

Primary Quality Mark

A Self Evaluation Tool For Primary, Secondary, Special Schools, PRUs, Extended Services and Early Years Settings

Alliance for Lifelong Learning



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What Is It?

The Quality Mark for Schools provides a framework for the continuous improvement of the basic skills of all pupils in a school. This includes those who underachieve and those whose attainment is lower than would be expected of someone of their age.

Basic skills are defined as 'the ability to read, write, and speak in English and use mathematics at a necessary level to function and progress at work and in society in general'.

The Primary Quality Mark was first introduced in 1997. However, since then the national education picture, particularly in literacy and mathematics, has changed significantly. It seemed, therefore, time for the guidance to be re-examined to ensure that schools¹ achieving the award now genuinely are required to demonstrate they are worthy of a 'Quality Mark' in respect of their provision to support and improve basic skills.

The guidance for the Primary and Secondary Quality Mark was revised in September 2007 when the merger with NIACE/Tribal took place and the Basic Skills Agency became the Alliance for Lifelong Learning.

Consultation has taken place with the local authorities in the Primary and Secondary Quality Mark Partnerships to ensure that the revised guidance is now fit for purpose and reflects the picture of the teaching of literacy and mathematics in schools today.

There continue to be 10 elements to the award.

When a school is awarded the Quality Mark it receives a plaque to display. Schools are also entitled to use the Quality Mark logo on school documents. The school retains the award for a period of three years, subject to a light touch monitoring visit half way through the award. At the end of each three year period, the school is able to renew their Quality Mark. The list of schools who have achieved the Quality Mark nationally and locally can be accessed via the Quality Mark website, www.qmdatabase.org,

¹ Although the term 'school' is used in this briefing, the PQM is also suitable for early years settings and the SQM for PRUs.

The Ten Elements

In order to gain the Quality Mark a school needs to show evidence that it is meeting the requirements of ten elements.

1. A whole school strategy and planning to improve basic skills.
2. An analysis of the assessment of pupil performance
3. Target setting for the improvement in basic skills.
4. Improvement planning for underachieving and/or under attaining pupils
5. Review of progress for underachieving and/or under attaining pupils
6. Improving skills of staff in teaching and extending basic skills.
7. Use of a range of teaching approaches and learning styles
8. Use of appropriate teaching and learning materials
9. Involvement of parents and carers in supporting their child
10. Effective procedure for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in performance

Why Go For It?

- The Quality Mark provides national recognition of a school's commitment to raising standards for its pupils.
- It can provide a valuable framework to support school improvement.
- It is recognised by Ofsted as an indicator of effective practice.

- It links to the Self Evaluation Form

Some comments made by head teachers:

'...an endorsement of the school's hard work and commitment to raising standards for all the children'

'...a very good management tool, it creates awareness of our strengths and weaknesses'

...'delivering our agenda of school improvement in a clear, focused and celebratory way'.

Suggestions for Getting Started

- Talk to your SIP and Governors to get their support.
- E-mail www.qm-alliance.co.uk to register your interest and arrange for a Quality Mark Associate to speak with you.
- Audit where you are, with reference to the ten elements. A self audit template can be found at www.qm-alliance.co.uk
- Identify areas for development to include in the School Improvement Plan, specifically mentioning Basic Skills.
- Agree responsibilities for developments, collection of evidence and who will be responsible for compiling this evidence.
- Identify a timeline for assessment; there is no time limit between making a formal commitment and the assessment. If you feel a support visit would be helpful, contact Yasmin Patel at enquiries@qm-alliance.co.uk to arrange one.

Assessment

When a school is ready for assessment, contact Angela Taylor at amt1314@btinternet.com to arrange a visit.

The documentary evidence is formally assessed. This takes place on site and will include a learning walk alongside discussions with members of staff responsible for Basic Skills in the setting. There is no expectation that a separate Quality Mark folder should be compiled. Evidence can be cross referenced on the audit form from existing school documentation.

The Quality Mark Assessor will recommend the award of the Quality Mark to the Alliance, providing there has been sufficient evidence to validate all 10 elements and the assessor will submit the completed form to the Alliance as well as a feedback report to your school.

Frequently Asked Questions

When will we be ready to request final assessment?

A school will be ready to apply for final assessment when it:

- Has an evidence base to demonstrate that all 10 elements have been achieved cross referenced on the audit form
- Can demonstrate improvement in children's basic skills – i.e. the school has added significant value to pupils' achievements. This will usually be demonstrated through an upward trend in children's achievement. This upward trend should be evident over more than one year in order to demonstrate that improvement is linked to effective teaching and not to factors such as an increase in the number of higher attaining pupils entering the school.

What will be the format of the final assessment?

The Alliance will ask one of Kent's local assessors to visit the school on a mutually agreed date. During the visit the assessor will meet with the headteacher to discuss and see the evidence base, including a tour of the school.

At the end of the visit the assessor will feedback to the headteacher and will usually recommend the award of the Quality Mark. Points for further development will also usually be left for the school.

Can we fail assessment?

If a school does not have an appropriate evidence base to meet all 10 elements of the Quality Mark, but gives a commitment to meet them in the future, it can continue the assessment at a later date.

How is consistency ensured during final assessments?

Kent's local assessors have all been accredited to undertake assessments. Joint visits are often undertaken to moderate and ensure consistency in all judgements. Assessment guidance, prompt questions and refresher training are provided for all assessors to again ensure consistency.

Quality Mark Contacts

Angela Taylor, Quality Mark Associate

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QM Sites

www.qm-alliance.co.uk for information and resources.

www.qmdatabase.org for the list of schools in Kent with the Quality Mark.

Monitoring

As a form of quality assurance, a number of schools may be selected at random for a brief monitoring visit to ensure the school is continuing to meet the requirements of the Quality Mark.

If by the renewal date a school slips below the required standards and has not been granted a deferral, the school is no longer able to use the award on stationery and must remove the Quality Mark plaque and logos.

Please read the guidance for headteachers to find out about the subscription scheme in Kent.

Renewal

The Alliance will send a reminder letter to both the school and the LA, 6 months and 3 months before the Quality Mark runs out. The school then needs to agree a date for revalidation with the Quality Mark Assessor who will contact the school. Revalidation must be successfully completed 3 months before or after the official renewal date, or in exceptional circumstances a request for an extension be agreed by the Alliance, otherwise it will not be possible to renew and a new application will need to be made.

The school will be asked to provide documentary evidence of how, over the three years, the Quality Mark has been used to improve practice throughout the school. The school will need to show evidence of:-

- Progress made in respect of the aims and objectives of the action plan. The action plan has been monitored and reviewed and, if necessary, revised to take account of analysis (element 1)
- Progress towards the school targets (element 3)
- Use made of the improvement plans for pupils (element 4)
- Review of pupil progress (element 5)
- Staff development, both teaching and 'non-teaching', identifying training strategies and annual training plans. These activities have reflected changes in staffing and in the curriculum (element 6)
- Use of teaching observations and monitoring reports, ensuring a range of suitable teaching approaches are being used in the school (element 8)
- An attempt made to maximise the involvement of parents and carers in helping their children with basic skills (element 9).

The same procedure for validation applies as noted above for first applications, and the Quality Mark Coordinator will recommend renewal of the award, where the school continues to meet all of the 10 elements of the Quality Mark.

It is advised that the school regularly updates the audit form submitted for their initial assessment to aid the assessment for renewal, as evidence needs to be submitted to cover the full three-year period and show progress.

Support for Schools

Advice can be gained from the Alliance.

The Alliance regularly produces a newsletter and other supporting information.

For more information, access the website; www.qm-alliance.co.uk

Information about all schools in England with the Quality Mark is available on: www.qmdatabase.org

LINKS BETWEEN PQM ELEMENTS AND OFSTED EVALUATION SCHEDULE 2009

QM elements	Judgements from the OFSTED evaluation schedule
Element 1: A whole school strategy and planning to improve performance in basic skills	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement , taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of teaching and learning • The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money
Element 2: The analysis of the assessment of pupil performance in basic skills in the school	<p><u>OUTCOMES: HOW WELL ARE PUPILS DOING TAKING ACCOUNT OF ANY VARIATION?</u> Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' attainment • The quality of learning for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and their progress <p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE PROVISION?</u> The quality of teaching, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of assessment to support learning
Element 3: Target setting for the improvement of the school's performance in basic skills	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE PROVISION?</u> The quality of teaching, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of assessment to support learning <p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement , taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of teaching and learning
Element 4: Basic skills improvement planning for pupils underattaining and/or underachieving	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of teaching and learning • The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money
Element 5: Regular review of the progress made by pupils underattaining and/or underachieving in basic skills	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE PROVISION?</u> The quality of teaching, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of assessment to support learning <p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</p>
Element 6: A commitment to improving the skills of all staff in the school to teach and extend basic skills	<p><u>OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: HOW GOOD IS THE SCHOOL?</u> The school's capacity for sustained improvement</p> <p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</p>
Element 7: Use of a range of teaching approaches and learning styles to improve basic skills	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE PROVISION?</u> The quality of teaching, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of assessment to support learning
Element 8: Use of appropriate teaching and learning materials to improve basic skills	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money.</p> <p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE PROVISION?</u> The quality of teaching, taking into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of assessment to support learning
Element 9: The involvement of parents and carers in developing their child's basic skills	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</p>
Element 10: Effective procedures for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in performance	<p><u>HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?</u> The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</p> <p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>