and managing the cycle and culture for 'classroom teachers' under the VGSA. These teachers, about 95 per cent of all teaching staff, are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). The other 5 per cent are leading teachers and teachers with provisional registration (e.g., teachers in their first year out of university).

The audit also surveyed a representative sample of teachers, their performance assessors and principals to understand how schools manage the cycle and culture, and to assess the impact of the cycle and culture on teaching. Survey participants were drawn from primary and secondary schools, and combined primary-secondary schools.

The survey results are in three categories: classroom teachers (or teachers), assessors (comprising principals, assistant principals and leading teachers) and principals. The principals' responses are separate as they are responsible for managing the performance of all staff in their school.

The percentages in the report relate to the responses from 599 classroom teachers, 679 performance assessors and 339 principals. These numbers are a representative sample of staff performing these roles. Accordingly, they have been weighted and extrapolated across the school population. The number of responses was not large enough to reliably disaggregate results, for example by type of school or location.

Where the percentages are equated to numbers of teachers and principals, we based teacher numbers on the total number of classroom teachers as at June 2009 (37 355) and principal numbers on the number of schools as at January 2010 (1 555).

1.4.3   Cost

This audit was performed in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards applicable to performance audits. The total cost of the audit was $540 000.

2 Design and implementation of performance management

At a glance

Background

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) expects schools to manage teacher performance through a performance and development culture (the culture), and cycle (the cycle). For teachers to improve, DEECD needs the right elements and processes in the culture and cycle.

Findings

- DEECD does not regularly monitor the operation of the cycle or evaluate its effectiveness.
- As teachers are not assessed on how well they meet DEECD's professional teaching standards, and there are no mandatory indicators for principals to assess teachers against each standard, teaching quality cannot be reliably measured at a system level.
- DEECD has introduced or is trialling new ways to understand and measure teacher performance. The aim is to provide a better understanding of teacher capabilities and whether professional development actually helps teachers improve.
- DEECD's current and new assessments of teacher performance are not well integrated.

Recommendations

DEECD should:
- mandate performance indicators and a scale for schools to assess teacher classroom skills and knowledge, and monitor change
- review how to effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes to optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance
- obtain regular and reliable assurance that schools are properly managing the cycle, particularly for teacher underperformance.

2.1   Introduction

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) management of teacher performance is important for improving teaching quality in government schools. DEECD needs to use the right elements and processes, determine whether they are working effectively and also be able to show that a teacher's performance is improving.

This chapter scrutinises the development and introduction of the performance and development culture (the culture) and the performance and development cycle (the cycle).

2.2   Developing the culture and cycle

2.2.1   Compatibility with best practice

To assess the design of both the culture and the cycle, the audit compared them with best practice.

Figure 2A shows that DEECD's approach to managing teacher performance compares well in most respects with best practice.

Figure 2A
**Comparison of the elements of DEECD teacher performance
management system with best practice**

Best practice element	Assessment
Preparing for teacher improvement	
Clear roles and responsibilities/duty statements	Met
Development of performance goals and/or plans	Met
Identification of personal development needs	Met
Teacher professional development	
Providing resources (mainly in terms of time release) and opportunities for teachers to follow through on their professional development plans	Met
Review and feedback for teachers	
Ability to recognise achievements	Partially met
Review of performance and provision of feedback	Met
Grievance procedures	Met
A means of addressing underperformance	Met

**Figure 2A
Comparison of the elements of DEECD teacher performance
management system with best practice – *continued***

Best practice element	Assessment
Training for assessors	
Systematic training and resources for the senior staff involved in conducting assessments	Partially met
Documentation and other forms of assistance for the teachers being assessed to understand the process and its objectives	Met
Dissemination of good practice in teacher evaluation	Partially met
Evaluation of the performance management system	
Ongoing monitoring and evaluation by the department of the operation of teacher evaluation processes	Not met

Note: Best practice elements are from research into Australian government and non-government schools and international models. Details are contained in Appendix C.
Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

DEECD meets eight of the 12 best practice elements and partially meets three. Only the regular monitoring or evaluating of the cycle does not meet best practice.

Best practice not met

Under the DEECD's devolved service delivery, principals are responsible for managing the performance and development of their staff. DEECD regional directors assess principals annually against core tasks in their performance and development plans. However, principals' plans do not include managing teacher performance and development as a core task.

Principals attest whether they are adequately managing teacher performance in the School Compliance Checklist. DEECD's central office introduced the checklist in 2007 to help government schools manage and monitor their compliance with legislation and policies and to reduce administration. Principals self-assess against the checklist and report to DEECD central office.

There are 90 elements in the checklist. Teacher performance management is part of the 'Employment Policy' element which requires schools to employ teachers in line with DEECD policies and legislation, and the Victorian Government Schools Agreement. Schools first had to give DEECD's central office an assessment on their compliance with this item, then report to DEECD's central office again only if they changed their self-assessment (e.g., from partially to fully compliant) or if DEECD updated its policies.

Of the 1 451 schools (93 per cent) that have done this, 1 422 have assessed themselves as fully compliant, 27 schools as partially compliant and one school as not compliant. The remaining school assessed itself as not needing to comply with this requirement. DEECD's central office is addressing the non-assessment by the other 7 per cent of schools through its *Increasing Compliance Strategy*.

One in four classroom teachers surveyed did not identify professional learning activities in their cycle plan, which raises doubts that schools are fully complying with the 'Employment Policy' requirement.

DEECD's central office audits a sample of schools on various checklist elements every two years to:

- assess the accuracy of schools' self-assessments
- identify gaps in schools' understanding of compliance requirements
- identify any issues that reduce schools' capacity and commitment to become and remain compliant.

The first audit in 2008 of 50 schools covered 15 of the checklist's elements. It did not include managing teacher performance, which is part of the 'Employment Policy' element.

The audits are not frequent or broad enough to determine whether schools are adequately managing teacher performance. At the time of this audit DEECD's central office was reviewing the checklist and had yet to decide which parts to audit in 2010.

Apart from the checklist and two-yearly audits, DEECD central office does not monitor how well schools implement the cycle.

Best practice partially met

DEECD's cycle and culture partially meet best practice in three areas:

- **Ability to recognise achievements**—Unless they are paid the highest expert teacher salary, classroom teachers are eligible for a salary increment when principals assess them as meeting their performance plan requirements. About 45 per cent of classroom teachers are paid the highest expert teacher salary. The DEECD secretary may also approve multiple increments for teachers upon recommendation from their school principal. DEECD is trialling a new performance pay system which, if introduced statewide, would make all classroom teachers eligible for pay increases. DEECD also recognises outstanding teaching through its Innovation Showcase and the Victorian Education Excellence Awards. However, teachers are eligible for a total of 6 of only 12 awards as either individuals or part of a team so the likelihood of recognition is low.

- **Systematic training and resources for the senior staff conducting assessments**—DEECD's central office publishes cycle guidelines and templates for teachers, assessors and principals. The guidelines clearly and comprehensively outline the aim of DEECD's cycle, the roles and responsibilities of teachers and assessors and the professional standards for teachers. However, the guidelines do not explain how to conduct assessments and DEECD's central office does not train or specifically guide assessors. The templates show teachers and assessors what to include in a performance and development plan. Nevertheless, this area is partially met since the survey results showed most principals and assessors feel prepared to assess performance.

- **Dissemination of good practice in teacher evaluation**—DEECD's central office does not circulate good practice in teacher evaluation. However, in at least three regions principals do share information through regional network meetings coordinated by Regional Network Leaders.

2.2.2 Implementing the culture and cycle

The audit found that in developing and implementing the culture and cycle DEECD's central office:

- consulted effectively with schools and other stakeholders before introducing the culture and cycle into schools
- adequately informed schools about the aims of the culture and cycle and DEECD requirements, including training for principals to manage the cycle, and publishing accreditation guidelines and a self-assessment framework under the culture
- monitored their initial implementation by surveying and holding focus groups with principals and other DEECD staff for the cycle, and by independently reviewing the culture.

In implementing the culture DEECD's central office:

- designed the accreditation process using expert advice
- trained external assessors
- could quality assure the external assessors' reports on school applications.

2.3 Scope for improving teacher performance management

Although DEECD's approach to managing teacher performance aligns with best practice in almost all respects, there is scope to improve.

2.3.1 Measuring improvement in teacher performance

Although DEECD has committed to improve the quality of teaching in government schools, neither the cycle nor the culture have measures to assess whether individual teachers are improving their performance.

Individual teacher performance

Principals assess teachers annually against DEECD's professional standards as part of the cycle and can use indicators suggested but not required by DEECD. Principals assess teachers only on whether they have met the standards or not, not how well they have met them on an assessment scale. Without a broader assessment scale, schools cannot reliably use teacher performance assessments to measure teaching quality, or monitor changes over time. Using basic mandatory indicators would facilitate a more consistent measurement of teacher performance by schools.

The *Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning* trial (Disciplined Approach trial) is an encouraging development because there is a data collection method to identify whether teachers believe they are improving as a result of targeted professional development. The Disciplined Approach trial is ongoing and teachers have yet to self-assess whether their performance has improved after their professional development.

DEECD should integrate any broader roll-out of the Disciplined Approach trial into its management of teacher performance.

School performance

DEECD's 2005 *School Accountability and Improvement Framework* aims to hold schools accountable to DEECD's central office and the community. It also required schools to focus on improving student learning. School self-evaluation and review are key components of the Framework which help schools analyse their performance and practices in order to develop improvement strategies. Schools are also required to undertake one of four different types of review over a four-year period depending on their performance level and context.

Under the Framework, DEECD's central office collects information annually on the school learning environment through its Staff Opinion Survey, completed by all teachers, and Attitudes to School Survey, completed by students in Years five to twelve.

The surveys ask whether staff and students believe the school is improving in areas like school leadership, morale and student experiences such as motivation and decision-making. They also ask whether students think their teachers are effective.

Though the surveys give some information on whether aspects of teacher performance are improving in a school, the information is based only on staff and student perceptions.

Student achievement data also gives some insight into teacher performance as teachers are the major in-school influence on student learning outcomes. However, this data has limitations. Teachers are not the only influence on student outcomes and as achievement data is aggregated variations in teacher performance are masked. Understanding the causes of positive and negative movements in student learning achievements requires closer examination. Schools do this through self-evaluation and review.

DEECD's central office monitors student achievement data and can follow-up with schools where results fall below expected levels. Thus it is more likely to be reacting to, rather than preventing, a problem with teacher performance.

Improving teacher performance data

DEECD recently reviewed the workforce to identify where it needs better data on its departmental and school-based staff performance. An interim report acknowledged the need to assess workplace performance but suggested measuring school performance using:

- results of DEECD's Staff Opinion Survey
- rates of implementing DEECD initiatives
- achievements against the culture framework
- satisfaction with the performance assessment process.

Understanding school performance is important but it is not clear how the interim report's proposals will enhance DEECD's central office understanding of where teachers are performing well or underperforming, and whether individual teachers are improving their classroom practice.

2.3.2 Monitoring and oversight of the cycle

As DEECD's central office is accountable for the cycle's success, it should be able to report whether schools are managing it properly.

DEECD's teacher rewards trial has stronger governance for teacher assessments than the cycle both for the assessment and the school's accountability to its regional office. A three member panel means teacher assessments are not solely the principal's responsibility. An external assessor such as a Regional Network Leader or Director must verify that the school's assessment meets DEECD criteria. This makes schools directly accountable to the regional office for teacher assessments—currently they are not.

As part of this trial, DEECD central office should assess whether this governance practice could apply to the cycle.

2.3.3 Integration of ways to manage teacher performance

DEECD has two tools and two initiatives for managing teacher performance, namely:

- the culture, which sets the standard for schools on how to create the right environment for teachers to teach to their potential
- the cycle, in which principals assess teachers annually against DEECD's professional standards
- the *e⁵ Instructional Model* (e^5 model), which describes the skills teachers should have to teach proficiently and which DEECD's central office expects teachers and school leaders to use to improve teachers' classroom practice
- the Disciplined Approach trial, which measures whether teachers are improving their knowledge, skills and teaching practice as a result of targeted professional development.

DEECD's central office introduced the culture and the Disciplined Approach trial after the 2003 workforce review. Each aims to improve teacher performance but they are not well integrated in that schools do not have to integrate the cycle, where a teacher's performance is assessed with the culture or the Disciplined Approach trial.

For example, under the culture, teachers get feedback on their teaching which becomes the basis of their performance and development plan. Under the cycle, teachers are required to consult and agree on a performance and development plan with their assessors. DEECD's guidelines require this plan to be based on the teacher's previous assessment.

Individual schools may integrate professional development planning, feedback and assessment to satisfy the culture's standards and cycle's requirements. However, there is no requirement for:

- a teacher's assessment under the cycle to be based on the same sources of feedback they get under the culture
- a teacher's performance and development plan under the culture to be the same as the one developed under the cycle.

DEECD expects schools to use the e^5 model as the basis for identifying teacher professional development. There is no requirement that schools use it to enhance teacher performance and development under the cycle. The e^5 model and the professional standards are not aligned. However they are complementary in that the professional standards identify teacher competencies and the e^5 model explains how teachers can demonstrate competency.

Although it is limited to 50 schools, the Disciplined Approach trial is not helping to fully integrate one approach which would be more effective. With this trial, teachers do not have to self-assess their capabilities and identify professional development in line with the cycle.

Introducing the e^5 model and the Disciplined Approach trial suggest that DEECD recognises the need to improve how school leaders and teachers understand teacher capabilities and how to measure improvement. Using them independently of the cycle suggests that DEECD is moving away from the professional standards that relate to teacher skills. It also shows that DEECD's central office has not integrated its teacher performance initiatives in schools.

This lack of integration may result from three areas of DEECD's central office administering the four ways of managing teacher performance:

- the Office for Resources and Infrastructure manages the cycle
- the Office for Government School Education manages the culture and e^5 model
- the Office for Policy, Research and Innovation manages the Disciplined Approach trial.

This administrative structure may have contributed to non-integration of teacher performance initiatives and could increase administration in schools. It may lead to inefficiency and confusion about DEECD's expectations for teacher performance and development, as schools use different tools and processes to achieve the same goal of improving teacher performance.

2.4   Conclusion

The DEECD's teacher performance assessment cycle and development culture have most of the elements of best practice, however aspects of DEECD's approach can improve.

Measuring improvements in teacher performance

Indicating whether a teacher has met or not met the professional standard gives only a limited indication of performance and change over time. In the absence of mandatory indicators the basis of assessments is less certain. Introducing a broader assessment scale and a base set of mandatory indicators would facilitate a better understanding of how teachers perform against the assessment standards and more certainty over the consistency of assessments.

Monitoring and oversight

As DEECD's central office does not routinely monitor how well schools manage the cycle, it has little assurance that:

* schools are actually following the cycle in line with DEECD requirements
* schools are conducting each step in the cycle consistently
* it will identify any significant inconsistencies among schools in the way they assess teacher performance
* emerging statewide issues will be highlighted such as teacher underperformance, or whether classroom teachers at the top of the expert teacher salary range have the incentive to maintain or improve their performance.

Regularly monitoring how well schools conduct the cycle would:

* assist DEECD's central office identify these and other potential problems as they emerge
* guide DEECD's central and regional offices on how to target assistance for schools.

The current trial of the Teacher Rewards model in the *Rewarding Teaching Excellence* initiative strengthens the governance of teacher performance assessments within schools and makes schools accountable to their regional office for these assessments. DEECD's central office should consider applying both features of this trial to all schools. DEECD's central office could also obtain greater assurance that schools are meeting these requirements by including this as a core accountability in principals' performance and development plans.

Integration of approaches

Although DEECD is developing new ways to assess teacher performance, its current tools and processes are not well integrated. DEECD should review how it can optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance so that:

- duplication is eliminated
- assessors can use the same indicators to assess a teacher's performance
- uncertainty is reduced
- approach is clear.

Recommendations

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should:

1. Mandate a set of core performance indicators and an assessment scale against which schools can:

   - assess and grade teacher classroom skills and knowledge against expected requirements
   - monitor change over time in teacher performance.

2. Review how it can effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes to optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance.

3. Obtain regular and reliable assurance that schools are managing the performance and development cycle in line with its requirements particularly for teacher underperformance.

3 Operation of the culture and cycle

At a glance

Background

The audit surveyed teachers, assessors and principals for insight into the operation of the performance and development culture and cycle.

Findings

- About one in five teachers knew little or nothing about how they are assessed and how to use the results in their next performance and development plan.
- Nearly one in three teachers do not understand how underperformance is identified.
- Addressing underperformance constructively is the most concerning aspect of the cycle. Twenty-six per cent of principals (equating to about 400 schools) and 22 per cent of assessors feel either unprepared or very unprepared to do so.
- Seventy-nine per cent of teachers (equating to about 29 500) were satisfied with their opportunities to meet professional learning and development needs.
- Seventy-four per cent teachers (equating to about 27 600) were satisfied with their school's support to meet these needs.
- About a quarter of teachers (equating to about 9 300) did not identify professional development activities and about 5 per cent did not take part in a performance assessment.

Recommendations

DEECD should:

- address why so many teachers do not know how they are assessed and how they can use the cycle to improve their teaching year-by-year
- define underperformance
- support principals and assessors to deal with teacher underperformance constructively
- remind schools of the requirements to assess teachers and for teachers to develop professionally.

3.1   Introduction

How well the performance and development culture (the culture) and the performance and development cycle (the cycle) operate in schools determines how much teachers can benefit from them. It also affects how far the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) can meet its aim of improving the quality of teaching.
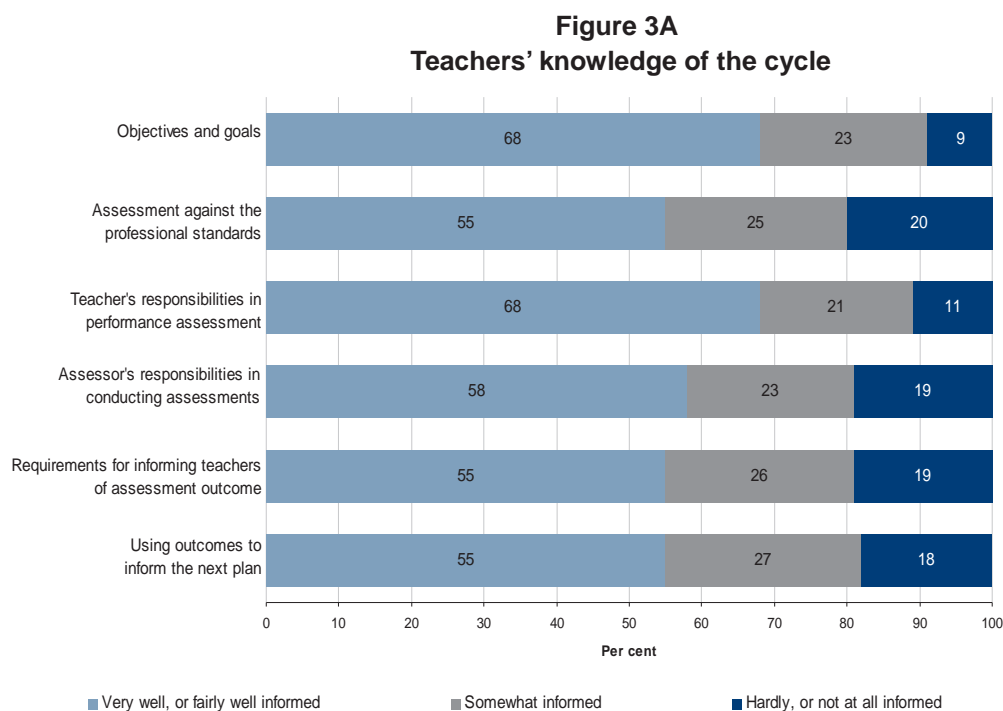
In this chapter the report reviews:
* how staff felt about conducting the cycle
* aspects of the culture and cycle that were not working as intended.

3.2   Knowledge and preparedness of staff

For insight into the operation of the culture and cycle within schools, the audit surveyed teachers, their performance assessors, and principals in their dual role as assessors and managers of staff performance.

3.2.1   Teachers

Figure 3A shows teachers' reported knowledge of the cycle for aspects that affect performance assessments.

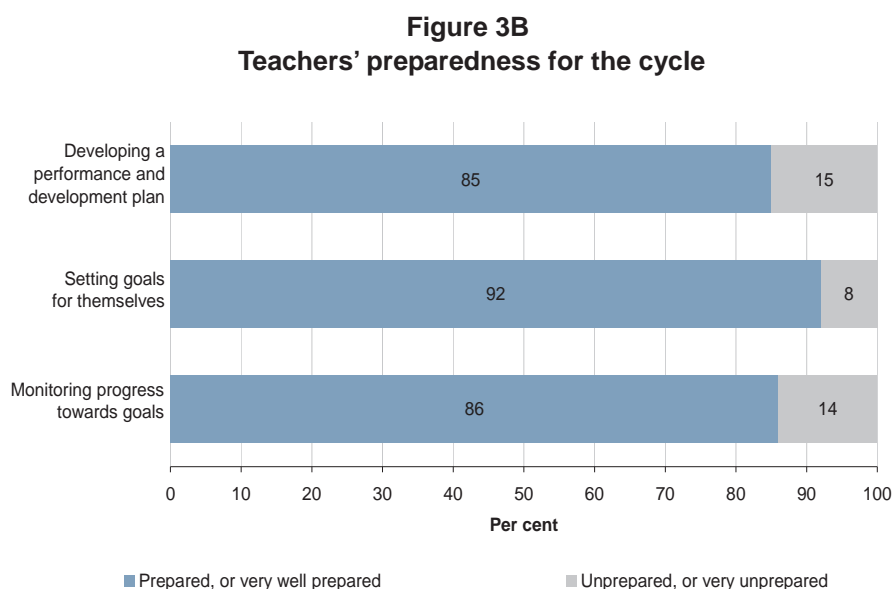**Figure 3A**
Teachers' knowledge of the cycle

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

The survey results showed that:

- teachers in secondary schools knew less about the cycle than those in primary schools
- teachers in schools of more than 400 students knew less about:
    - their assessment against the professional standards
    - the requirement that they be told about their assessment
    - how to use cycle results in their next performance plan.

Figure 3B shows that most teachers felt well prepared for developing performance and development plans, setting goals and monitoring progress.
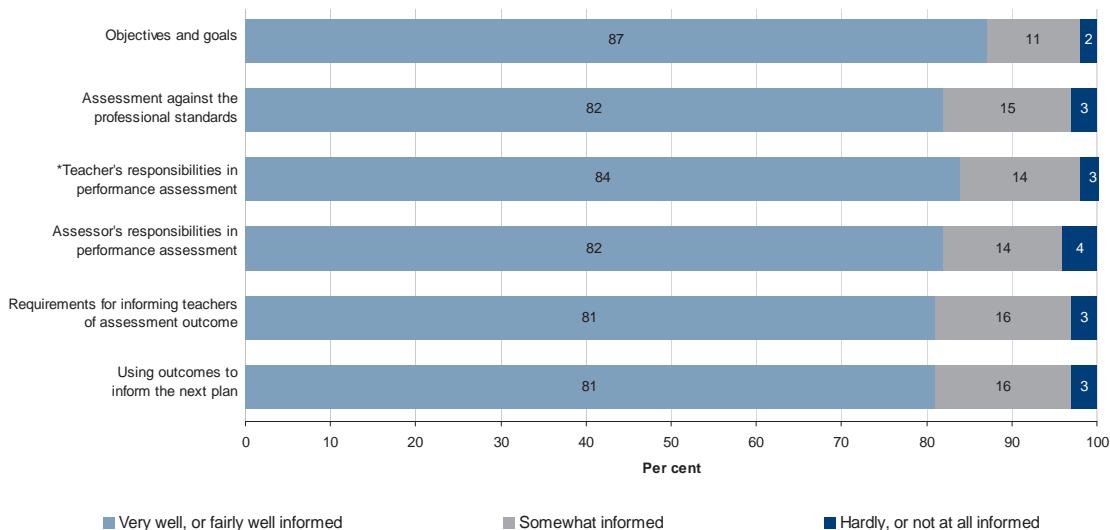
Figure 3B
Teachers' preparedness for the cycle

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

3.2.2 Assessors

Figure 3C shows assessors' were well informed overall about the cycle for aspects that affect performance assessments. Principals reported similar knowledge of the cycle as assessors.

Figure 3C
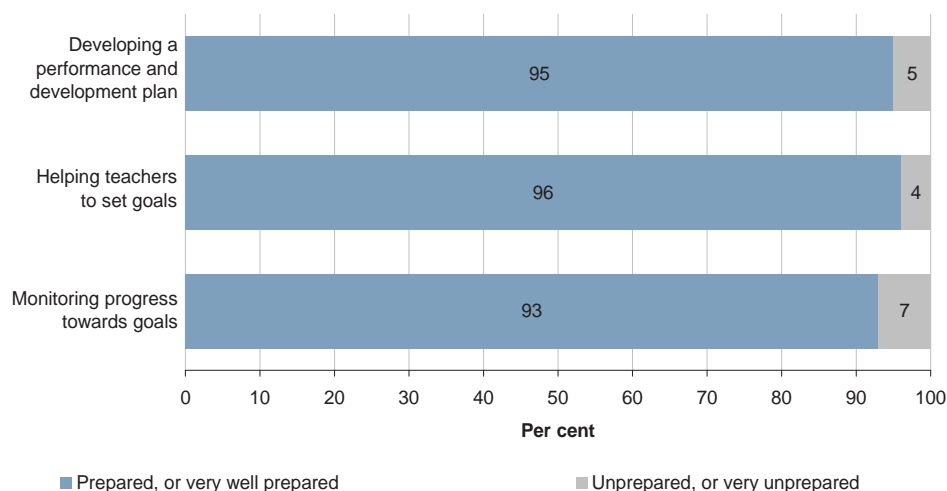**Assessors' knowledge of the cycle**

Note: *Figures do not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Figure 3D shows that assessors felt well prepared to develop performance and development plans, set goals and monitor progress.

Figure 3D
Assessors' preparedness for the cycle

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

3.2.3 Overall analysis of survey results

The survey results suggest that teacher experience of the cycle has improved since 2003, with most teachers finding some value in it. But the proportion of teachers that do not accept its value still warrants close attention.

About one in ten teachers (equates to about 3 700) knew little or nothing about their own responsibility in preparing for their performance assessment, and almost one in five (equates to about 7 500) had little or no knowledge about:

- how they are assessed against the professional standards
- their assessors' responsibilities for assessing and giving feedback
- how to use the results of their assessment in their next performance and development plan.

Possible explanations are that principals and assessors may not have explained the cycle's aims, or that teachers may not have engaged with the cycle because they do not see their assessment as relevant to improving their teaching from one year to the next. Teachers who do not know how to use the results of their assessment to inform their next plan may also be relying on their assessors to help them prepare it, rather than taking control of their own development.

It is unlikely that the teachers with little or no knowledge about these aspects of the cycle will gain much value from it.

In contrast, assessors generally felt more informed about their responsibilities and those of the teachers they assess, with fewer than one in 20 reporting little or no knowledge about the same aspects.

Despite the differing knowledge about the cycle, teachers and assessors reported similar levels of preparedness for developing a plan, and setting and monitoring goals.

3.3 Risks to improving teacher performance

Three parts of the culture and cycle were not working as intended, which could be a barrier to improving teacher performance, namely:

- teachers not identifying and accessing professional development in line with DEECD requirements
- principals and assessors feeling unready to manage teacher underperformance constructively
- teachers not taking part in performance assessments.

3.3.1 Identifying and accessing professional development

DEECD's standard for accreditation under the culture requires teachers to:

- have individual performance and development plans that are current, reviewed regularly and updated where needed
- take part in a structured professional learning program at their school clearly linked to their needs and school goals.

The culture also requires that schools' professional learning programs reflect DEECD's Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning described in its *Professional Learning in Effective Schools* statement (refer to Appendix B). These principles help teachers identify and access professional development.

The cycle requires all teachers to identify their own professional development needs and activities when preparing their performance and development plans. DEECD guidelines require teachers and assessors to base these needs and activities on the teacher's previous performance assessment.

DEECD also expects school leaders and teachers to use the e^5 *Instructional Model* collaboratively so teachers can improve their teaching and professional learning. There is no specific requirement, however, for schools to use it to identify professional development as part of the cycle.

One in four classroom teachers (equating to about 9 300) responding to the audit survey did not nominate any professional learning activities. This raises doubt that:

- teachers are sufficiently updating and improving their knowledge and skills
- their principals and assessors are working with them effectively to identify areas to improve their teaching.

Schools must use two of the four 'pupil free' days for teacher professional development each year. Beyond this, schools decide the budget for and amount of professional development teachers can access.

The audit survey showed that 75 per cent of teachers had specified professional learning activities—56 per cent in their cycle plan and 19 per cent outside the cycle. Of the 75 per cent of teachers, nearly all had done at least some activities. Sixty-nine per cent of these teachers had done most or all of their activities. At the time of the survey, the cycle was at its midpoint. This data suggests that for the teachers who specified professional development activities, access to such activities may be adequate. The completion rates do not in themselves show whether these teachers are satisfied with access to development opportunities.

The survey also showed that:

- 79 per cent of teachers (equates to about 29 500) were satisfied or very satisfied and 17 per cent (equates to about 6 400) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their opportunities to meet professional learning and development needs
- 74 per cent (equates to about 27 600) were satisfied or very satisfied and 22 per cent (equates to about 8 200) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the support (financial or otherwise) from their school to meet these needs.

Teachers in regional schools were more dissatisfied than those in metropolitan schools, and teachers in secondary schools were more dissatisfied than those in primary schools.

As only 56 per cent of teachers named professional development as part of an agreed plan, it is not possible to assess whether their expectations for accessing activities were realistic.

3.3.2 Identifying and managing underperformance

The *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2008* (VGSA) commits to addressing underperformance. As part of this commitment, the performance and development system for school staff is designed to support improved performance where standards are not met.

Neither the VGSA nor DEECD defines underperformance. It appears to occur when a teacher does not meet one or more of DEECD's professional standards, which is then addressed within the school. When principals or assessors identify underperformance they must work with the teacher to:

- identify what is affecting performance
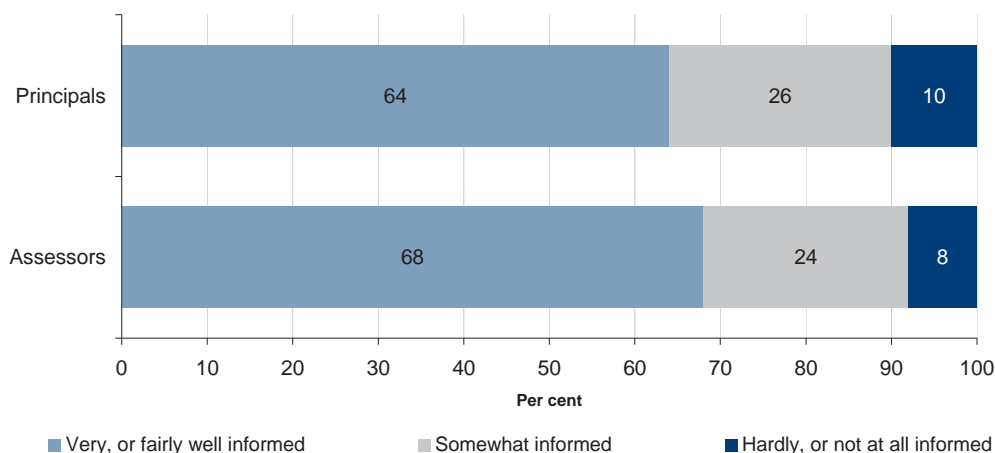- address the causes of the teacher's unsuccessful assessment.

Individual schools keep track of underperformance. DEECD's central and regional offices do not record the nature and extent of underperformance or assess whether schools address it adequately. As a result, it cannot identify and address any systemic underperformance amongst teaching staff.

DEECD's 2003 workforce review found that while over 99 per cent of teachers passed their performance assessment, principals believed that between 10 and 20 per cent of teachers were underperforming. DEECD has not assessed whether this differential has narrowed since 2003.

Principals and assessors

The survey asked principals and assessors how informed they felt about identifying underperformance, noting that underperformance did not necessarily mean unsatisfactory performance. Figure 3E shows that nearly all principals and assessors felt somewhat informed about it.

Figure 3E
Identifying underperformance—principals and assessors

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Thirty-three per cent of principals and 28 per cent of assessors had identified underperformance. Of these principals and assessors:

- 79 per cent of principals and 81 per cent of assessors said they received good to very good support from their schools in working with the teacher to identify the factors affecting performance
- 79 per cent of principals and 81 per cent of assessors said they received good to very good support from their schools to address the factors affecting performance.

Nevertheless, the audit survey also showed that 26 per cent of principals and 22 per cent of assessors felt unprepared or very unprepared to address underperformance constructively. This result for principals is particularly concerning, as it equates to about 400 schools. Further, addressing underperformance constructively is the only area in which more than 10 per cent of principals and assessors reported they were unprepared or uninformed about a key part of the cycle.

This raises questions about how effective principals and assessors are in:

- identifying cases of underperformance appropriately
- giving underperforming teachers the help they need to improve their performance and meet DEECD professional standards
- being confident about when to escalate repeated underperformance to unsatisfactory performance where necessary.

Teacher knowledge of underperformance

The survey asked teachers how well informed they were about how underperformance is identified as part of the cycle, noting that underperformance did not necessarily mean unsatisfactory performance. It found that:

- one in three were hardly or not at all informed about this aspect of the cycle
- one in four were somewhat informed
- less than half were very or fairly well informed.

Secondary school teachers were less likely to feel informed than primary schools teachers. Teachers in schools with over 400 students were less likely to feel informed that teachers in smaller schools.

Underperformance and unsatisfactory performance

It is important to distinguish between underperformance and unsatisfactory performance. Unsatisfactory performance is the repeated failure to meet the professional standards, requiring special procedures outside the school to address it. DEECD's *Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct* details them.

Between 2004 and 2008 DEECD's central office started unsatisfactory performance procedures against 61 teachers, an insignificant number out of a total of 37 355 classroom teachers.

DEECD's payroll system produces information on teachers not recommended for salary progression because they do not meet the professional standards. In 2009, 58 teachers (less than 1 per cent) were not recommended for salary progression.

This data is not reliable as an indicator of the extent of underperformance as:

- only about half of all classroom teachers are eligible for a salary increment based on their assessment in the cycle
- DEECD's central office does not monitor the accuracy of schools' administration of performance assessments, nor whether the assessments actually occurred.

This result is consistent with DEECD's 2003 workforce review which found that over 99 per cent of teachers received a satisfactory rating in their performance assessment.

3.3.3 Teacher participation in performance assessments

The survey showed that 80 per cent of teachers had been assessed for performance in the past 12 months, 14 per cent had not, and 6 per cent did not say either way.

Of the 14 per cent not assessed, about half had been on extended leave or started teaching after 1 January 2009, just over 10 per cent indicated 'other' reasons and 38 per cent (equates to about 2 000) indicated that:

- their cycle was completed without a performance assessment or
- their school did not use the cycle or
- they worked part time.

While this is few, it is still a large cohort not taking part in a mandatory aspect of the cycle. This indicates that not all principals are meeting their responsibilities to manage the performance of these teachers.

3.4 Conclusion

Ideally all teachers, principals and assessors should feel sufficiently well informed and prepared to undertake their roles in the cycle. The survey results show this is unlikely as principals and assessors reported higher levels of knowledge of and readiness for the cycle than the teachers they assessed.

Identifying and addressing why nearly one in five teachers do not know how to use the results of their performance assessment in their next cycle plan would assist them to get more value from the cycle. The findings suggest that DEECD's central office should prioritise its help to teachers in secondary schools, as they were less likely to be informed about the cycle than primary school teachers.

Currently the culture and cycle are not working as intended in that:

- about 25 per cent of teachers are not identifying professional development activities
- about 25 per cent of principals and assessors felt unprepared or very unprepared to address underperformance constructively
- about 5 per cent of teachers did not take part in a final assessment because their school finished it without them or because it did not use the cycle.

The greater dissatisfaction amongst regional teachers for this part of their learning and development suggests that DEECD's central and regional offices should assess if and how schools can improve teachers' access to professional development beyond the mandatory two days. However the audit could not assess whether teacher expectations in this area are realistic overall.

These aspects of the culture and cycle's operation pose risks to teachers needing to improve their teaching, and to students' ability to realise their potential. It is important that all teachers identify and take part in professional development because it improves their skill and knowledge. It is also a DEECD requirement.

That around a quarter of principals felt unprepared to address underperformance constructively warrants particular attention. They have a critical role in managing the cycle and in identifying teachers' professional development needs. It is also a concern that nearly one in three teachers did not know how underperformance is assessed. It raises the risk that underperforming teachers may not realise they need to improve, and that they will not get the support they need to do so.

DEECD's central office relies on schools to manage underperformance. However, without monitoring how this is performed, it is not well placed to understand the magnitude of underperformance across the system.

Defining underperformance is important if assessment is to be consistent across the school system and if incentives to improve are to be effective. Assessment must be predictable so schools can constructively address underperformance in teachers.

Recommendations

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should:

4. Identify and address why some teachers know little or nothing about how they are assessed, and how to use the cycle to improve their teaching from one year to the next.

5. Define underperformance so that schools share an understanding of what it is.

6. Identify what principals and assessors need to address teacher underperformance constructively, provide that support and assess its effectiveness.

7. Remind schools of its requirements for teacher performance assessments and participation in professional development activities.

4 Quality of teaching

At a glance

Background

To understand whether the quality of teaching was improving in government schools, the audit used its survey, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD's) staff and student surveys, and its evaluation of the culture.

Key findings

- Most classroom teachers, their performance assessors and principals believe the performance and development culture and the performance and development cycle have improved teacher knowledge and skills at their school.
- DEECD's staff survey results suggest that most schools have benefited from the introduction of the culture, but there is insufficient data to predict its longer term impact.

4.1   Introduction

Teacher performance assessments and other data can point to whether the quality of individual classroom teaching is improving. Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) surveys of staff and students provide some information about whether the teaching and learning environment is improving at the school level. However, neither the performance and development culture (the culture) nor the performance and development cycle (the cycle) have measures to assess whether individual teachers are improving.

This chapter uses data from the audit survey, the DEECD staff and student surveys and its evaluation of the culture to assess whether teaching quality is improving in government schools. The audit examined:
- the impact of the culture and cycle on teaching practice
- school level teaching performance.

4.2   Impact of the culture and cycle on teaching practice

DEECD designed the culture to improve teaching practice, better target professional development and create a more enriching, supportive and motivating environment for staff. Accreditation under the culture covers elements that directly affect the quality of teaching.

DEECD designed the cycle to link teacher pay rises to performance assessed annually. As part of the annual assessment cycle, teachers are expected to identify areas for their ongoing learning and development.
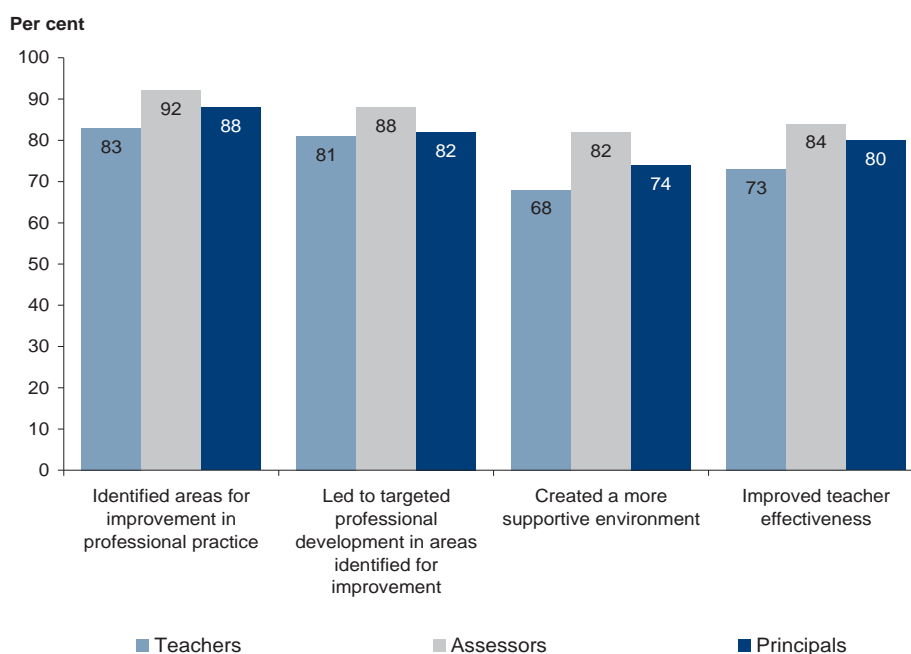
4.2.1   The impact of the culture

Figure 4A shows that most assessors and principals consider the culture has helped identify where and how to improve teaching practice. They believe it has also created a more supportive environment for teachers and has improved teacher effectiveness.

These results are based on the 94 per cent of principals and 87 per cent of assessors who confirmed that their school had been accredited under the *Performance and Development Culture Accreditation Scheme*.

Figure 4A shows that classroom teachers who knew their school was accredited also believed the culture had a positive impact; but a smaller proportion believed the culture had improved their effectiveness in the classroom or created a more supportive environment in the school for them to do so.

However, only 53 per cent of classroom teachers knew their school was accredited and 42 per cent were unsure, while 5 per cent said their school was not. A low level of awareness about a school's accreditation does not mean that teachers would not benefit from it. However, it suggests that senior staff are more aware of the *Performance and Development Culture Accreditation Scheme* and its impact than classroom teachers.

Figure 4A
Outcomes achieved from the culture and accreditation—
teachers, assessors, principals

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

The results in Figure 4A for 'identified areas for improvement' 'targeted professional development' and a 'more supportive environment' relate to respondents who believed these outcomes had been achieved to some extent or a great extent. Between 11 and 12 per cent of teachers, 7 and 12 per cent of assessors, 9 and 18 per cent of principals believed the culture and accreditation had achieved each of these outcomes, but not by a great deal.

The results for 'improved teacher effectiveness' relate to respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied the culture and accreditation had achieved this outcome. Seventeen per cent of teachers, 11 per cent of assessors and 15 per cent of principals were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

DEECD's evaluation of the culture

In 2009 when evaluating the culture, DEECD's central office surveyed one principal (or their nominee) and one teacher selected by the principal from half of all government schools (around 750), with 517 principals (or nominees) and 436 teachers responding.

The combined responses showed that 74 per cent believed to a great or medium extent that teacher practice at their school had improved as a result of creating and building on their culture. Another 20 per cent said it was true to a small extent.
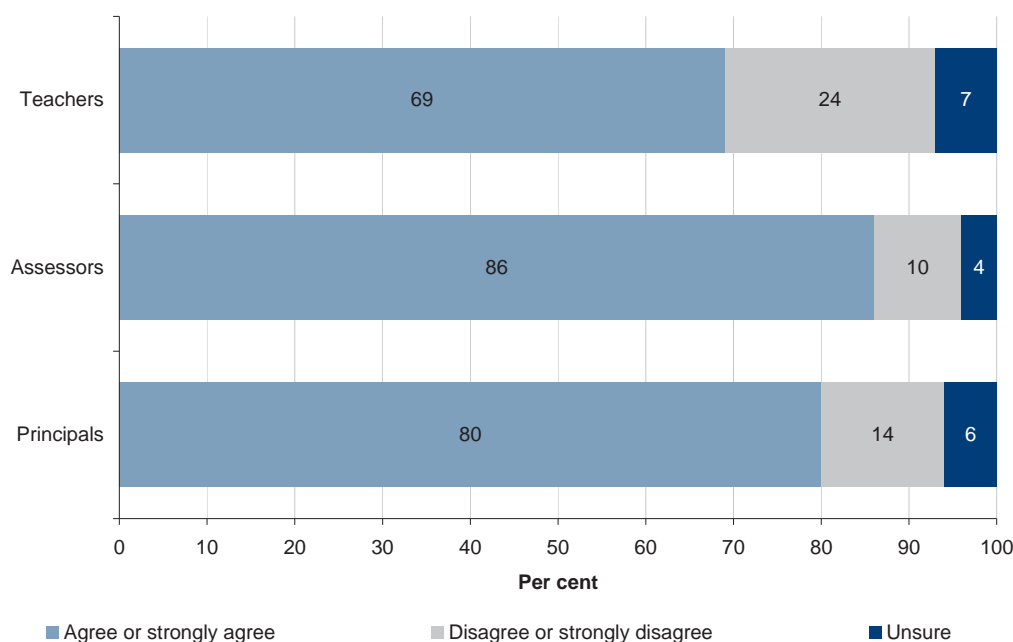
Most respondents also agreed to a great or medium extent that the culture had helped teachers to:
- increase consistency in teaching practice across classrooms
- improve the use of data to improve student results
- better recognise and respond to student needs
- use technology more effectively
- report on student achievement.

4.2.2 The impact of the cycle

Figure 4B shows from the audit survey that 69 per cent of classroom teachers, 86 per cent of assessors and 80 per cent of principals agreed, or strongly agreed, that overall the cycle had improved teacher knowledge and skills at their school.

Figure 4B
Improved teacher knowledge and skills attributable to the cycle

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

While fewer teachers believed that the cycle had improved their knowledge and skills, significantly more assessors had noticed improvements.
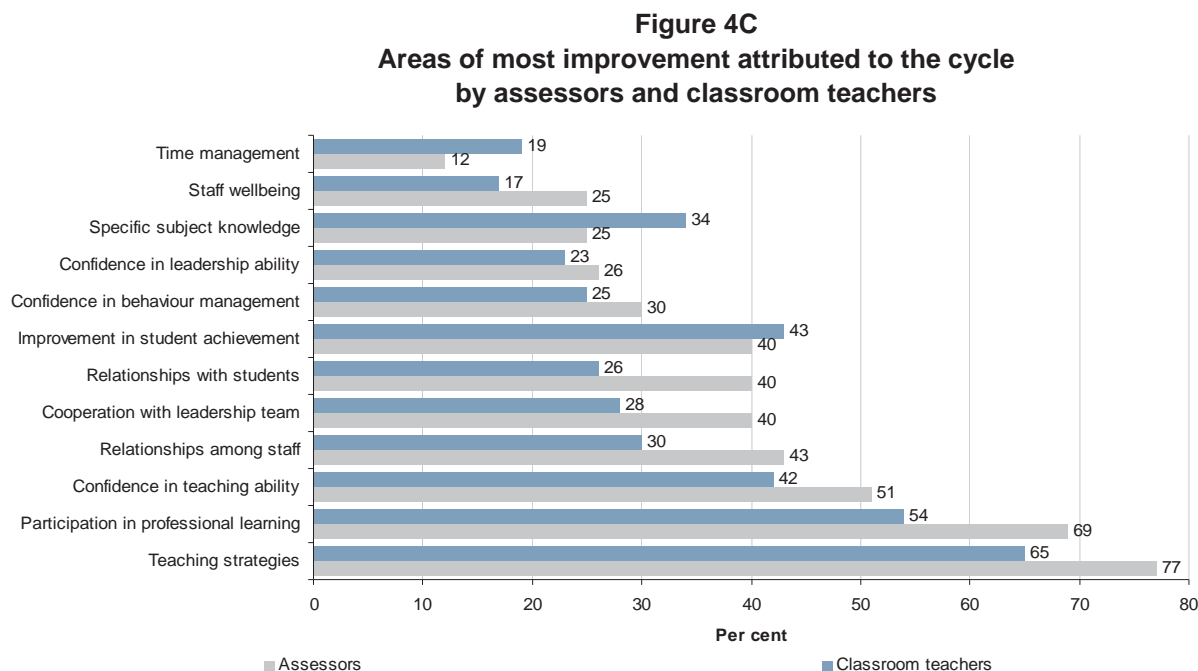
The difference may be because:
• teachers are more critical of their own performance than assessors
• teachers do not get the feedback they need from assessors about their performance, or are not asking for it.

Overall, teachers in secondary schools and schools of more than 400 students were more likely to disagree that the cycle led to an improvement in their knowledge and skills. Teachers over 40 were more likely to disagree than those under 40.

Areas of teacher improvement

Figure 4C shows where assessors and classroom teachers had noted the most improvement in teacher performance due to the cycle. Assessors based their observations on informal feedback from staff (the most common evidence), direct observation of change and student achievement data. Assessors were asked to comment only on the teachers they themselves assessed.

Figure 4C
Areas of most improvement attributed to the cycle
by assessors and classroom teachers

Note: Assessors and teachers could indicate more than one area.
Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Twenty-three per cent of teachers also noted improvement in their leadership and management abilities. Assessors also observed improvements in teachers trialling new strategies in classrooms (34 per cent of assessors), across a year level (16 per cent) and across the school (18 per cent).

The results indicate improvement across areas such as classroom practice, relationships between staff and students, and student results. While assessors and teachers credited these improvements to the cycle, they are similar to those that DEECD is trying to achieve through the culture.

Overall, assessors noticed a much greater improvement in these areas than teachers, which is consistent with the finding that more assessors than teachers believe the cycle has improved teacher knowledge and skills. As DEECD's central office had not previously collected data on the cycle, it is not possible to judge whether these were the most critical improvement areas for teachers.

4.3 Teaching performance at school level

DEECD's central office has two sources for assessing the teaching and learning environment at individual schools—the annual Staff Opinion Survey and the Attitudes to School Survey completed by students.

4.3.1 Staff opinion survey

The DEECD annual staff opinion survey from 2003 to 2009 shows a link between a school achieving culture accreditation and improvements in:

- teachers' own professional growth
- interaction with other school staff
- support from the school leadership
- school morale
- curriculum coordination
- student motivation and student performance.

Schools typically have improved in these aspects of the culture as they work towards accreditation under DEECD's *Performance and Development Culture Accreditation Scheme*. As there is no target for improvement, it is not possible to judge if the observed improvement is reasonable or in line with expectations.

The staff opinion survey in the years after accreditation and up to 2009 also shows:

- a slight decline for the 263 schools accredited in 2005 and 2006
- a plateau for the 1064 schools accredited in 2007 and 2008.

The results are averages for the schools accredited in each year between 2005 and 2008. There is no post-accreditation data for the 67 schools that were accredited in 2009. There were 170 schools accredited between 2005 and 2008 that have insufficient trend data as, for example, some schools closed or merged.

There is insufficient trend data to determine whether the decline and plateau effects for schools accredited between 2005 and 2008 is part of a normal levelling off after a period of improvement.
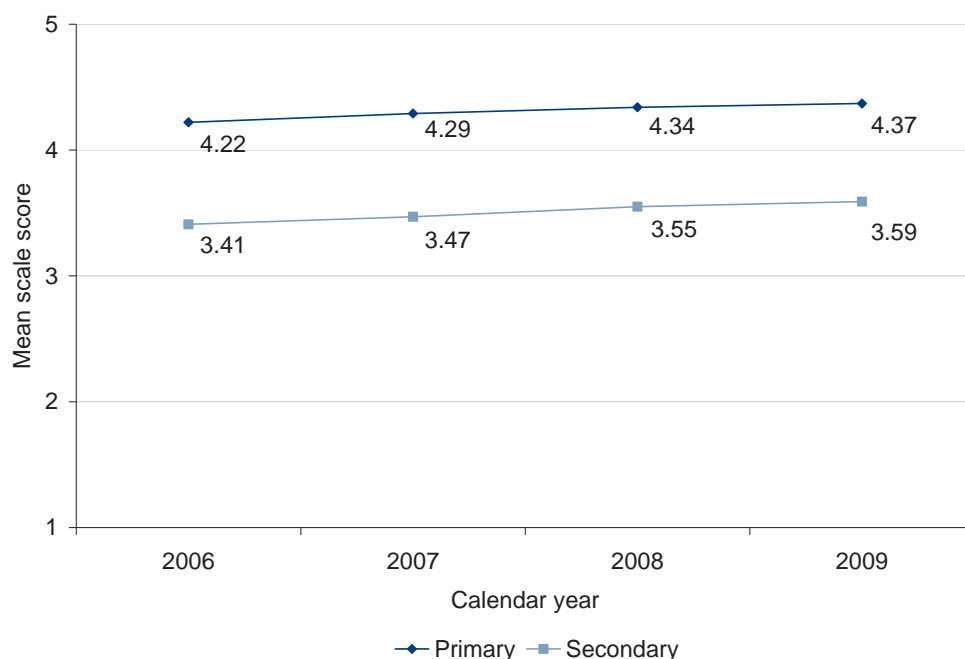
4.3.2 Attitudes to School survey

DEECD's Attitudes to School survey is a survey of student opinions about the teaching and learning environment, student relations and student wellbeing. Schools survey students from Year 5 to Year 12.

For teaching and learning, students are asked about their experience at school, including their experience with their teachers and their school work. Answers are reported in categories that cover the effectiveness and empathy of their teachers, how stimulated and confident they are about learning, their level of motivation and their connectedness to the school.

DEECD's central office has collected data on this since 2006. The results for all teaching and learning aspects of the survey have improved each year. The results for teacher effectiveness in Figure 4D are typical of the trend in other aspects of the survey, although the percentage increase for each varies.

Figure 4D
Attitudes to Schools survey: teacher effectiveness 2006–2009

Note: Scores are averages out of five for all primary and secondary schools.
Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office analysis of DEECD's Attitudes to Schools Survey data.

The audit examined whether the Attitudes to School survey results improved as a result of schools being accredited under the culture. There was a similar upwards trend for all schools for each survey element. Schools that had been accredited for longer scored higher on the 1 to 5 scale. This suggests the culture has had a slight and positive effect on student perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

The results for the Attitudes for School survey are consistent with the view of teachers, assessors and principals that the cycle and the culture have improved teacher effectiveness.

4.4   Conclusion

Most principals, assessors and teachers believe the quality of teaching in government schools is improving as a result of DEECD's performance assessment and development cycle and culture. Primary and secondary school students also believe teacher effectiveness, as defined by DEECD, has increased.

While encouraging, these results are insufficient evidence to reliably conclude that the quality of teaching is improving in Victoria's government schools as a result of the performance and development cycle and culture.

Survey data should be supplemented with data about teachers' performance against the professional standards and/or the capability requirements set by DEECD central office. This data would prove a rich source of information for schools about the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. Such data does not currently exist.

DEECD central office has committed to improving the quality of teaching, and teacher effectiveness is the greatest in-school influence on student learning. It should therefore be a priority that schools be fully informed of the quality of teaching. The DEECD central office initiatives in schools should help address this data gap. DEECD should promptly review them to see how they can effectively do so.

Appendix A.

Professional teaching standards and indicators of performance

The following standards and indicators are taken from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's *Performance and Development Guide: Teacher Class*. The guide explains that the indicators for the professional standards can be used to assist principals in determining whether the standards have been met. The indicators are neither mandatory, nor exhaustive.

Graduate teachers

Professional standard

Know how students learn and how to teach them effectively

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- drawing on the body of knowledge about learning and contemporary research into teaching and learning to support teaching practice
- knowing the importance of prior knowledge and language for learning, and the impact of discussion, group interaction and reflection in the learning process
- knowing how to engage students in active learning
- knowing how classroom and program design, use of materials and resources and the structure of activities impact on learning.

Professional standard

Know the content they teach

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- having a sound, critical understanding of the content, processes and skills they teach
- articulating the key features and relevance of content to students and others, and demonstrating how these are applied
- knowing the methodologies, resources and technologies which support learning of content, processes and skills taught
- familiarity with curriculum statements, policies, materials and programs associated with the content that is taught.

Professional standard

Know their students

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- knowing the learning strengths and weaknesses of their students and awareness of the factors that influence their learning
- awareness of the social, cultural, and religious backgrounds of the students they teach, and treating students equitably
- developing an understanding and respect for their students as individuals, and sensitivity to their social and emotional needs and the way they interact with others
- knowing the importance of working with and communicating regularly with students' families to support their learning.

Professional standard

Plan and assess for effective learning

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- using their knowledge of students, content and pedagogy to establish clear and achievable learning goals for their students
- planning for the use of a range of activities, resources and materials to provide meaningful learning opportunities for all their students
- monitoring student engagement in learning and maintaining records of their learning progress
- selecting assessment strategies to evaluate student learning, to provide feedback to students and their parents/guardians and to inform further planning of teaching and learning.

Professional standard

Create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- developing a positive learning environment where respect for individuals is fostered and where learning is the focus
- providing a learning environment that engages and challenges their students and encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning
- using and managing the materials, resources and physical space of their classroom to create a stimulating and safe environment for learning
- establishing and maintaining clear and consistent expectations for students as learners and for their behaviour in the classroom.

Professional standard

Use a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- communicating effectively with students to make their learning programs explicit, to build rapport, and to support their learning
- providing and managing opportunities for students to explore ideas and develop knowledge and skills, through discussion and group activities
- using and managing a range of teaching and learning strategies, technologies, activities and resources
- providing meaningful and ongoing feedback to students and their parents/guardians about their developing knowledge and skills.

Professional standard

Reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- regularly reflecting on and critically evaluating their professional knowledge and the effectiveness of their teaching
- working collaboratively with other members of the profession and engaging in discussion of contemporary issues and research to improve professional practice
- identifying their own professional learning needs and planning for and engaging in professional development activities
- developing organisational and administrative skills to manage their non-teaching duties effectively.

Professional standard

Are active members of their profession

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- contributing to the development of school communities that support the learning and wellbeing of both students and fellow teachers
- working effectively with other professionals, parents/guardians and members of the broader community to provide effective learning for students
- promoting learning, the value of education and the profession of teaching in the wider community
- understanding and fulfilling their legal responsibilities and sharing responsibility for the integrity of their profession.

Accomplished teacher

Professional standard

Demonstrate a high level of knowledge of relevant curriculum areas, student learning processes and resources, and can apply it in implementing programs which enhance student learning

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- high level understanding of the principles of teaching and learning and the educational context and ability to apply this understanding to improve student learning
- effective implementation of teaching programs in accordance with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, VCE, where appropriate, and school curriculum policy
- high level of knowledge of specific programs relevant to the teacher's classroom responsibilities e.g., early years, middle years, later years, 'e' learning, and integration of these into classroom teaching as appropriate.

Professional standard

Demonstrate high quality classroom teaching skills and successfully employ flexible and adaptive approaches and constructive strategies to allow students to reach their full potential

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- implementation of a range of teaching strategies which provide for structured teaching, maximisation of time on task and opportunity for each student to learn and experience success
- establishment of a teaching style which challenges and supports all students to do their best by engaging and motivating students and taking positive steps to improve the quality of students' learning
- provision of targeted assistance to students failing to make progress.

Professional standard

Successfully apply assessment and reporting strategies that take account of relationships between teaching, learning and assessment

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- ongoing monitoring of student progress linked to achievement of Victorian Essential Learning Standards
- implementation of structured assessment of students in accordance with the department's assessment and reporting requirements
- completion of student reports in accordance with department and school policy.

Professional standard

Respond effectively to emerging educational initiatives and priorities

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- effective contribution, in the context of the teacher's role, to the implementation of school strategic and annual implementation goals and priorities, including implementation of teaching and learning strategies which support the achievement of school goals and priorities
- integration of school and department initiatives and priorities into classroom teaching, as appropriate.

Professional standard

Demonstrate high-level communication skills and professional behaviour when interacting with parents or guardians, students and colleagues

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- consistently demonstrated high level communication skills when interacting with staff, students, parents and members of the broader school community
- establishment of effective working relationships with other staff members.

Professional standard

Successfully organise and manage aspects of the wider school program

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- active support for the implementation of school priorities through participation in the development of school policies and programs
- undertaking additional responsibilities to classroom teaching which may include subject and/or student coordination roles and/or school organisation roles, or other responsibilities appropriate to the role
- engaging parental and community involvement in the school.

Professional standard

Demonstrate improved teaching and performance skills through critically evaluating professional practices

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- effective participation in school-based professional learning, area/learning level meetings, parent/teacher activities, curriculum development and evaluation meetings relevant to the teacher's classes, and/or student management meetings
- undertaking school-based and/or external professional development focused on improved teaching and learning strategies
- engaging in critical reflection on own teaching practice that improves the quality of the teacher's teaching and learning.

Professional standard

Provide high-level professional assistance to other teachers in classroom related areas

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- provision of high level support to other teachers to enable improvements in the quality of teaching and learning through collegial interaction, mentoring and/or other appropriate action
- effective supervision and training of student teacher(s).

Expert teacher

Professional standard

Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of relevant curriculum areas

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- high level knowledge of curriculum area(s) in order to teach effectively
- comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of exemplary practice in teaching techniques relevant to the curriculum area(s) and students taught
- high level knowledge of policies and programs relevant to the teacher's classroom responsibilities, e.g., early years, middle years, later years, e-learning.

Professional standard

Demonstrate and model excellent teaching and learning skills

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- implementation of consistent and highly effective lesson plans and sequences of lessons to meet students' individual learning needs
- consistent and highly effective use of a range of strategies for teaching and classroom management which provide for structured teaching, maximisation of time on task and opportunity for each student to learn and experience success
- establishment of a teaching style which challenges and supports all students to do their best by engaging and motivating students and taking positive steps to improve the quality of students' learning
- provision of targeted assistance to students failing to make progress
- enhancing the teaching and learning practices across the school through effective mentoring for classroom teachers, collegial interaction and provision of support and advice as appropriate.

Professional standard

Demonstrate a productive contribution to the school program

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- effective implementation of school policies and promotion of the values of the school
- positive articulation of education beliefs, learning programs, teaching practices
- high level communication skills and modelling behaviour which leads to positive and constructive team work
- effectively undertaking responsibilities appropriate to the role of an expert teacher
- engagement of parental and community involvement in the school and working cooperatively with colleagues, parents and students to develop a supportive school environment
- responsiveness to emerging educational needs and priorities at the school level.

Professional standard

Demonstrate a significant contribution to the development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum programs and policy, and respond to initiatives that enhance student learning

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- significant contribution to the development, implementation and evaluation of strategic curriculum goals and priorities
- significant contribution to school policy/program review
- high level knowledge of school and department initiatives which enhance student learning and integration of these into the teacher's classroom teaching, as appropriate.

Professional standard

Demonstrate a high level of commitment to student welfare within the school

This standard may be demonstrated by:

- effective use of teaching, learning and classroom management strategies which support the engagement of all students
- positive interaction with students, parents and staff including outstanding rapport and empathy with students
- effective implementation of school policies related to student welfare and discipline
- working effectively with other staff to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to student welfare in the school
- engagement of parents in their children's learning
- adherence to school health and safety requirements.

Professional standard

Demonstrate strong ongoing professional learning

Indicators

This standard may be demonstrated by:
- taking responsibility for own on-going professional development and applying outcomes to improve own teaching and learning
- active participation in school-based and external professional development focused on improved teaching and learning strategies
- engaging in critical reflection on own teaching practice that improves the quality of the teacher's teaching and learning
- sharing knowledge with colleagues on effective teaching and learning strategies.

Appendix B.

Seven principles of highly effective professional learning

These seven principles are drawn from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's publication Professional Learning in Effective Schools: The Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning. Under the performance and development culture, schools professional learning programs must reflect these principles.

Principle 1

Professional learning is focused on student outcomes (not just individual teacher needs)

Professional learning is aimed at maximising student learning so that all students achieve their learning potential. Using multiple sources of student outcomes data, teacher professional learning should be guided by analyses of the differences between goals and standards for student learning and student performance. Such analyses will define what teachers need to learn, make teacher professional learning student centred, and increase public confidence in the use of resources for professional learning. Student outcomes will improve if professional learning increases teachers' understanding of how to represent and convey content in meaningful ways.

Principle 2

Professional learning is focused on and embedded in teacher practice (not disconnected from the school)

Teacher professional learning should be school based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching. The most potent and meaningful learning experiences occur in the school, where teachers can address the immediate problems and challenges of learning and teaching. Being situated close to the classroom and their colleagues enables teachers to work together to identify problems, find solutions and apply them.

This does not imply that beyond school learning experiences, such as postgraduate studies or attendance at workshops and seminars, are not valuable. External learning opportunities can complement school-based professional learning. Professional learning should be anchored in the school-based work of teachers but enriched with ideas and knowledge sourced from outside the school.

Principle 3

Professional learning is informed by the best available research on effective learning and teaching (not just limited to what they currently know)

Teacher professional learning that improves the learning of all students prepares teachers to apply research to decision-making. Successful professional learning programs immerse teachers in the content they teach and provide research-based knowledge about how students learn that content.

Results of research need to be made accessible to teachers to enable the expansion and elaboration of their professional knowledge base. This research should include information on effective teaching and learning, how students learn particular content, classroom management, assessment and curriculum.

Principle 4

Professional learning is collaborative, involving reflection and feedback (not just individual inquiry)

Teacher professional learning opportunities should relate to individual needs but be organised around collaborative problem-solving. Organised in teams, educators take collective responsibility for solving the complex problems of teaching and learning and improving student outcomes. Teams share knowledge, expertise and experience in order to deepen learning and to foster a mutual understanding of effective classroom practice. Teams create the conditions for collegial reflection and support and help to spread workloads more evenly.

Constructive, objective and actionable feedback on teacher practice is important for targeting areas where a teacher needs to improve his or her performance and for the purpose of designing professional learning opportunities that address areas for improvement.

Competent, experienced teachers, school leaders or an expert sourced from outside the school can also provide teachers with feedback on their professional learning. For example, feedback from a trusted peer on the operation of a professional learning team or a coaching or mentoring partnership is useful to gauge the effectiveness of such strategies.

Principle 5

Professional learning is evidence based and data driven (not anecdotal) to guide improvement and to measure impact

Data from different sources can be used to determine the content of teachers' professional learning and to design and monitor the impact of professional learning programs.

Evidence, rather than anecdotes, needs to be collected regularly at the student, teacher and school level to help focus teacher learning. Student journals, for example, can be analysed to identify areas where students are struggling or how students are progressing from one month to another.

Data can be used to measure and improve the impact of professional learning. Formative evaluations allow teachers to make mid-program refinements and corrections, while summative evaluations measure the effectiveness of professional learning activities and their impact on teacher practice, knowledge and student learning.

Principle 6

Professional learning is ongoing, supported and fully integrated into the culture and operations of the system—schools, networks, regions and the centre (not episodic and fragmented)

Professional learning needs to be ongoing, long term and sustained. Significant and long-term change in teacher practice does not occur in a matter of weeks but more often over months or years. Learning by doing, reflecting and refining is a long, multistage process.

Teachers need support for their professional learning. Solving complex problems and implementing innovative practices may require outside expertise and additional resources. Encouragement and recognition is also crucial to maintaining effort since finding new ways to do things is difficult and often painful. Sustained, immediate and quality support is essential to ensure improvement in schools and classrooms, particularly when unexpected problems arise.

Supported, ongoing professional learning must be embedded in the system. Central and regional staff have a responsibility to model good practice by participating in ongoing professional learning.

Principle 7

Professional learning is an individual and collective responsibility at all levels of the system (not just the school level) and it is not optional

Professional learning should occur at all levels of the system. It is an individual and collective responsibility encompassing schools, regions and the centre. For teachers and school leaders, professional learning needs to be linked to schools' performance goals. These goals in turn need to reflect the needs and aims of the regions and the centre. Professional learning is inextricably linked to enhancing the capacity of the system as a whole.

Central and regional offices and key stakeholder groups should work collaboratively to determine strategies for improvement and share best professional learning practices to drive school and system-wide improvement.

Appendix C.

Best practice in managing teacher performance bibliography

These references are the basis for the elements of best practice in managing teacher performance, as identified in Part 2.

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Appendix D.

Audit Act 1994 section 16— submissions and comments

Introduction

In accordance with section 16(3) of the *Audit Act 1994* a copy of this report, or relevant extracts from the report, was provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with a request for comments or submissions.

The comments and submissions provided are not subject to audit nor the evidentiary standards required to reach an audit conclusion. Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Submissions and comments received

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Mr D.D.R. Pearson
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
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Dear Mr Pearson

Thank you for your letter of 5 May 2010 inviting management comments on the proposed report for the performance audit of *Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools*.

I request that the attached management response be included in the report for tabling.

The Department's contact is Mr James Kelly, General Manager, Portfolio Governance and Improvement Division, telephone 9637 3158, should you wish to discuss the response and any matters further.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Peter Dawkins
Secretary

This original has been printed in black and white to reduce cost and environmental impact.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

VAGO Audit - *Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools* – May 2010

DEECD Management Response

The Department welcomes the opportunity to comment on the audit report and in general accepts most of the key findings and recommendations. As the report acknowledges, we are close to best practice in relation to teacher performance and our system has international recognition through the OECD.

Our current intentions around the e^5 Instructional model, the Disciplined Approach to Whole of School Planning, Rewarding Teacher Excellence and Effective Schools Model, which are discussed in this audit report, are directed at improving teacher quality within Victoria and provide the context for overall school improvement.

The Department's specific management response for each recommendation is outlined below.

Number	Recommendation
1	The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should: Mandate a set of core performance indicators and an assessment scale against which schools can: • assess and grade teacher classroom skills and knowledge against expected requirements • monitor change over time in teacher performance *DEECD Response: Recommendation is rejected* *Comments: The Department has a commitment to monitoring student outcomes to measure changes in teacher performance over time rather than using input measures as recommended by VAGO. Student outcome data provides a robust source of evidence to reliably demonstrate changes in teacher performance over time. DEECD uses this evidence as well as value-add measures of school performance to routinely assess how well individual schools are performing and to identify where teacher quality can be improved.*
2	Review how it can effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes to optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance *DEECD Response: Recommendation is accepted* *Comments: VAGO has recognised DEECD performance as generally best practice. The Department recognises the need to fully and effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and*

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – continued

	processes.
3	Obtain regular and reliable assurance that schools are managing the performance and development cycle in line with its requirements particularly for teacher underperformance *DEECD Response: Recommendation is accepted* *Comments: The Department will examine some strengthening of current monitoring through existing mechanisms.*
4	Identify and address why some teachers know little or nothing about how they are assessed, and how to use the cycle to improve their teaching from one year to the next *DEECD Response: Recommendation is accepted* *Comments: The Department will be addressing this issue in the context of implementing recommendations 2 and 3.*
5	Define underperformance so that schools share an understanding of what it is *DEECD Response: Recommendation is accepted* *Comments: The Department will continue to improve the quality of teaching through rolling out the e^5 Instructional Model, the Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning, Rewarding Teaching Excellence and Effective Schools Model which are all covered by the audit report, to improve quality and share understanding of high quality teaching.*
6	Identify what principals and assessors need to be prepared to address teacher underperformance constructively, provide that support as necessary and assess its effectiveness. *DEECD Response: Recommendation is accepted* *Comments: The Department will continue to support principals and assessors to implement the e^5 Instructional Model, the Disciplined Approach to Whole School Planning, the Bastow Leadership Program and Performance and Development Culture to drive improvements in teacher quality. The assessment of individual teacher performance will continue to be in accordance with the Department's industrial obligations.*
7	Remind schools of its requirements regarding the conduct of teacher performance assessments and participation in professional development activities. *DEECD Response: Recommendation is accepted*

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Report title	Date tabled
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Making Public Transport More Accessible for People Who Face Mobility Challenges (2009–10:12)	December 2009
Use of Development Contributions by Local Government (2009–10:13)	December 2009
The Effectiveness of Student Wellbeing Programs and Services (2009–10:14)	February 2010
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