

13 August 2012

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR NO. 15 / 2012

**Enhanced Quality Assurance Framework under the
Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme**

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisor and Heads of
Kindergartens/Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres
and Schools with Kindergarten Classes – for action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information.]

SUMMARY

This circular sets out details of the enhanced Quality Assurance (QA) Framework for kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes (hereafter collectively referred to as “KGs”) under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) starting from the 2012/13 school year (s.y.). Heads of KGs should ensure that this circular is made available to teachers for information and action. This circular supersedes Education Bureau Circular No. 9/2007 dated 31 July 2007 on the same subject.

BACKGROUND

2. QA Framework comprises School Self-evaluation (SSE) and Quality Review (QR). QR, which was introduced in the 2007/08 s.y. with the roll-out of the PEVS, complements SSE to facilitate the sustainable development of KGs. All KGs under the PEVS are required to conduct ongoing SSE for school development and accountability purposes.

3. The QA Framework has gained wide support from the sector in the past five years, and the majority of KGs have established the SSE mechanism. The Education Bureau (EDB) has taken into account the recommendations of two independent studies,

namely the Review of the PEVS and Impact Study on Quality Review, as well as the feedback of KGs, to fine-tune the Framework, which was then tried out in some KGs in the 2011/12 s.y. The enhanced QA Framework will be implemented as from the 2012/13 s.y. to tie in with the next phase of the PEVS. Details are set out in the following paragraphs.

DETAILS

School Self-evaluation

4. Improvement measures will have the greatest impact when owned and initiated by schools. Under the enhanced SSE mechanism, KGs are encouraged to continue to adopt a whole-school approach when conducting annual self-evaluation. SSE should be gradually embedded in schools' daily practices instead of being taken as extra work. KGs should also make full use of the evidence readily available in school for SSE to avoid unnecessary documentation and preparation.

5. As children's learning and whole-person development should be the prime concern of KGs, the enhanced SSE mechanism promotes the evaluation of schools' effectiveness with reference to children's performance. KGs should undertake their self-evaluation and prepare their development plan with a distinct focus on Learning and Teaching while conducting a holistic review on their current state of performance by making reference to the Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions).

6. The enhanced SSE mechanism also aims at further supporting KGs in utilising their self-evaluation findings for strategic planning, so that the inter-connected self-evaluation processes, viz. planning, implementation and evaluation can be efficiently implemented. Under the mechanism, KGs should start their self-evaluation by reviewing the effectiveness of their existing development plan and their current state of performance, then analyse and compile their SSE findings to strategically devise a development plan for the next school year. Clear goals and success criteria should be included in the development plan to facilitate monitoring of the progress and evaluation of the effectiveness. For this purpose, we have revised the School Report template, which is an integration of the School Report and Annual School Plan, for school use. Before the start of the 2012/13 s.y., KGs are required to use the revised template to record their self-evaluation findings and formulate the school development plan for the next school year.

7. To promote better understanding of the enhanced SSE mechanism, the *School Self-evaluation Manual*, which includes the guidelines and the template for the School Report, has been uploaded onto the EDB website (http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/quality-assurance-framework/sse/SSE_Manual_Eng.pdf) for reference of schools. To enhance transparency and promote home-school collaboration, KGs are strongly encouraged to make their School Reports accessible to stakeholders through different means, such as via the school websites and the Profile of Kindergarten and Kindergarten-cum-child care centres (hereafter referred to as “KG Profile”).

Quality Review

8. QR will continue to be improvement-oriented but will be more school-specific by taking KG’s areas of concern as the starting point and making reference to the recommendations made in the previous QR. The Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions) will continue to be used by the review teams to make professional judgment on overall school performances.

9. The next cycle of QR will start from the 2012/13 s.y. The timing for conducting QR at individual KGs will in general follow the sequence in the first cycle. The EDB will notify KGs of the exact QR dates eight weeks in advance. Each QR visit will last from 2.5 to 3.5 days depending on the school size. Upon receiving the notification, KGs are required to submit their School Report and stakeholder survey results to the EDB within four weeks.

10. KGs that are assessed as having met the prescribed standards will remain eligible for the PEVS and voucher redemption. The latest QR reports will be uploaded onto the EDB website and linked to the KG Profile to facilitate parents in making informed choices of kindergarten for their children.

11. Any KGs that fail to meet the prescribed standards may apply for a Follow-up QR by submitting to the EDB an action plan to address the issues identified for improvement. Those assessed as having met the prescribed standards in the Follow-up QR will remain eligible for the PEVS and voucher redemption. KGs that do not meet the prescribed standards in the Follow-up QR will not be eligible to join the PEVS and can only redeem the voucher up to the end of the school year. All Follow-up QR reports will be uploaded onto the EDB website and linked to the KG Profile. For the KGs that fail to meet the prescribed standards but choose not to apply

for a Follow-up QR, they can only redeem the voucher up to the end of the school year. Their QR reports will also be uploaded onto the EDB website and linked to the KG Profile.

12. A newly registered KG may join the PEVS upon the completion of all the registration procedures. It is required to conduct self-evaluation and compile a School Report by using the template mentioned in paragraph 7 above. The EDB will normally conduct QR at a new KG about one year after the start of its operation.

13. For more details regarding the enhanced QR mechanism, please refer to the *Handbook on Quality Review for Pre-primary Institutions* at the EDB website (http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/quality-assurance-framework/qr/handbook_on_qr_eng.pdf).

Support for KGs

14. To familiarise KGs with the enhanced SSE mechanism, the EDB has organised 50 training sessions for KG principals and teachers from January to June 2012. Two identical briefing sessions were also conducted in April 2012 to introduce the enhanced QA Framework. The EDB will continue to organise training and experience sharing sessions to promote KGs' understanding of the enhanced QA Framework.

ENQUIRY

15. For enquiries, please contact the Kindergarten Inspection Section at 2892 5458.

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