

31 July 2007

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR NO. 9 / 2007

**Quality Review Framework under the
Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme**

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors 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 announces and gives details about a Quality Review (QR) 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). Heads of KGs should ensure that this circular is made available to teachers for information and action.

BACKGROUND

2. The Education Bureau will introduce the PEVS starting from the 2007/08 school year to provide direct fee subsidies for parents with young children attending KGs. The PEVS aims at enabling all our children to receive affordable and quality pre-primary education. To support continuous improvement in the quality of KGs and to enhance the quality assurance mechanism for parents and the community, the QR Framework for KGs will be introduced as from the 2007/08 school year. The review process will be improvement-oriented. All KGs joining the PEVS are required to undergo the QR process for quality assurance purpose. Starting from the 2012/13 school year, only local non-profit-making KGs having met the prescribed standards established in the QR Framework may continue to redeem the voucher under

PEVS.

3. The QR Framework is built on the groundwork with use of a set of performance indicators (PIs) already established in consultation with the practitioners in the field of pre-primary education since 2000. Pre-primary education personnel have since then been trained and encouraged to carry out self-evaluation in their own KGs with a view to fostering a culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement. KGs have already conducted in self-evaluation based on this PI framework.

4. We have further piloted the QR mode since the 2003/04 school year. QR will complement other quality assurance measures which include improved transparency of KGs to facilitate parental choice via the KG Profile, formulation of teacher development plan for professional upgrading of teachers and principals, and school support services by the School-based Support Services Office of this Bureau.

DETAILS

The QR Framework

5. The Bureau's review teams will conduct QR in collaboration with each KG within the first five-year cycle from the 2007/08 to 2011/12 school year to validate KGs' self-evaluation. The Second Edition of the Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions) published between 2001 and 2003 (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?langno=1&nodeID=2292>) will serve as the basis for evaluating the performance of KGs.

KGs' Self-evaluation

6. KGs under PEVS are required to conduct ongoing self-evaluation. With reference to the templates available on the Bureau's homepage, they should compile two documents for developmental and accountability purposes - a **School Report (SR)** and an **Annual School Plans (ASP)** before 1st September each year. For the 2007/08 school year which is first year of implementation, KGs may have the SR and ASP ready by 1st November. The SR should include a broad view of a school's performance in the 12 areas of Domains 1, 2 and 3 of the PIs and give a reflective account of the children's development in the preceding year, with a focus on the achievements made and follow-up actions set out for improvement. While KGs are expected to evaluate their performance with reference to the four-level quality scale

stated in the PIs, they need NOT indicate their self-evaluation ratings in their SRs. The ASP should provide details about the strategic planning for school improvement in the coming year, including tasks listed in order of priority, expected outcomes, success criteria, methods of evaluation, person in charge, resources required and the time frame for action on each area of concern. KGs should see the importance of an integrated approach to planning and reporting in achieving continuous improvement. Over-preparation and over-documentation, which in themselves may indicate a lack of purposeful direction, are strongly discouraged. KGs are requested to upload their SR and ASP onto their own homepage and/or make the documents available to their major stakeholders including parents and teachers. Upon receiving notice for QR from the Bureau, KGs are to submit one set of their SR and ASP for the current school year.

QR

7. The impetus for continuous improvement should be developed within KGs through its own self-evaluation supported by a self-reflective culture. QR will examine closely how the inter-connected self-evaluation processes, viz. planning, implementing and evaluation, function to help achieve sustainable school improvement. A KG's own self-evaluation serves as a starting point for the review of its performance. It is the validation focus of QR conducted by inspectors from the Bureau who are tasked with providing objective views on the KG's performance and its developmental potential. While QR is basically improvement-oriented, an overall professional judgment will be made on whether a KG has met the prescribed standards in accordance with the four-level quality scale set out in the PIs for Pre-primary Institutions. The judgment will provide the basis for ascertaining the eligibility of the KG concerned for joining PEVS. The following outlines the QR procedures (Please refer to the flow chart in the Annex).

Notification and Preparation

- a. KGs will be notified eight weeks before the QR. After receiving the inspection notice, the KG has to submit their SR/ASP for the current school year within four weeks. KGs will also be required to conduct a stakeholder survey involving teachers and parents by using the standard questionnaires produced by the Bureau and forward the survey results within six weeks to the Bureau for reference.

Pre-visit

- b. The leader of the review team will conduct a pre-visit to a KG before the on-site review visit to further explain the work flow of QR in detail and answer enquiries. The KG head will present a brief oral report on self-evaluation findings and to answer enquiries from the team leader.

On-site review

- c. Depending on the school size, a team of two to three inspectors from the Bureau will conduct a 2- to 3-day on-site visit to serve the following purposes:
 - to validate self-evaluation findings;
 - to examine and advise on the KG's self-evaluation tools and processes;
 - to provide the Bureau with information for disseminating good practices; and
 - to provide the Government and the public with information on the current situation regarding the quality of pre-primary education in Hong Kong.
- d. During the on-site review visit, inspectors will observe lessons and examine children's work. Interviews will be held with the KG heads, teachers, parents and children to enhance communication and solicit stakeholders' views. Document review will be conducted, when needed, to locate further evidence on the KG's performance.

Reporting

- e. Oral feedback will be given to the head and teaching staff of the KG at the end of the on-site review. A draft report will be issued to the KG within four weeks after the visit. Within four weeks on receipt of the draft report, the KG will need to submit a written response endorsed by the Supervisor. The review team will append KG's response to the final report and send it together with a set of post-QR questionnaires for collecting staff's feedback on the QR visit within two weeks upon receipt of the written response. The QR report will then be uploaded onto the Bureau's homepage and linked to the electronic version of the KG Profile.

Support materials

- f. To promote better understanding of the concept and arrangements of QR and to support KGs ongoing self-evaluation processes, further details of the QR framework including a handbook on the rationale, procedures and requirements; and frequently asked questions and answers are available on the Education Bureau's homepage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeid=5889&langno=1>). These supportive materials will be updated from time to time.

Selection and Timing

8. KGs are expected to embark on their self-evaluation process. All KGs joining PEVS will be selected to undergo QR by random sampling from the 2007/08 to 2011/12 school years. In the first year of implementation of PEVS, those KGs which are ready for QR are welcome to indicate their interest to undergo the external review. Those eligible KGs which underwent quality review during 2004-06 may be exempted or opt for another review visit. The Bureau will discuss directly the arrangement with these KGs.

9. Any newly established KGs may join PEVS after completion of all the registration procedures. They have to conduct self-evaluation and compile the SR and ASP reports. The Bureau may conduct QR after one year of its operation on the basis of its first SR and ASP.

Follow-up QR

10. Any KG under PEVS assessed as not meeting the prescribed standards will receive an advisory letter issued by the Bureau. While the QR report will not be uploaded onto the Bureau's homepage, the KG concerned will have to make the report and improvement plan accessible to teachers and parents. The KG may apply for a follow-up QR by submitting an action plan to address the issues identified for improvement to the Bureau within two months after receiving the final QR report. A separate team of inspectors will conduct a follow-up QR about 12 months after the issue of the initial QR report. If the KG is assessed to have met the prescribed standards in the follow-up QR, it will remain eligible for PEVS in the next cycle starting from the 2012/13 school year. Any KG still not meeting the prescribed standards will not be eligible to join the PEVS and can only redeem the voucher up to

the 2011/12 school year. All follow-up QR reports will be uploaded onto the Bureau's homepage and linked to the electronic version of the KG Profile. For those KGs assessed as not meeting the prescribed standards but choose not to apply for a follow-up QR, they can only redeem the voucher up to the 2011/12 school year. Their QR reports will be uploaded onto the Bureau's homepage and linked to the electronic version of the KG Profile.

Provision of support

11. Since 2000, the Bureau has organised about 70 training programmes on self-evaluation and use of the PI Framework for more than 90% of the KGs. In preparation for the launch of QR in 2007/08, more than 40 whole-day workshops on the QR Framework were conducted for KGs between March and July this year to familiarise pre-primary personnel with QR and the necessary knowledge and skills of conducting self-evaluation. Feedback collected from the workshop participants has been very positive. It is anticipated that the participants will work with their colleagues to provide quality educare service through continuous self-evaluation. The Bureau will continue to organise training and experience sharing sessions as needed.

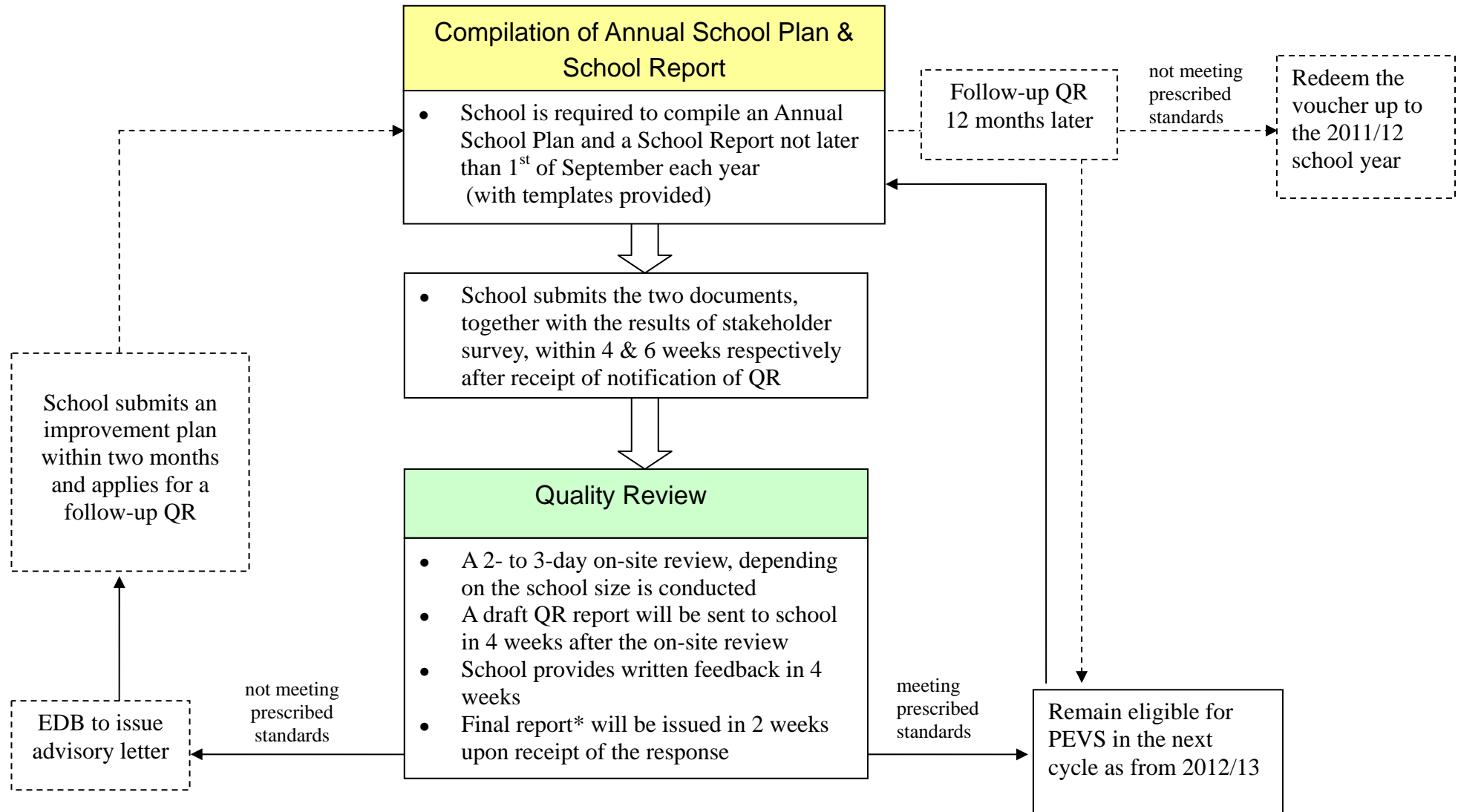
ENQUIRY

12. If you have any enquiries, please visit the Bureau's homepage on QA Mechanism under the PEVS (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=2291&langno=1>) or contact the Kindergarten Inspection Section at 2892 5458.

Tony TANG
for Permanent Secretary for Education

Quality Review Framework under the PEVS

Annex



* Uploading of QR reports for KGs assessed as meeting the prescribed standards to the Education Bureau Homepage once ready while QR reports of those assessed as not meeting the prescribed standards should be made accessible to teachers and parents of the KGs concerned. If KGs concerned do not apply for a follow-up QR, their QR reports will be uploaded. All follow-up QR reports will be uploaded.