



Module 1: How Can Schools Understand Where They Are At?

FROM THE ONLINE RESOURCE *INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM*

“ *Self-review involves deliberate and on-going professional and organisational learning. It uses evidence to find out what is working well, so it can be sustained, and to identify and address any school-based conditions, beliefs, and practices that are limiting student learning.* ”

Ministry of Education, Introduction to the self-review tools, 2009, paragraph 6

Engaging in evidence-informed inquiry about inclusion will support schools to review their current strengths and needs and engage in professional learning that enhances inclusive practice and impacts positively on outcomes for students. It's important that **all students** are at the heart of any inquiry about inclusion, and their interests, learning, strengths, and aspirations are visible.

This module is for school leaders; it outlines four approaches for self-review about inclusive practice:

- Discussing inclusion and the New Zealand Curriculum
- Using conversation starters
- Using evaluation indicators and self-review questions
- Using the Inclusive Practices Tools.

The first two are designed to get conversations about inclusion started within the leadership team or with the wider staff. The second two are more formal self-review approaches based on specific sets of indicators that review school-wide systems and processes. Select a self-review approach that best supports your school's approach to inquiry and your purpose for reviewing inclusive practice.

Once you have engaged in self-review and identified your next steps using one of the approaches in this module, use the remaining modules in this guide to plan professional learning.



Essential reading for this module:

- [The NZC: A Curriculum for All Students](#) in *Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum*
- [Success for All – Every School, Every Child](#)
- [Inclusive Practices for Students with Special Education Needs in Schools](#)
- [Getting started with self-review](#) on the Wellbeing@School site

1.1 Discussing inclusion and the New Zealand Curriculum

This approach to self-review supports a staff group to reflect on and review their school curriculum to ensure it meets the changing demands and needs of their learners and communities.

Use The NZC: A Curriculum for All Students section in *Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum* to examine your team's perspectives on achieving an inclusive curriculum. There are three activities in this section that will support you to explore the extent to which inclusive practice is reflected and enacted in your school curriculum and to discuss next steps for achieving an inclusive school curriculum.



Resources required:

- [The NZC: A Curriculum for All Students](#) section in *Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum*

1.2 Using conversation starters

This approach to self-review supports a staff group to start exploring inclusive practices in their setting.

If your school is just beginning to explore inclusive practice, consider using this approach as a starting point – it should surface a range of understandings, assumptions, and beliefs and may result in some challenging conversations that prompt reflection and encourage change.

Select three or four questions from the list below and discuss these in small groups. For each question, reflect on what you are doing well and what your next steps are. Then share your discussions with the whole group.

Conversation starters could include:

- *What does inclusion mean to you?*
- *What phrases/words do you associate with the term 'inclusion'?*
- *What are our school's beliefs about inclusion? How are these evident in our school?*
- *What do inclusive practices in our school currently look like?*
- *How do we show we value diversity?*
- *How does our school encourage, respect, and value the contributions of all students and their families and whānau?*
- *How does our school create an environment in which all students are included in the school community?*
- *What does it mean to have an inclusive school culture? What would this look like and feel like?*
- *How does our school promote curriculum that is equitable and inclusive in meeting diverse learning needs?*
- *What challenges does our school face in achieving an inclusive curriculum?*
- *How can we build our inclusive practices? What are our next steps to strengthen inclusion in our school?*

Adapted from Edmonton Public Schools, 2013

1.3 Using evaluation indicators and self-review questions

The Education Review Office has released several resources that can support schools to review their systems, processes, teaching practices, and student outcomes. A recent report – *Inclusive Practices for Students with Special Education Needs in Schools* – has a clear set of evaluation indicators and self-review questions. These indicators and questions provide a helpful starting point for reviewing inclusive practice.

The evaluation indicators are grouped under four main themes. For each theme there is a series of high-level indicators and more detailed indicators. These can be used in the following way for self-review:

- Refer to the high-level indicators and decide on the key aspects you would like to review (e.g., 'Students with special education needs are valued').
- In small groups, get teachers to record evidence of what this aspect looks like in current practice in the school.
- Compare the evidence of current practice with the relevant detailed evaluation indicators.
- Identify your school's strengths and next steps from this comparison.

The self-review questions are under three headings: 'School values, culture, and commitment'; 'Teaching and support to promote participation and engagement'; and 'Outcomes for students with special education needs'. The questions can be used in the following way:

- Select the key questions you wish to review under each heading.
- In small groups, get teachers to record evidence of inclusive practice in the school for each question.
- Give staff an opportunity to express any questions that have surfaced in the discussions.
- Identify your schools strengths and next steps from this review process. Develop an action plan under the three headings.

Consider how you can include students, parents, families, and whānau in the self-review process by adapting the self-review questions. For example, you could hold whānau evenings or complete mini surveys to capture their perspectives.



Resources required:

The [evaluation indicators](#) and [self-review questions](#) in the ERO report about inclusion: *[Inclusive Practices for Students with Special Education Needs in Schools](#)*

1.4 Using the Inclusive Practices Tools to support self-review

“The Inclusive Practices Tools and review process are designed to assist school staff to consider what inclusion means, and encourage schools to engage in a dialogue with their community to think critically about how best to support a diverse range of learners.”

About the Inclusive Practices Tools, n.d., paragraph 4

The Ministry commissioned the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) to develop an inclusion self-review toolkit for schools. The tools are designed to support primary, intermediate, and secondary schools to engage in an ongoing review process for building inclusive practices for all learners. The kit is available on the [Wellbeing@School site](#).

The review process is a valuable exercise that involves surveying the school community, including teachers, students, and whānau. Data from the surveys can be analysed by the online tool to produce Inclusive Practices reports. The reports assist the school to identify possible strengths, as well as next steps to include in an action plan for inclusive practice. The tool allows flexibility so schools can consider a focus on one specific group of students and their whānau (e.g., year 9 students on entry to secondary school).

The website takes a school through the review process step by step.

The toolkit includes:

- a Student Survey (online or hard copy)
- a Community Survey (online or hard copy)
- a Staff Survey (online or hard copy)
- a School Review Profile (online or hard copy)
- links to additional resources for planning next steps
- an Inclusive Practices action plan template
- a range of online survey reports.



For leaders of PLD working in a range of schools, the schools you are working with may have already started or completed a self-review using the toolkit. If this is this case, the focus of PLD should ideally link to the self-review and its findings.

For leaders in schools, follow the review cycle step by step on the Inclusive Practices Tools website to ensure you complete the process. The 'Getting started' section clearly outlines the process and considerations at each of the five steps.

Contact your local Ministry of Education office to see if there is support available for the Inclusive Practices Tools self-review process.