



Kingdom of Tonga

Ministry of Education and Training

Minimum Service Standards Guide

A Guide for Principals and Education Officers to Using the MSS



2025

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ECE	Early childhood education
MSS	Minimum Service Standards
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SIP	School improvement plan

Introduction

Vision for Education in Tonga 2035

Ko e ako fungani 'oku kanoloto ai 'a e "Ko e 'Otua mo Tonga ko hotau tofi'a" 'aki 'a 'etau kafa taha.

Excellence in education that is based on the motto 'God and Tonga are our inheritance' and is founded on our working together.

Tonga Education Strategic Policy Framework 2025

The Minimum Service Standards (MSS) were updated in 2025 to help schools and their communities to improve learning. The **MSS Guide** is designed to help schools and education officers develop a School Profile, assess the school against the standards, and write and evaluate the annual School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Part A describes how schools will use the MSS for self-assessment and planning.

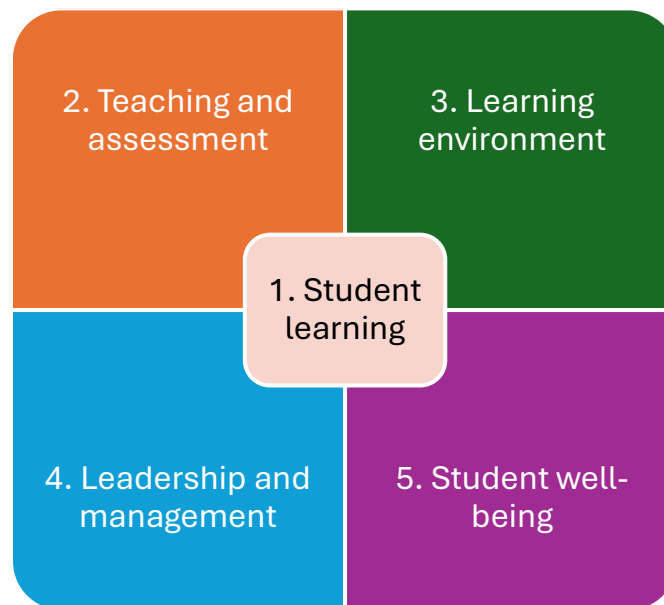
Part B describes how education officers will use the MSS to inspect schools.

What is new in MSS 2025?

Most standards and indicators remain the same as the previous MSS. Some have been merged or refined to make them easier to assess. New standards and indicators have been added to align with new policies and priorities in the *Tonga Education Strategic Policy Framework* and the *Corporate Plan* and complement the latest teacher and school leadership standards.

Updated MSS areas to focus on student achievement

Students are at school to learn. The new MSS includes learning, attendance and completion indicators at the heart of the standards.



Standards updated to include all grades

The standards have been updated to include early childhood education (ECE) to Form 7. Some indicators have specific targets for different types of school.

New MSS area for Student Well-being

Student health and well-being are essential for learning. New indicators have been added for pastoral and counseling care, access to health and nutrition information, and safeguarding.

Disaster-risk prevention added

A new standard on disaster-risk prevention and emergency drills has been added.

New and updated policies have been included

New national policies and regulations such as teacher registration, inclusive education and grants and subsidies have been reflected in the standards.

National targets have been updated

Targets from the Corporate Plan have been added or updated to be consistent with national priorities.

Clearer infrastructure standards

Clearer standards have been written for school infrastructure, pupil-teacher ratio, and curriculum materials for each type of school.

Tongan language, heritage and culture standard has been added

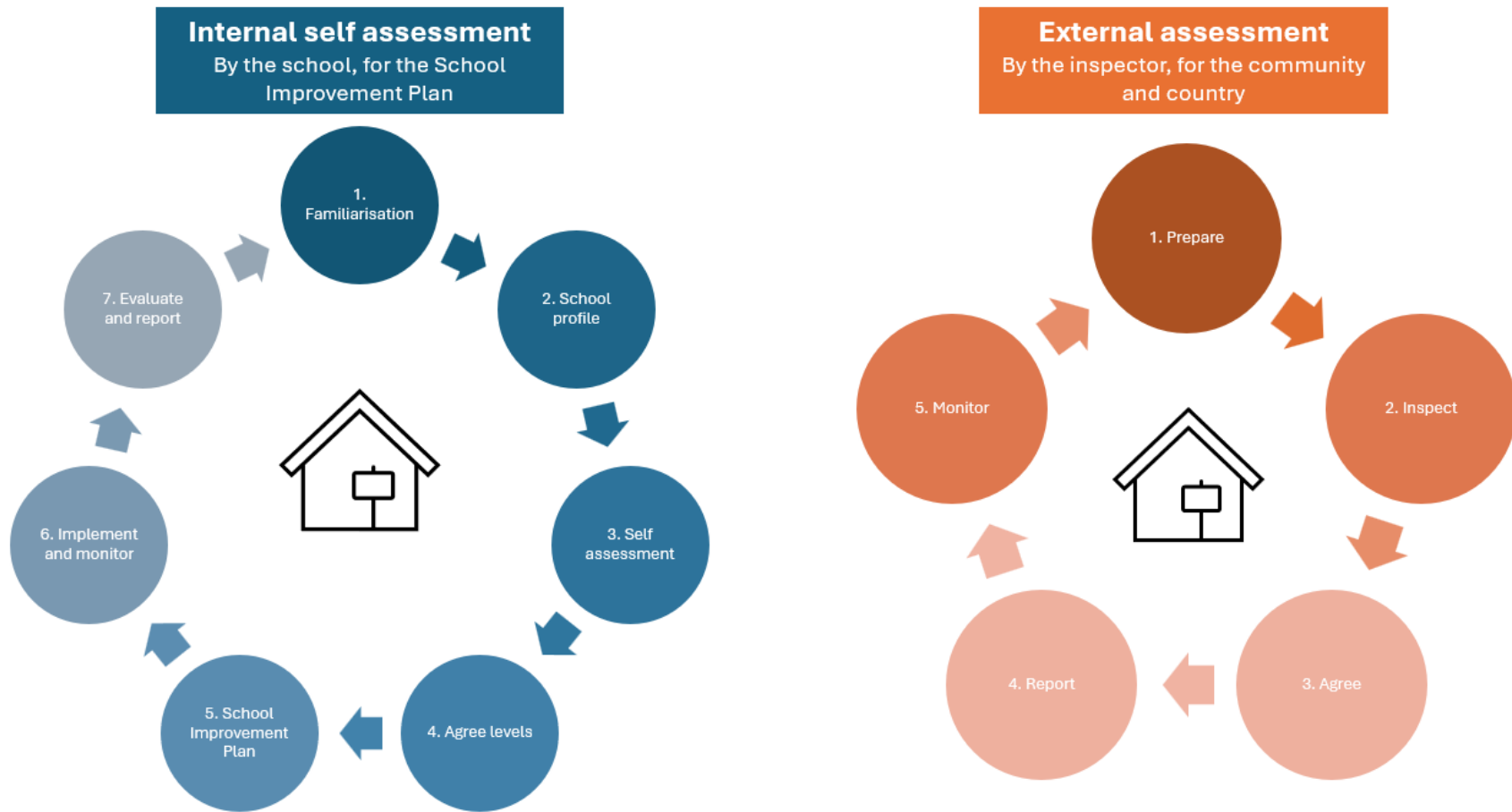
To reflect our unique culture and language, a standard on promoting and teaching Tongan heritage has been added.

Easy-to-use scoring rubrics

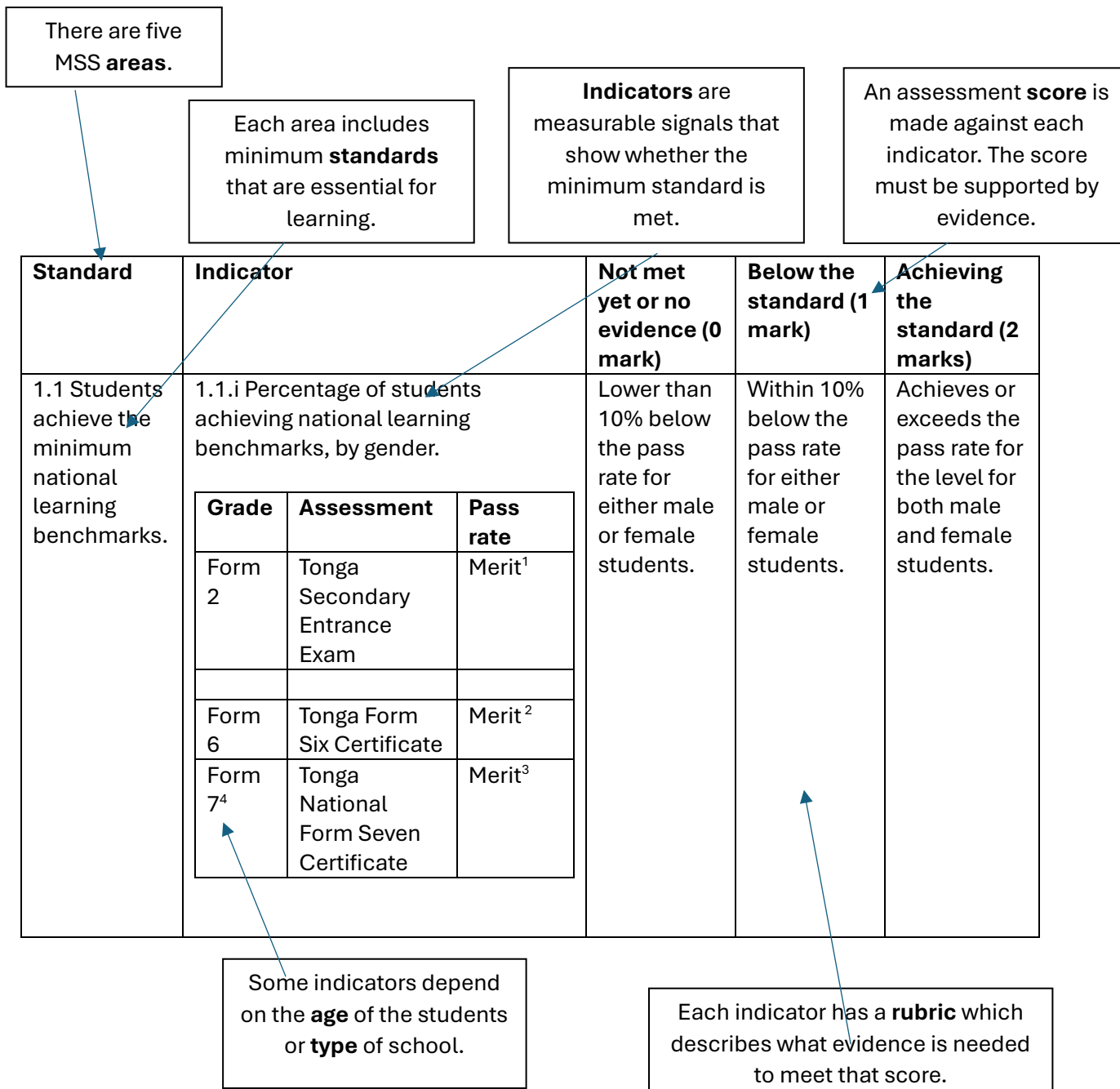
The rubrics have been updated to make it easier to score schools against the indicators.

How the MSS is used

The MSS is used for annual **internal** self assessment to help school's write their School Improvement Plan. The MSS is also used in the **external** inspection of the school to help the Ministry and Managing Authorities plan their support for schools and monitor progress across the education system. Both internal and external assessments are shared with the community.

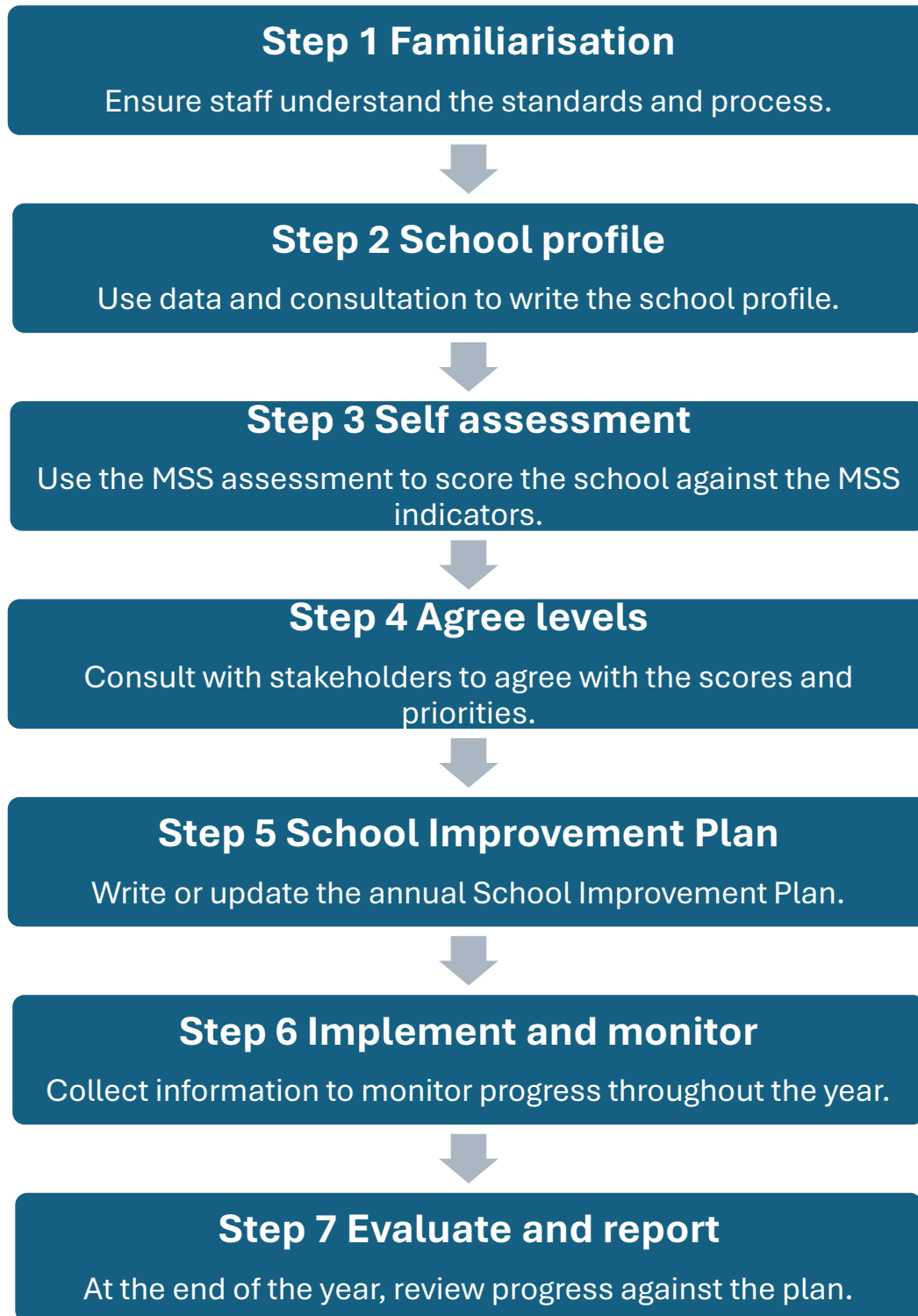


MSS structure



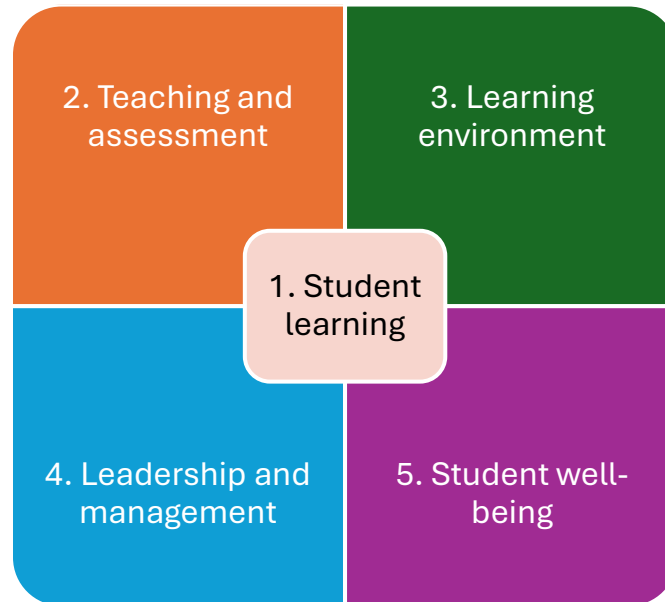
¹Merit is equivalent to 55-60%, ² Merit is equivalent to 58 – 76%, ³ Merit is equivalent to 55 – 76%. ⁴ Or equivalent international qualification (e.g., USP Foundations, Cambridge Examination etc.). Pass mark set by exam provider.

Part A. Steps to using the MSS at school



Step 1 Familiarisation

It is essential that all staff in the school understand the MSS. The MSS and School Improvement Plan are not just the responsibility of the principal.



1. Read the MSS 2025

Read the MSS 2025 and the Guide. If you have any questions, ask a colleague, your Managing Authority or the Quality Assurance Division.

2. Share with your staff

Give each member of staff a copy of the MSS and ask them to read it.

3. Professional development

Train the staff on the MSS process. Answer any questions about the MSS 2025.

MSS training plan

Use or adapt this plan for training staff about the MSS 2025.

Objectives

By the end of the training, you will be able to:

1. List at least five changes from the old MSS.
2. Explain the MSS process.
3. Reviewed at least five standards and indicators.
4. Discussed the School Profile template.
5. Discussed the MSS Assessment template.
6. Discussed the School Improvement Plan template.

Time

- Six hours
- Conducted before writing or updating the School Profile and before the annual MSS self-assessment.

Materials (one per teacher)

- MSS 2025
- MSS Guide
- School Profile template
- MSS Assessment template
- School Improvement Plan template

Session	Time	Activity
1	1 hour	What are the MSS? <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prayer.2. Attendance register.3. Explain objectives.4. Ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the MSS?• Why are they important?• What are the five MSS areas?• Which schools do the MSS apply to?• What other standards documents are there?5. In pairs, ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is new in the MSS 2025?• What do you think about the changes?6. Explain:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The MSS process• Annual internal self-assessment steps

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External inspection steps • Other standards documents for teachers and school leadership
2	1 hour	<p>What are the MSS areas?</p> <p>1. Divide the staff into five groups. Ask each group to prepare a presentation on one MSS 2025 area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is this area important? • How many standards are there in the area? • How many indicators are there in the MSS area? • What is included in the MSS area? • Are there any standards or indicators which are new? • Are there any indicators which might be hard to assess?
3	1 hour	<p>Presentations on MSS areas</p> <p>1. Ask each group to present their MSS area.</p> <p>2. After the presentation ask the whole staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our school’s strengths in this MSS area? • Are there any standards or indicators which we do not achieve yet?
4	1 hour	<p>School Profile</p> <p>1. Explain the School Profile step.</p> <p>2. Share the template. If the school already has a School Profile, review this.</p> <p>3. In pairs, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the School Profile important? • Why do you need to share the profile with parents? • Which sections are easy to complete? • Which sections might be hard to complete? Why? • What else will we put in our School Profile? • Who will collect the data for each section? • Do our parents need to be involved? If yes, how? • Do our students need to be involved? If yes, how?
5	1 hour	<p>MSS self-assessment</p> <p>1. Explain the MSS Assessment step.</p> <p>2. Share the template. If the school conducted an MSS self-assessment last year, review this.</p> <p>3. In pairs, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the MSS assessment important? • Why do we do it annually? • Why do you need to share the assessment results with parents? • How does the scoring work? • Who completes the assessment?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who reviews and approves the assessment scores? • Which indicators will be easy to score? • Which indicators will be harder to score? • How will we choose the priorities for the School Improvement Plan? • How will we involve parents? • How will we involve students?
6	1 hour	<p>School Improvement Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the School Improvement Plan and Review step. 2. Share the template. If the school already has a School Improvement Plan, review this. 3. In pairs, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is writing an annual SIP important? • Why do you need to share the plan with parents? • Why is it important the plan is based on the MSS assessment? • Why is it important to review the plan? • Why is it important that the school budget matches the plan? • Who writes the plan? • Who reviews the plan? • Who approves the plan? • When should the plan be ready? • When will we review the plan at the end of the year? • How will we involve all teachers in writing and reviewing the plan? • How will we involve parents? • How will we involve students? • How can we use the grant/subsidy to help? 4. Agree the next steps for the annual MSS self assessment. 5. Complete the readiness checklist: is your school ready to implement MSS 2025?

Frequently asked questions

Listed below are questions that teachers often ask about the MSS.

Does our school need to use the MSS?	Yes. Under the <i>Education Act 2013</i> , the Ministry sets minimum standards for all schools.
We already have a School Improvement Plan. Do we need to do another?	Congratulations. Every school must have a School Improvement Plan. Use the MSS 2025 self assessment to update your plan next year.
Do we have to use the templates?	No. But your School Profile and School Improvement Plan must have the same information as the template.
Do we need to do the self assessment every year?	Yes.
Will our school be inspected using the MSS?	Yes. The Quality Assurance Division and/or Managing Authority will use the MSS when they inspect the school.
We can't improve on some standards as we do not have enough money.	Achieving some standards may require investments in buildings or materials. The school can fundraise, use the school grant or subsidy, or mobilise community support. It may take several years to meet some standards.
What happens if we do not meet all the standards? What happens if we do not improve?	Be realistic about what you can change in one year in your School Improvement Plan. When you review the plan, think about why you did not improve the standard. If a school is not improving the Managing Authority or Ministry may visit more often to support and monitor the school.

Readiness checklist: is your school ready to implement MSS 2025?

How well does your school implement the MSS 2025?

0	We haven't done this yet	1	We have done this.	2	We can train other schools to do this.
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	Self-assessment	0	1	2
1	The principal has read the MSS and Guide.			
2	The principal has been trained in the MSS.			
3	Every teacher has a copy of the MSS and Guide (hard or soft copy).			
4	We have trained the teachers on the MSS.			
5	We have informed the parents about the MSS.			
6	We have informed the students about the MSS.			
7	We have written the annual school profile.			
8	Our school profile has a context statement, mission, and vision.			
9	We have completed the annual MSS self-assessment.			
10	We have agreed on the MSS self-assessment scores with stakeholders.			
11	We selected up to four priorities for this year.			
12	We wrote an annual School Improvement Plan.			
13	The School Improvement Plan is based on the self-assessment priorities.			
14	The School Improvement Plan has realistic actions and a budget for each priority.			
15	The School Improvement Plan has been submitted to the school's authority.			
16	A copy of the plan is on the school notice board.			
17	Every teacher has a copy of the plan.			
18	The plan is monitored regularly by staff (e.g., in a monthly staff meeting).			
19	Last year we evaluated the plan at the end of the year.			
20	Teachers, students and parents were involved in evaluating the plan.			
21	Last year we wrote a progress report about the plan evaluation.			
22	We sent the progress report to stakeholders and authorities.			
23	The school has a well organised file of previous school profiles, MSS self-assessments, and school improvement plans.			
24	We collect all the data needed for the MSS.			
25	We know who to contact if we have any questions about the MSS.			
	Total	/50		

Step 2 School profile

The **School Profile** provides useful information about the school and assists others not familiar with the school to form an idea of “what the school is like.” Developing a profile of the school starts the discussion about its strengths and areas for improvement. The principal completes the school profile form with the help of the staff. This can be done in a staff meeting.

The School Profile includes:

- ✓ Vision and mission statements
- ✓ Year the school was established.
- ✓ Profile of the school community
- ✓ Enrolment data
- ✓ Profile of student achievement (e.g., examination results)
- ✓ Important quality indicators
- ✓ Teaching staff data
- ✓ Facilities
- ✓ Teaching and learning resources

The School Profile must be displayed on the school noticeboard, shared with the Ministry and Managing Authority, and updated annually.

School Profile template

Island	
School name	
Authority	
Level (e.g. primary)	
EMIS code	
Date of profile	
Last inspection	
Principal's name	
Phone number	
Email address	
Website	

1. Context statement (1 page)

Describe the school's history, location, enrolment, teachers, resources, governance, facilities, and community support.

Grades																																										
Students (by grade)	Male		Female		Total																																					
Teachers	Male		Female		Total																																					
Achievement	<i>Learning assessment or examination results by grade and sex</i>																																									
Indicators	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Pupil Teacher Ratio⁵</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>% Teachers Qualified</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender Parity Index⁶</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Survival rate, by grade and gender.⁷</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income (last year)</td> <td colspan="4"></td> <td>T\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenditure (last year)</td> <td colspan="4"></td> <td>T\$</td> </tr> </table>						Pupil Teacher Ratio ⁵						% Teachers Qualified						Gender Parity Index ⁶						Survival rate, by grade and gender. ⁷						Income (last year)					T\$	Expenditure (last year)					T\$
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Infrastructure	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Classrooms</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Classroom Ratio</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Toilets</td> <td>M</td> <td></td> <td>F</td> <td></td> <td>T</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Toilet Ratio⁸</td> <td>M</td> <td></td> <td>F</td> <td></td> <td>T</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clean water</td> <td colspan="5"></td> </tr> </table>						Classrooms						Student Classroom Ratio						Toilets	M		F		T		Student Toilet Ratio ⁸	M		F		T		Clean water									
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Clean water																																										

⁵ Divide the number of students by the number of teachers.

⁶ Divide the number of female students by the number of male students. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes; a GPI that varies between 0 and 1 means a disparity in favour of boys; a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of girls.

⁷ Number of students enrolled in a grade divided by the number of students enrolled in the previous grade.

⁸ Number of students divided by the number of working toilets.

	Electricity			
	Internet for learning			
	Teachers' houses			
	Library			
	Other (laboratories, workshops, dormitories, ablution blocks, mess hall etc.)			
Community	PTA	Y/N	Student council	Y/N

2. Mission statement (1/4 page)

The mission statement describes the shared beliefs about what important for the school: why the school exists, who the school serves, what the community expects, and what services are provided. Stating the mission is a way of describing the culture of the school.

3. Vision statement (1/4 page)

The vision statement is a realistic vision of the future of the school. If the school achieved its mission, what would learning at the school be like?

School Profile examples

1. Context statement example

<p>Sacred Heart Primary School PO Box 15, Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu Sacred_Heart_Tonga@gmail.com School Profile 2026 1. Context Statement</p>			
Authority	Government	Level	Primary/middle
EMIS code	T025	Registered	1988
Grades	Years 1-6 Forms 1-2	Curriculum	National
Classrooms	8	Library	Yes
Water	Rainwater tanks	Electricity	Yes
Teachers' houses	4	Income (2025)	T\$16,500
Students	M: 91 F: 105 T: 196	Teachers	M: 3 F: 5 T: 8
Gender Parity Index	1.15	Pupil Teacher Ratio	25
Survival Rate	Y1-Y6 M: 88% F: 97%	Examinations results (SEE, 2024)	Language: 75% Maths: 68%
Feeder schools	Nuku Preschool Hope ECE Centre		
Graduates go to	Tonga High School		
Last inspection	July 2024		
Strengths	Student behaviour Strong PTA Good English and Tongan results Most children go on to high school All teachers are qualified		
Challenges	Some boys in the community are not coming to school. 2 classrooms need repair. Not enough water tanks. Maths scores are too low. Boys drop out of school too often.		

2. Mission statement example

2. 'Ofa High School Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the best learning experiences for young women and men. Our school is a place of love, care, and learning, where students are nurtured and supported to achieve their true potential. We welcome children from all communities and faiths in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our teachers are experts in inclusive education and have a deep commitment to the rights of young people and encourage their role as citizens in Tonga and the world.

3. Vision statement example

Saienisi TVET High School Vision Statement

Our school will be the strongest in Tonga and the Pacific for academic excellence in science, ICT and mathematics. Our students will be active, healthy and responsible citizens who help others in need and are ready for careers and learning. We will graduate an equal number of young women and young men to build a stronger Tonga.

Step 3 Self assessment

The self assessment against the MSS must be undertaken by the whole staff in a collaborative process. This is done once per year at the beginning of the year. Led by the principal, the staff needs to go through each of the standards and indicators using the **rubrics**. Using data and evidence, the staff will make an initial assessment. Aspects such as facilities and materials can be measured using a walking inspection and physical count.

It is important to remember that the MSS describe what the basic minimum standards are that must be achieved by schools. Some schools may already be achieving the standards in a range of areas. They may not be achieving the standards in other areas, and they may also be achieving beyond the standard in other areas.

The principal and staff will consider the evidence they have and use this to support their score for each indicator. If there is no evidence, the school is not yet reaching that level yet. It is important to remember that the score is just a starting point and may improve or decline over the years. The school makes a judgement at the beginning of the year.

For each indicator, the scores will be:

Achievement	Score
Not met yet or no evidence	0
Below the standard	1
Achieving the standard	2

If the school needs advice or has any questions, they can contact the Quality Assurance Division or their Managing Authority. If the school has recently been inspected, the inspection report can be used to help the school in its self-assessment.

MSS Assessment template

Island	
School name	
Authority	
Level (e.g. primary)	
EMIS code	
Principal's name	
Phone number	
Email address	
Date of assessment	
Inspector's name (if inspection)	

1. Student learning

Please refer to the rubrics in the MSS for a description of the scores for each indicator.

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
1.1 Students achieve the minimum national learning benchmarks.	1.1.i Percentage of students achieving national learning benchmarks, by gender.	0	1	2	
1.2 Students achieve the minimum regional learning benchmarks.	1.2.i Percentage of students achieving regional literacy and numeracy benchmarks, by gender. <i>If the school does not take part in a regional assessment, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	
1.3 Students attend school regularly.	1.3.i Student attendance rate, by grade and gender.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
1.4 Students complete the academic year and progress to the next grade.	1.4.i Repetition rate, by grade and gender.	0	1	2	
	1.4.ii Survival rate, by grade and gender.	0	1	2	
	Total				/10

2. Teaching and assessment

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
Professionalism					
2.1 Teachers must be qualified ⁶ , registered ⁷ and attend school diligently.	2.1.i Percentage of teachers with the minimum teaching qualification.	0	1	2	
	2.1.ii Student-teacher ratio.	0	1	2	
	2.1.iii Teacher attendance rate.	0	1	2	
2.2 Teachers engage in professional development as a means of upgrading and maintaining skills and knowledge.	2.2.i Percentage of teachers with at least 50 hours of professional development per year (e.g., in-service, professional reading etc.).	0	1	2	

⁶ As per the Education (Teachers' Registration) Regulations 2021 Section 7, for registration a teacher must have obtained or be working towards a Certificate of Teaching (Teacher Education) or equivalent, issued by an accredited institution in Tonga or abroad.

⁷ Registration may be full, provisional or limited authority to teach (Education (Teachers' Registration) Regulations 2021).

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	Refer to MSS Annex 4.				
	2.2.ii Teachers maintain a professional file (e.g., in-service attended, professional reading, planning etc.).	0	1	2	
2.3 New graduate teachers complete a 12-month support and guidance program.	2.3.i Records of graduate teachers are kept (e.g., principal's reviews, observations, etc.). <i>If the school does not have any graduate teachers, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	
	2.3.ii Graduates receive regular observations and feedback on their progress. <i>If the school does not have any graduate teachers, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	
	Sub-total				/14
Pedagogy					
2.4 Teachers demonstrate a sound understanding of student-centred approaches to effective teaching and learning across the curriculum and develop learning experiences that promote critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making skills and deep understanding of concepts.	2.4.i Percentage of teachers meeting standard on teacher appraisal form.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	2.4.ii Classroom observations indicate a mix of whole group, small group, paired and individual independent study. ECE teachers use play-based approaches.	0	1	2	
2.5 Teachers recognize individual differences in approaches to learning and student interest and provide for this diversity in learning experiences they develop.	2.5.i Classroom observations find a wide range of teaching strategies and approaches to meet the needs of different learners and abilities (i.e., questioning, brainstorming, role play, project work, games etc.).	0	1	2	
	2.5.ii Differentiated instruction (i.e., adjustment of concepts, level of difficulty, amount of work etc.) is used to meet learning needs of all students, including those with disabilities.	0	1	2	
2.6 Teachers evaluate and reflect on their teaching and use this to inform planning.	2.6.i Evidence that teachers evaluate their lessons and use their knowledge of their students to adjust their teaching, planning and pedagogical approach.	0	1	2	
2.7 Teachers set clear expectations of behaviour and high expectations for learning (“high expectation, high love”).	2.7.i All teachers use rules, expectations and routines consistently and these are well understood by students and parents.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	Sub-total				/12
Curriculum					
2.8 Teachers demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the curriculum content and Ministry policies.	2.8.i Classroom observations find teachers have sufficient content knowledge.	0	1	2	
	2.8.ii Percentage of teachers using curriculum materials (syllabi, teacher guides, pupil books, student textbooks etc.).	0	1	2	
2.9 Teachers plan effectively.	2.9.i Teachers' planning is well organised, up-to-date and aligns with curriculum and effective pedagogy. Planning is modified based on assessment data.	0	1	2	
	Sub-total				/6
Assessment and reporting					
2.10 School-based assessment clearly records individual progress by maintaining a portfolio for each student (samples of work, test scores, assessment tasks etc.).	2.10.i Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students (e.g., by reviewing assessment and examination data).	0	1	2	
	2.10.ii Individual student assessment portfolios and records are accurate, up to date and passed onto the next teacher.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
2.11 Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate and track student learning and update their planning.	2.11.i Evidence of a range of appropriate assessment tools and techniques (e.g., observations, standardised tests, self-assessment, checklists, assignments etc.).	0	1	2	
	2.11.ii Assessment is planned, continuous, relevant and appropriate. Formative assessment for learning is used regularly. Summative assessment occurs at least once per term.	0	1	2	
2.12 Assessment practices reflect the principles of authentic assessment.	2.12.i Assessment processes are fair, inclusive and enable all students to demonstrate their achievements.	0	1	2	
	2.12.ii Students receive regular constructive feedback.	0	1	2	
	2.12.iii Students and/or parents receive regular reports on progress against curriculum goals (i.e. at least once per term).	0	1	2	
	Sub-total				/14
	Total				/46

3. Leadership and management

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
3.1 Principal ensures that all staff receive appropriate curriculum, instructional materials and policies.	3.1.i Percentage of teachers with full set of curriculum materials.	0	1	2	
3.2 Teaching staff are provided with regular professional development opportunities and appraisals every six months to improve their skills and knowledge.	3.2.i Professional development is conducted on a regular basis, and focuses on improving learning including pedagogy, curriculum, inclusion, and assessment. At least 50 hours per teacher per year.	0	1	2	
	3.2.ii Minutes from weekly staff meetings.	0	1	2	
	3.2.iii Percentage of teachers who have received an appraisal in the last six months and have a documented performance enhancement plan.	0	1	2	
3.3 Principal demonstrates the skills necessary to lead a continuous school improvement process focused on improving student learning.	3.3.i Principal engages students, staff and other stakeholders in frequent conversations about student learning.	0	1	2	
	3.3.ii Strategies to improve student learning are the focus of staff meetings on a regular basis. Staff are encouraged to share research, instructional	0	1	2	

	strategies, and learning reflection.				
	3.3.iii Annual school improvement plan developed, implemented and reviewed.	0	1	2	
	3.3.iv School has a systematic process for collecting, recording, analysing and reporting data.	0	1	2	
	3.3.v School policies are developed, implemented and review.	0	1	2	
	3.3.vi Job descriptions are developed in consultation with staff and are aligned with the teacher standards.	0	1	2	
3.4 Principal establishes procedures and records to maintain efficient and effective operation of the school.	3.4.i Accurate and up-to-date student and staff documentation and records as required by the Education Act and policies (e.g., student enrolment and attendance records etc.).	0	1	2	
	3.4.ii School has a system for quickly responding to student and teacher absenteeism to improve attendance.	0	1	2	
	3.4.iii School and class timetables ensure all minimum subject hours are met.	0	1	2	

3.5 Principal effectively and efficiently manages and uses resources, including financial resources and assets to support positive outcomes for students.	3.5.i Accurate, secure, transparent, and up-to-date financial management and procurement records (e.g., ledger, requisitions, invoices, receipts, statements, reconciliations, acquittals, stock book, fixed asset register, etc.).	0	1	2	
	3.5.ii School submits acquittal for grant or subsidies on time as per the grants and subsidies policy.	0	1	2	
3.6 Principal fosters positive relationships between the school and all sectors of the community.	3.6.i Evidence of student, parent and community involvement through a range of strategies (e.g., parent-teacher interviews, termly reports, PTA meetings, student councils etc.).	0	1	2	
3.7 The school reports data to the Ministry on time.	3.6.ii Annual/monthly school census data submitted on time.	0	1	2	
	Total				/34

4. Learning environment

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
Teaching and learning resources					
4.1 There are enough teaching and learning materials for effective learning.	4.1.i Student-textbook ratio. <i>For ECE, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	
	4.1.ii Student-reading book ratio.	0	1	2	
	4.1.iii All curriculum materials are in good condition, available and accessible in the school administration office as listed by CDU (primary and secondary) or ECE Division (ECE). Records of materials are maintained, up to date, checked and audited.	0	1	2	
	Sub-total				/6
Facilities					
4.2 Buildings and facilities are clean, furnished, well-maintained and safe for learning.	4.2.i Facilities are clean, orderly and well-maintained and resilient to extreme weather and earthquakes as per the National Building Code of the Kingdom of Tonga. ⁸	0	1	2	
	4.2.ii Classrooms meet the minimum size and meet the	0	1	2	

⁸ <https://www.theprif.org/document/tonga/building-codes-and-standards/national-building-code-tonga-2007-tongan>

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	MET technical specifications and standard school designs.				
	4.2.iii At minimum each classroom will have a chalkboard/whiteboard, locker, cupboard or bookcase, teachers' chair and desk, and pin board.	0	1	2	
	4.2.iv Chair and writing surface (either table or desk) for every student which is appropriate for their age and disability status.	0	1	2	
	4.2.v If provided, teachers' housing is well maintained, clean, safe and has adequate clean water and sanitation as per the National Building Code of the Kingdom of Tonga. <i>If the school does not have teachers' housing, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	
	4.2.vi If boarding school, student dormitories are well maintained, clean, safe and gender segregated with adequate privacy and furniture. <i>If the school is not a boarding school, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
4.3 Students and teachers have access to safe, clean water for drinking and washing.	4.3.i Improved water source with at least 5 litres of clean water per student per day.	0	1	2	
	4.3.ii Handwashing station with clean water and soap for every 50 students.	0	1	2	
4.4 Students and teachers have access to gender-segregated, safe, hygienic, accessible, improved sanitation facilities.	4.4.i Student-toilet ratio, by gender	0	1	2	
	4.4.ii Teacher-toilet ratio, by gender	0	1	2	
4.5 Students have access to gender-segregated, safe, hygienic and accessible changing room/showers.	4.5.i Students have access to a shower room/changing room (e.g., for menstrual hygiene management).	0	1	2	
	4.5.ii Student-shower ratio (secondary and boarding schools only). <i>If the school is not a secondary or boarding school, score as 2.</i>	0	1	2	
4.6 Staff have access to offices or staffroom.	4.6.i Staff room or staff offices. All schools to have a head teacher's office. All schools to have at least one computer for administration.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
4.7 Students have access to safe, age-appropriate play, recreation or sports facilities.	4.7.i Safe, age-appropriate and well-equipped recreation and sports facilities. For example, a playground for ECE students, sports fields or halls for older students, etc.	0	1	2	
4.8 Students have access to services and specialist facilities appropriate to their learning needs.	4.8.i School has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside and inside play area (ECE) • Outside and inside learning areas (ECE) • Electricity • Library • Internet for learning (secondary) • Computer lab (secondary) • Science lab (secondary) • TVET workshop (secondary) • Home economics classroom/kitchen (secondary) • Fence • School hall • Secure storage space • Parking 	0	1	2	
4.9 Facilities are accessible to students and staff with disabilities.	4.9.i Percentage of facilities rated as 'accessible'.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	Sub-total				/32
	Total				/38

5. Student well-being

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
5.1 The learning environment is safe, equitable, supportive, orderly and promotes student learning.	5.1.i The physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of students is considered by all staff and strategies are implemented to promote this.	0	1	2	
	5.1.ii Male and female students are treated equitably. Evidence that the school is working to improve enrolment, attendance, survival, and transition rates for male and female students.	0	1	2	
	5.1.iii Gender Parity Index.	0	1	2	
5.2 Standards of behaviour are explicit and applied consistently with appropriate consequences. There is no corporal punishment. Teachers know how to respond to reports of	5.2.i Behaviour management policies, rules and regulations are clear and shared with students, parents and the community.	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
abuse, harassment or sexual assault.					
	5.2.ii School has a system for reporting and addressing bullying, abuse, harassment or sexual assault. Teachers know their duties and who to report to.	0	1	2	
5.3 The school promotes a sense of shared values and respect for each other, the community, and school property.	5.3.i The students and teachers demonstrate the school's shared values through communication, trust and respect for each other, the community and school property.	0	1	2	
	5.3.ii Evidence teachers participate in a range of extracurricular activities that support the school and community.	0	1	2	
5.4 The school is sensitive to and teaches Tongan way of life, culture, language and history.	5.4.i Students learn about, celebrate, and reflect on Tongan cultural traditions, arts, language and heritage.	0	1	2	
5.5 Students have access to age-appropriate nutrition, counselling and health care and teaching.	5.5.i School has at least one trained counsellor.	0	1	2	
	5.5.ii Students learn about healthy nutrition, drugs and alcohol, and healthy	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	behaviours. If meals are provided, they are nutritious. Staff do not use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in working hours.				
	5.5.iii Students receive regular medical checks and screening for physical, vision, hearing, behavioural and learning difficulties. If necessary, students have access to first aid.	0	1	2	
	5.5.iv Students take regular exercise and learn about the importance of regular exercise for a healthy life.	0	1	2	
5.6 School is prepared for disasters and has taken measures to improve resilience.	5.6.i School has a disaster risk reduction plan which is reviewed annually.	0	1	2	
	5.6.ii Students take part in regular emergency and evacuation drills. Staff are trained in emergency procedures.	0	1	2	
5.7 Students with disabilities receive inclusive education and, if necessary, have an individual education plan.	5.7.i Individual education plans are written collaboratively, implemented and reviewed regularly. Teachers are aware of any student special needs	0	1	2	

Standard	Indicator	Not met yet or no evidence (0 mark)	Below the standard (1 mark)	Achieving the standard (2 marks)	Evidence
	(including high risk allergies and health needs).				
5.8 Teachers set regular home learning activities which are appropriate to the age and learning level of the students.	5.8.i School promotes home learning such as home reading or homework tasks. These are appropriate to the age and learning level of the student. School provides information to parents and students on effective home learning and self study.	0	1	2	
	Total				/32

Overall school performance

Area	Maximum score	Assessment score	%
1. Student learning	10		
2. Teaching and assessment	46		
<i>Professionalism</i>	14		
<i>Pedagogy</i>	12		
<i>Curriculum</i>	6		
<i>Assessment and reporting</i>	14		
3. Leadership and management	34		
4. Learning environment	38		
<i>Teaching and learning resources</i>	6		
<i>Facilities</i>	32		
5. Student well-being	32		
Overall school performance	160		

Priorities for annual School Improvement Plan *Choose up to 4 priority indicators for the annual school improvement plan*

Standard/indicator	Score	Priority action (what do we need to do to meet the minimum standard)

Agreement

We agree with the assessment and the priority areas. Stakeholders consulted can include the PTA, student council, inspector and Managing Authority.

Name	Position	Represents	Signature	Date
	Chairperson, PTA	Parents		
		Students (male)		
		Students (female)		
	Inspector	Authority ⁹		
	Teachers	Teachers		
	Principal	School		

⁹ Ministry of Education and Training or the school's Managing Authority.

Step 4 Agree levels

After the principal and staff have drafted the level of achievement for each indicator of the MSS, the next step is to consult with stakeholders and authorities on the scoring and priorities.

Stakeholders will include:

- Parent-Teacher Association
- Student council¹⁰

Authorities will include:

- Ministry Quality Assurance Division School Officers
- School's Managing Authority (non-government schools)

During the consultation, the principal will provide evidence for the scoring and justify the selection of the priority areas. The Ministry and Managing Authority will provide advice on how the school can improve (for example, by sharing examples from other schools or providing new guidance materials).

Once the scores and priorities are agreed, the stakeholders sign the assessment, and the principal and staff prepare the annual School Improvement Plan.

Consulting with **stakeholders** ensures the community shares a common vision for the school.

The **authorities** provide expert advice and can help schools understand national reforms and policy.

This step promotes transparency and rigour.

¹⁰ In mixed gender schools, the head boy and head girl or head prefects should both sign the self assessment. It is important that male and female students are both consulted.

Step 5 School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement Plan is an annual action plan which addresses the areas where the school does not meet the minimum standards.

The plan describes the actions, budget and who is responsible for each priority in the self-assessment.

The school’s resources should be considered. It may be easier to improve the standards in some areas than others.

For example, it would be easier (and relatively inexpensive)

to obtain a set of curriculum materials compared to repairing infrastructure.

The principal and teachers will write the plan during a staff meeting. It should be short, focused and include a realistic budget. It is vital that the principal ensures that all the staff are aware of the plan and the roles and responsibilities they will have.

Do not choose too many areas for improvement. It is not practical to focus on too many problem areas at once.

Focus on **up to four priorities** each year to achieve success. Start with the most important first.

Remember that the plan can be changed and updated during the academic year if an action is completed early or the school is not making progress.

A good plan is...

High impact	What are the most important standards to focus on which will improve student learning and well-being? Do all our stakeholders agree on the priorities?
Realistic	What did the school achieve in last year’s plan? What can we do in one academic year?
Honest	What is our realistic budget for this year? How much can we fundraise? Which actions are low cost or no cost?
Measurable	How will we know when we have finished the action? Can we measure its impact?
Owned	Who is responsible for each action? What happens if they do not do it? Do they have enough skills, time and resources? Who can help us?
Inclusive and equitable	Do the actions help the most vulnerable students? Have we considered the needs of male and female students and students with disabilities?
Shared	How will we make sure all our stakeholders know about our plan? What is the best way to keep stakeholders updated?
Reviewed	When will we review the plan? Who needs to review it? What do we do if the plan is not on track? Does anyone need to approve our plan?

School Improvement Plan template

Island	
School name	
Authority	
Level (e.g. primary)	
EMIS code	
Year of plan	
Principal's name	
Phone number	
Email address	
Website	

1. Estimated budget

Estimate the income for this year. Add or remove items as needed.

1. Bank balance brought forward	T\$
2. School fees	T\$
3. Grants and subsidies	T\$
4. Fundraising	T\$
5. Income generation (e.g., rentals, sales etc.)	T\$
6. Other	T\$
TOTAL INCOME	T\$

Estimate the expenditure for this year including the action plan. Add or remove items as needed.

Item	Budget	Funding source
1. Salaries	T\$	
2. Utilities	T\$	
3. Administration and governance	T\$	
4. Curriculum materials	T\$	
5. Equipment and furniture	T\$	
6. Professional development	T\$	
7. Repairs and maintenance	T\$	
8. New infrastructure	T\$	
9. Transport	T\$	
10. Reserves/savings	T\$	
11. Student well-being	T\$	
12. Other	T\$	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	T\$	

Estimate any funding gap to implement the plan.

T\$ _____ If there is a funding gap, how will the school raise money?

2. Action plan

Priority standard (from self assessment)	Action (what, who)	When	Resources (how many)	Estimated cost	Funding source
				T\$	
				T\$	
				T\$	
				T\$	
TOTAL				T\$	

3. Approved

The School Improvement Plan is based on the MSS assessment, discussed with stakeholders, and approved for implementation. There will be a monitoring review every quarter. The plan will be evaluated on _____.

Principal name	
Signature	
Date	

Share the plan with all teachers and the parents. Pin the plan to the school's notice board. If requested, submit a copy to the Ministry or Managing Authority.

4. Attachments

- School Profile
- MSS Assessment

Step 6 Implement and monitor

Developing the plan is only the beginning. Once the plan has been developed, the next step is to implement and monitor the plan.

Principals need to ensure that the staff are well informed and have a clear understanding of their **implementation** roles and responsibilities. For example, if learning environment in the school is below the standard, then the staff as a whole and individually need to consider why this is happening. They firstly need to consider the evidence they have gathered and what this evidence is indicating as the problem. The problem might be identified as bullying in the school or inappropriate behavior amongst students. Teachers need to be able to identify possible causes. In some cases, it may be that there has been a clear lack of a behaviour management policy, or expectations of behavior are not clearly identified and shared with students and the community.

Communicate the plan to staff, students and parents regularly. Even young children can understand an action plan. All staff must be given a copy of the SIP for their professional file.

If the plan is to be successful and achieve its aims, then principals need to ensure that they are **monitoring** the progress of the priorities throughout the year and not just at the end of the year. For an SIP to be effective it is essential that it is constantly being reviewed and monitored and if necessary, changes made. It might be that the actions or strategies that were developed originally are not working or that the situation in a school may have changed.

Monthly monitoring during a staff meeting are a good way to monitor progress on the plan actions. Put the review dates in the school calendar.

For example, the school might undertake a survey of students, staff and parents throughout the year as a means of gathering evidence of whether they consider if there has been changes and improvement. You may decide that the school needs to make changes to the actions or strategies, if current actions are not successful. This is quite often the case and principals should not be hesitant in changing plans if they feel they are not achieving or making changes, progress or improvement.

The school's authority may require a regular report on progress on the plan. The school must report to the Quality Assurance Division and Managing Authority at least once per year.

A **SIP Monitoring Report** template is included below.

SIP Monitoring Report template

School					
Year					
Date of monitoring					
Attendance (names)					
Priority standard (copy from plan)	Action (what, who) copy from plan	Status	Achievements	Problems	Next steps (what, who, when)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> On track <input type="checkbox"/> Off track <input type="checkbox"/> Not started			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> On track <input type="checkbox"/> Off track <input type="checkbox"/> Not started			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> On track <input type="checkbox"/> Off track <input type="checkbox"/> Not started			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> On track <input type="checkbox"/> Off track <input type="checkbox"/> Not started			

Step 7 Evaluate and report

At the end of the academic year, the principal will lead the staff to evaluate the SIP during a staff meeting.

- Did we finish all the actions?
- Did the actions improve the school's MSS score for the priority indicators?
- What went well? Why?
- What did not go well? Why?
- How could we have improved the plan?
- Which actions need to be rolled over to the next academic year?
- What other changes happened at the school this year?

The principal will write an **SIP Evaluation Report** on their progress and whether the school has improved against the priorities in the plan. They will compare the MSS score for the indicator in the self assessment at the beginning of the year and what they think the score would be at the end of the year.

The report is shared with the teachers, parents and the school's authority. A simplified version can be shared with students. The report will be used in the next year's self assessment.

SIP Evaluation template

Island	
School name	
Authority	
Level (e.g. primary)	
EMIS code	
Year of plan	
Date of report	
Principal's name	
Phone number	
Email address	

1. Progress on School Improvement Plan

Priority standard (copy from plan)	Action (what, who) copy from plan	Status	Achievements	Problems	Next steps	MSS score before SIP	MSS score after SIP
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not started					
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not started					
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not started					
		<input type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not complete <input type="checkbox"/> Not started					

2. Approval

I certify the staff, parents and students have been consulted on the SIP evaluation at the end of the academic year. The report will be used in the self assessment at the start of the next academic year.

Principal name	
Signature	
Date	

Part B. Inspection

42 Inspection of schools and teachers

- (1) The Minister or any authorised officer may, with due notice to the Managing Authority concerned –
 - (a) visit, enter and inspect any school; and
 - (b) inspect, assess and appraise the work of any teacher in such school.
- (2) For the purpose of this section a school shall be deemed to include any part of such school and any building used in connection with it, including workshops, dormitories, kitchens, sanatoria, hostels and all auxiliary buildings.

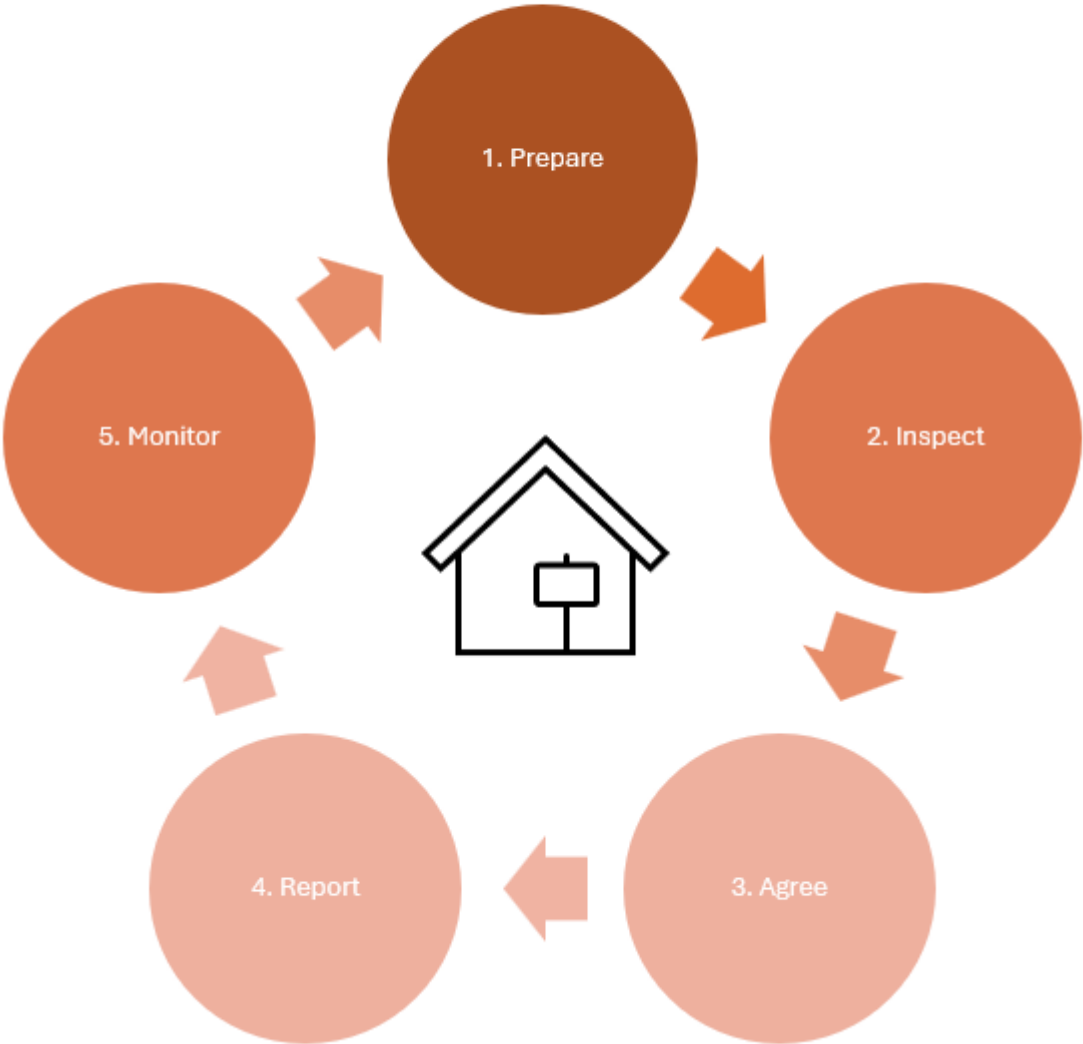
The Ministry of Education and Training **inspects** schools regularly to ensure minimum standards are being met and to provide advice on how to improve the quality of education. The authorised officer will use the MSS to conduct the inspection to calculate a score. The MSS ensures that the standards are transparent and measurable. If the score differs from the annual self assessment, the inspector can provide guidance to the principal.

The inspection will always include lesson observations and a meeting with staff and may include meetings with students and parents. The inspector will ask to see documents, data and facilities. Prior to the visit, the inspector will inform the principal and Managing Authority. A Managing Authority can also use the MSS to inspect and support non-government schools.

Inspection is important to inform the citizens and community about the quality of education in their schools.

Inspection steps

External assessment
By the inspector, for the community
and country



Step 1 Prepare

During the preparation phase the inspector will:

- Review the school's file, including:
 - EMIS data
 - Previous Inspection Reports
 - Most recent grant or subsidy acquittal report
 - Most recent annual School Improvement Plan
 - Most recent MSS Evaluation Report
- Inform the Managing Authority (non-government schools)
- Communicate with the principal, including:
 - Date and time of inspection
 - Who will be involved in the inspection
 - Protocols for the inspection
 - Meetings to be held with staff, parents and students
 - Teachers, grades and subjects to be observed
 - Whether the school has the MSS and MSS Guide
 - Documents to be sighted, including:
 - School Profile
 - MSS Assessment
 - School Improvement Plan
 - Any SIP Monitoring Reports
 - Grants and subsidies acquittal reports
 - Curriculum documents
 - School policies, handbooks and timetables
 - Records to be reviewed, including:
 - Student enrolment, disciplinary and attendance data
 - Teacher professional files and attendance data
 - Student assessment portfolios
 - Individual Education Plans for students with additional needs
 - Examination and assessment data
 - Financial records (e.g., cash book, reconciliations, stock book, asset register etc.)

Step 2 Inspect

On the day of the inspection, the inspector will use the MSS Assessment to review all aspects of the school. A typical inspection day will include:

1. Meet the principal to review progress on the annual School Improvement Plan and plan the day.
2. Document check, including:
 - i. School Profile
 - ii. MSS Self Assessment
 - iii. School Improvement Plan
 - iv. Any SIP Monitoring Reports
 - v. Grants and subsidies acquittal reports
 - vi. Curriculum documents
 - vii. Policies, handbooks and timetables
3. Records check, including:
 - i. Student enrolment, disciplinary and attendance data
 - ii. Teacher professional files and attendance data
 - iii. Student assessment portfolios
 - iv. Examination and assessment data
 - v. Individual Education Plans for students with additional needs
 - vi. Financial records (e.g., cash book, reconciliations, stock book, asset register etc.)
4. Tour of all school facilities, including every classroom, water supply, and toilet facilities.
5. Lesson observations and feedback to individual teachers.
6. Staff meeting with all teachers.
7. Meeting with student representatives (e.g. student council).
8. Meeting with the PTA.
9. Debrief with principal and teaching staff.

During the inspection, the inspector will score the score against the MSS indicators using the **MSS Assessment template**.

Step 3 Agree

At the end of the inspection, the inspector meets with the principal and teaching staff to discuss the scores, strengths and areas for improvement. The inspector and school agree on the priorities and next steps for the school. These are recorded in the **MSS Assessment** template for inclusion in the School Improvement Plan (if necessary). The inspector and principal sign and date the form.

If the principal and staff disagree with the scores, the inspector notes this on the form with an explanation. However, the inspectors' score is the one which is reported to the Ministry.

Step 4 Report

After the visit, the inspector completes a written **Inspection Report** with recommendations for the school and its community. The inspector's scores for each MSS area are reported to allow the Ministry to track progress at the national level. It is important that the recommendations are clear and realistic for the school.

A copy of the report is provided to the principal and respective Ministry division. If the school is non-government, a copy is sent to the Managing Authority.

The principal must put a copy of the report on the school notice board and give a copy to every teacher for their professional file.

If a serious weakness or risk is found at the school as per the Education Act 2013 Section 43 (1), the inspector will report this immediately to the Ministry.

Inspection Report template

School	
EMIS code	
Inspector name	
Inspector's title	
Inspector's contact details	
Date of inspection	

1. MSS inspection scores

Area	Maximum score	Assessment score	%
1. Student learning	10		
2. Teaching and assessment	46		
<i>Professionalism</i>	14		
<i>Pedagogy</i>	12		
<i>Curriculum</i>	6		
<i>Assessment and reporting</i>	14		
3. Leadership and management	34		
4. Learning environment	38		
<i>Teaching and learning resources</i>	6		
<i>Facilities</i>	32		
5. Student well-being	32		
Overall school performance	160		

Grading (%)	Level	The school (<i>tick one</i>)
90-100	Advanced/ Mahulu	
70-89	Exemplary/ Hulu	
50-69	Achieved/ A'usia	
1-49	Emerging	

2. Priority areas for improvement

Area	Priority recommendations for improvement
1. Student learning	
2. Teaching and assessment	
3. Leadership and management	
4. Learning environment	
5. Student well-being	

3. Inspection of individual teachers

Name of teacher	Grade	Notes

4. Next steps for inspector

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5. Submission

Name of inspector	
Signature	
Date	
Name of principal	
Signature	
Date	

Step 5 Monitor

At least once per year, the inspector will contact the school principal to monitor progress on the priorities identified in the inspection. During the next inspection, the inspector can evaluate progress against the weaker areas in the MSS and provide advice on how the school can improve achievement of the minimum standards.

The inspectors will also provide information to the Ministry and Managing Authorities on the common issues faced by schools which require changes to policy and guidance to improve learning across Tonga.