

A presentation

IMPROVING EDUCATION THROUGH **STEERING** AND **SUPPORT**



Skolverket
Swedish National Agency for Education

THE NATIONAL AGENCY FOR EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS IN A PROCESS OF CHANGE

Significant reforms are being carried out within the education system, and the National Agency for Education has considerable responsibility for the preparation and implementation of these reforms. Parallel to this, the authorities within the sector have been reorganised, meaning that the Agency has a partly new role. National school improvement activities have been reintroduced to the authority, while inspection, supervision and approval of independent schools have been allocated to a new, separate authority.

The National Agency for Education is the national authority for the public school system, the preschool system, for schoolage childcare and for adult education. The Agency also has responsibility for coordinating national initiatives for pupils with disabilities, environmental issues and issues relating to pupils who have just arrived in Sweden.

A director general heads the Agency and, in order to improve the Agency's quality and reinforce its establishment in society, a council is appointed by the government.



TASKS AND ROLE

Government and Parliament specify goals and guidelines for preschool and school through the Education Act, curricula etc. The task of the Agency is to work actively for the achievement of these goals. The Agency steers, supports, follows up and evaluates the work of municipalities and schools with the purpose of improving quality and the result of activities to ensure that all pupils have access to equal education. All pupils are entitled to an equal education. The Agency addresses principal organisers, school managers, school heads, and teachers within preschool and schoolage childcare, compulsory school, upper secondary school and adult education. Pupils and parents are sometimes target groups for the Agency. An important mission is to give evidencebased feedback and analyses of the situation in Swedish education system to the Government.

THE AGENCY'S CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVED QUALITY

National goals and governing documents

The Agency establishes frameworks and guidelines for how the education is to be conducted and assessed using goal documents, syllabuses, tests, grading criteria and general guidelines. This is an activity that is going to be of considerable significance as a result in the Government's reform programme for the compulsory and upper secondary school system and, to a certain extent, preschool. Future



initiatives will be carried out to support the implementation of the new reforms.

The National Agency for Education is responsible for the national testing system. Together with universities and colleges it develops national tests and diagnostic material in order to ensure equality in the assessment of pupils.

With financial help the Agency is also responsible for distributing and evaluating government grants for the achievement of goal fulfilment and for guaranteeing quality in the different activities.

National school development

The National Agency for Education shall support preschools and schools in their development. The support provided shall be given national priority. The support may be provided for general development needs identified as shortcomings or problems in national or international surveys in areas such as mathematics, languages and reading and writing. Support may also be provided for issues relating to bullying, equality, minority languages and pupils who have just arrived in Sweden. Skill development for school staff is an essential element in our new organisation. The Agency is responsible for the national school head training and for professional development for teachers. The Agency also disseminates information about research and knowledgebased methods and experience that are of significance for school heads and teachers.



Evaluation

The National Agency for Education evaluates the activities through in-depth studies and analyses to highlight areas requiring attention on a national basis.

Analyses are made to explain variations in goal fulfilment relating to different organisers and schools. The Agency participates in international studies in order to assess our own educational system and compare it with those of other countries.

Follow-up

The National Agency for Education is the authority responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing relevant statistics in this sector. We follow up the prerequisites of the different activities, how the activities are conducted and how the results develop, by the continual collection of data from the municipalities. This allows comparison of different organisers and activities.

INSPECTION – A SEPARATE AUTHORITY

The task of examining the standards of quality and equivalence in schools, in the form of educational inspection and supervision, is now dealt with by a new authority, the National Schools Inspectorate. In addition, the Schools Inspectorate is responsible for authorisation and grants for independent schools. The Representative for Children and Pupils' Equal Treatment is also attached to the new inspectorate.



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