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# Appendix two – About the audit

## Audit objective

This audit assessed the effectiveness of the NSW Department of Education's and NSW Education Standards Authority's arrangements to ensure teaching quality in NSW public schools.

## Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective through the following audit questions and criteria.

1. Do agencies effectively monitor the quality of teaching in NSW public schools?
  - a) Agencies have clearly defined indicators of teaching quality.
  - b) Agencies consistently assess, monitor and report on teaching quality.
  - c) Agencies collect and analyse data to monitor trends in teaching quality across NSW.
2. Are strategies to improve the quality of teaching planned, communicated, implemented and monitored well?
  - a) Effective planning was undertaken for the implementation and delivery of strategies to improve teaching quality.
  - b) Strategies are implemented in accordance with their guidelines
  - c) Agencies regularly monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of strategies to improve teaching quality.

## Audit scope and focus

In assessing the criteria, we focused on the following aspects.

1. Arrangements to monitor teaching quality, including:
  - a) performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers in NSW Public Schools
  - b) School Excellence Framework
  - c) teacher accreditation at proficient and higher levels
  - d) management of unsatisfactory teacher performance.
2. Strategies to improve teaching quality, improving:
  - a) Strong Start, Great Teachers
  - b) Quality Teaching, Successful Students
  - c) Quality Teaching Rounds
  - d) Mastery of Teaching program
  - e) Teacher Performance Management and Improvement project
  - f) Executive Priority Project - Teaching Quality.

## Audit exclusions

The audit did not assess:

- the regulation or accreditation of initial teacher education courses
- accreditation of professional development courses
- early childhood education or schools for specific purposes
- the school leadership institute and strategy
- merits of government policy objectives.

## **Audit approach**

Our procedures included:

1. interviewing staff from the audited agencies
2. interviewing 14 principals from a selection of primary and secondary schools.
3. reviewing documents relevant to strategies and other monitoring arrangements:
  - a) Planning documents for strategies
  - b) Program guidelines and communication materials
  - c) School Excellence Framework evidence sets and external validations
  - d) School Plans and Annual Reports
  - e) Performance and Development Plans
  - f) Program reviews and evaluations.
4. analysing data from sources including:
  - a) School Excellence Framework self-assessments and external validations
  - b) People Matter Employee Survey
  - c) Tell Them From Me Surveys
  - d) Teacher accreditation decisions.

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

## **Audit methodology**

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standard ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements and other professional standards. The standards require the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with requirements specified in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by the audited agencies throughout the audit. We also thank the school principals we selected and other stakeholders who met with us to discuss the audit.

## **Audit cost**

The estimated cost of the audit, including travel and overheads, is \$330,000.