

Chapter 6

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum

Curriculum Guide for Special Schools

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Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum

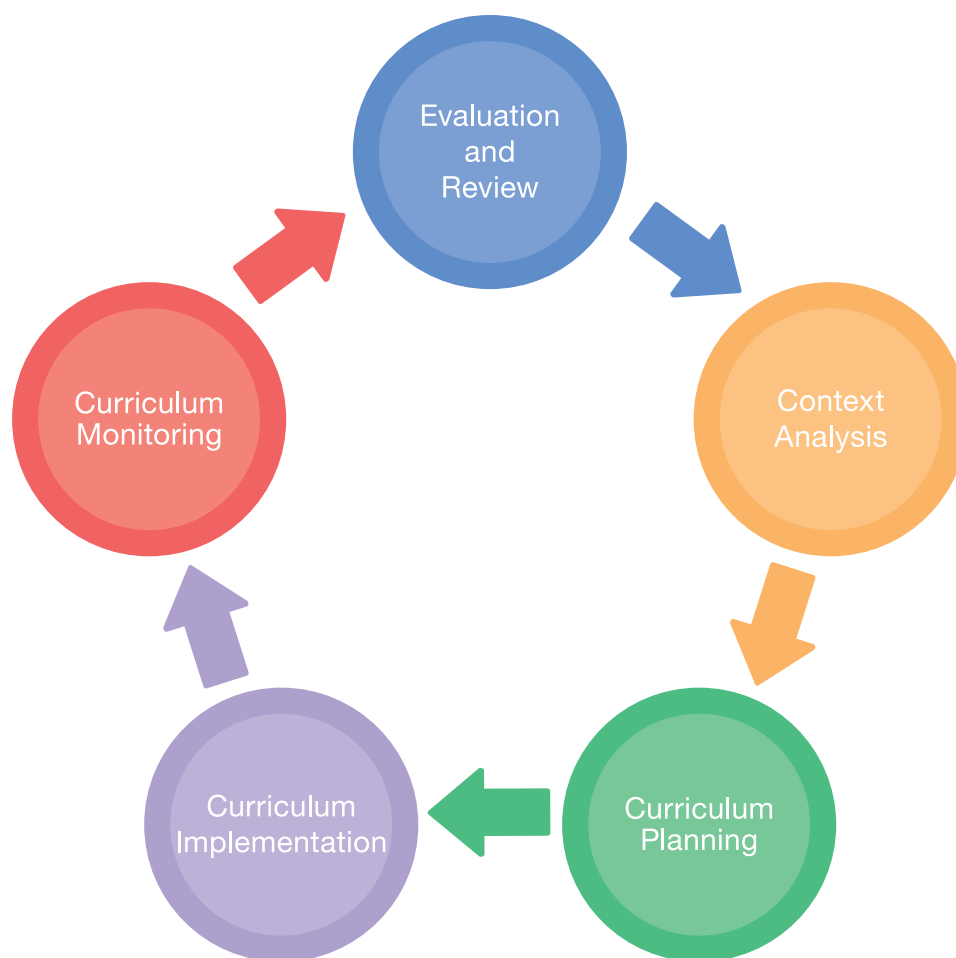
6.1 Cycles of Curriculum Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

Staff in special schools should regard monitoring, evaluation and review as part of a cycle for optimising whole-school curriculum planning which involves:

- **Context Analysis** – reconnaissance or examination of the contexts for learning and teaching within the school
- **Curriculum Planning** – including long, medium and short term planning, planning for assessment and planning for the deployment of staff, equipment and resources
- **Curriculum Implementation** – learning and teaching activities in class, in school and life-wide
- **Curriculum Monitoring** – including ongoing assessment of student outcomes through observation and record keeping as well as more formal aspects of assessment
- **Evaluation and Review** – with opportunities to look back at curriculum plans in relation to the school context and student attainment and to make improvements

This process is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Cycles of Curriculum Planning, Implementation and Evaluation



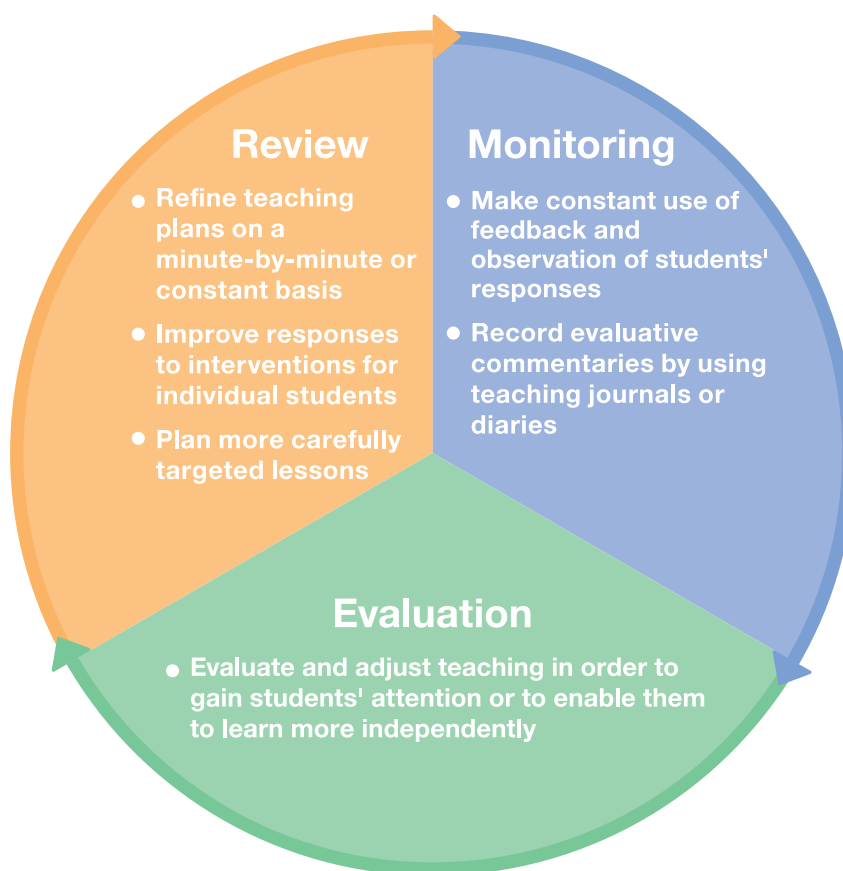
Curriculum monitoring is essentially a process of observing outcomes and gathering information about learning and the progress made by students. Curriculum evaluation implies a need to ask searching questions about the effectiveness of current curriculum planning in relation to the range of individual needs of the students in the school, the expertise of staff and levels of resourcing. The process of curriculum review suggests a drive for constant renewal and improvement in the curriculum so that planning is more effective and student attainments are enhanced. As proposed in Chapter 5, Section 5.7 “How Can the Outcomes of Assessment be Used?”, staff in special schools can conceptualise processes of monitoring, evaluation and review in three phases.

In the short term, or at a micro level, teachers may make constant use of feedback and observation of students’ responses in order to evaluate and adjust their teaching. Experienced teachers will engage in this kind of informed refinement of teaching plans on a minute-by-minute or effectively constant basis. Providing timely feedback and adjustments to teaching in order to gain students’ attention or to enable them to demonstrate their attainments with greater independence should be regarded as part of the everyday flow of classroom activity. For more formal documentation and planning, teachers may use lesson planning formats and teaching journals/diaries to record considered evaluative commentaries about the sessions they teach in order to enable themselves and other

teachers in future to improve responses to interventions²⁷ for individual students and to plan more carefully targeted and effective lessons.

Figure 6.2 illustrates the process of curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review on micro level.

Figure 6.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum — **Micro Level**



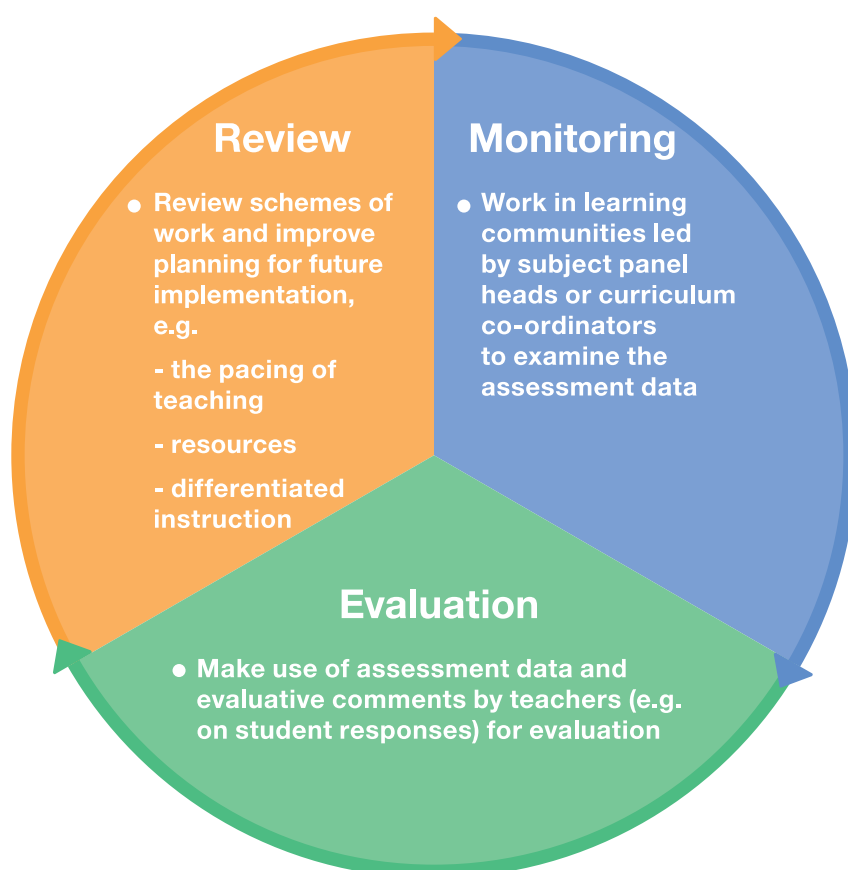
In the medium term, or at a meso level, groups of teachers, working in learning communities led by subject panel heads or curriculum co-ordinators, may make use of assessment data and evaluative comments by teachers in order to look critically at and reflect on the schemes of work. Where a number of teachers have taught a particular unit of work, for example, it will be productive for them to pool their ideas and their findings in terms of student

²⁷ "Response to Intervention" is an educational approach for early identification and the provision of support for students in needs. Students' responses to the intervention/support as well as their progress will be reviewed regularly and the level of intervention will be adjusted accordingly, in order that they can receive the most appropriate support and services.

responses in order to find ways to improve planning for future implementation. These improvements may involve the pacing or sequencing of sessions in a scheme of work; the deployment of staff, equipment and resources; differentiation in terms of modes of access and levels of learning outcome; or planning for targeted opportunities to make assessments of student attainment. These kinds of processes will enable curriculum planning systems to be maintained, updated and optimised under regular review.

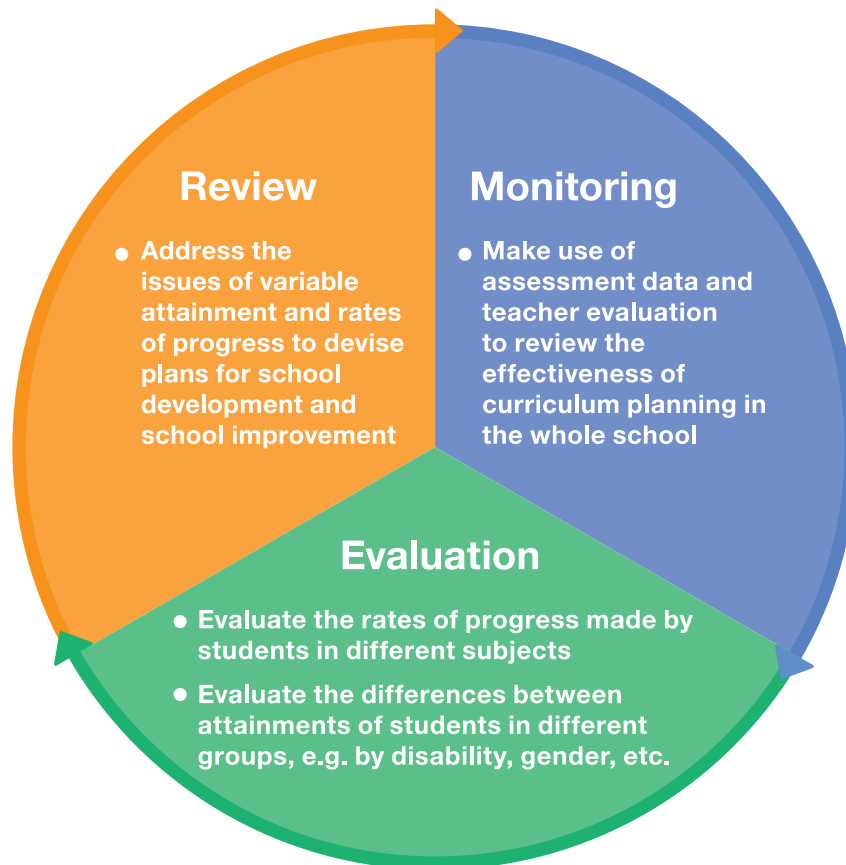
The process of curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review on meso level is shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum — **Meso Level**



In the long, or at a macro level, school leaders can make use of assessment data and teacher evaluation to enquire into the broader effectiveness of curriculum planning and provision among others in the whole school, in order to prepare for school self-evaluation and external school review. Curriculum co-ordinators, vice principals and principals will wish to be informed, for example, about rates of progress made by students in different subjects and in various strands within subjects in different age groups/key stages. This information may lead to questions arising about the differences between attainments of students in different groups (by disability, gender, cultural background or age, etc.) and proposals being made to address those issues of variable attainment and rates of progress.

The process of curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review on macro level is illustrated in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum — **Macro Level**

For reflection and action

- Does your school make use of curriculum planning and development processes that are similar to the cycles of curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation? What are the differences and how could these processes be improved in your school?

6.2 Data Sources for Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum

Sources of evidence that will be useful for curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review purposes may include:

- data from various forms of assessment
- examination results
- end of year reports, annual reviews of student progress and individualised education programmes
- classroom observations, lesson study and learning walks²⁸
- scrutiny and analysis of planning documents including schemes of work and lesson plans
- teacher diaries and journals
- teacher evaluations and commentaries
- reports of behaviour, attendance and punctuality
- surveys of the views of parents and family members
- the views and responses of students
- analysis of extra-curricular activities, elective subjects/elements in learning and life-wide learning

Given the range of data sources on the above non-exhaustive list, it will clearly be useful to triangulate findings by looking at combinations of data. When reviewing schemes of work or curriculum plans, for example, staff might look together at teaching plans, lesson observations and assessments of student outcomes. It might also be useful to draw on the views of parents and students in order to evaluate the effectiveness of activities carried out online, at home and beyond the standard school day.



For reflection and action

- In collecting information for curriculum evaluation and review, how does your school include students' voices and parents' views?
- What are the benefits for teachers of approaches to lesson study offering collaborative lesson preparation and post-lesson discussion?

²⁸ Learning walks are used for school improvement by looking at specific areas of development across the school, where these areas of interest or criteria are agreed upon with teachers in advance. Instead of providing feedback for individual teachers for purposes of appraisal or support, staff undertaking the learning walk will spend short periods of time in a number of classrooms or contexts for teaching looking for evidence of development in the agreed target areas.

6.3 Action Planning for Efficient Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

In order to be effective, approaches to curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review should be systematic. Further, monitoring, evaluation and review procedures should be manageable, using planned and agreed samples gathered over time and, where possible, information and data that teachers collect as a matter of regular practice and everyday routine.

All along schools have targeted their efforts in terms of monitoring, evaluation and review by looking in depth at focused areas, for example:

- in one term, examining learning and teaching in one strand of one subject (such as “writing” in Chinese Language)
- across two terms, scrutinising the interface between subjects as students move from one phase of learning to another, for example, from General Studies in junior secondary to Citizenship and Social Development in senior secondary for students with intellectual disability
- gathering information at the start and end of a school year in order to look, across age groups, at rates of progress against generic skills targets in individualised education programmes

It is the responsibility of senior staff to ensure that the work associated with curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review fits comfortably within the working lives of all members of school staff. This will mean, for example, focused data collection and observation exercises are built into and become an integral part of action planning for school development and the development of curriculum planning.



For reflection and action

- What is the relationship in your school between whole-school curriculum planning, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation? When should the processes of curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review begin?

6.4 Roles and Responsibilities Within Cycles of Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Curriculum

Curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review should not be regarded as tasks that only occupy senior staff. All staff in special schools will have roles and responsibilities within these cycles of development and improvement. For example, all school staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff, therapists and other professionals, potentially have data gathering roles to play within monitoring, evaluation and review processes.

However, procedures for monitoring, evaluation and review should be clear, simple and sustainable and they should be understood and owned by all involved. Senior staff will therefore ensure that roles and responsibilities within processes of monitoring, evaluation and review are made clear and that resources (including working time) are made available to enable staff to carry out their monitoring, evaluation and review activities. It is important that members of staff involved can see the purposes of monitoring, evaluation and review activity. It is also important that they fully accept the relevance and the significance of what they are being asked to do and that these tasks fit acceptably within their work commitments.

It helps, therefore, if processes of monitoring, evaluation and review can be an integral part of normal learning and teaching activity or part of a standard routine rather than an add-on or optional duty. Staff should see themselves as working within a learning community of colleagues in which responsibilities for curriculum leadership are widely distributed under the guidance of the curriculum co-ordinator and school leaders. As part of this shared effort, it will also be important to ensure that data and information to be used for monitoring, evaluation and review purposes are gathered from a variety of different sources and triangulated through analysis for enhancing reliability.



For reflection and action

- How does your school integrate data gathering for monitoring, evaluation and review into the daily activities of teachers and other staff?
- How does your school manage the deployment of resources to facilitate staff in taking part in curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review?

As this chapter has proposed, monitoring, evaluation and review have key roles in the cycle for optimising whole-school curriculum planning. Staff in special schools should use these processes constantly in order to drive forward improvements in planning, in practice and in policy.

Responsibilities for leadership in curriculum development can be shared very effectively among staff. The work of curriculum monitoring, evaluation and review should be carried out collaboratively with school communities. It will be important for schools to nurture the development of new capacity for curriculum leadership while also enhancing the curriculum planning skills of current school leaders as a key factor in school development. Thus, it will be the responsibility of subject leaders, curriculum co-ordinators, members of the school leadership team such as vice principals and principals as well as those with responsibility for governing schools to ensure that processes of monitoring, evaluation and review are well planned and that the outcomes of these processes are put to good use, so that these processes serve the best interests of students in special schools.



For reflection and action

- In what ways do processes of monitoring, evaluation and review contribute to curriculum development in your school?
- How can processes of monitoring, evaluation and review be used in your school to enhance the school-based curriculum, including curriculum planning procedures, curriculum implementation, pedagogy and assessment?