

Inspectie van het Onderwijs  
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap

## Supervision of failing Schools in the Netherlands

to sustainable improvement  
of the quality of primary  
education

Presentation SICI workshop  
Braunschweig

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## Context

- 7160 schools primary education (in 2011 0.6% failing, 3.8% weak, 95.6% at least satisfactory)
- 1057 schoolboards (50% one school, 7% > 20 schools)
- Big variety in number of pupils and number of schools under one school board.
- Less capacity inspectorate (20% cutback, while high expectations): 140 fte in primary education
- Risk based inspection (2007) on a legal basis
- Public reports and information
- Legal change in steering schools: division between schoolboard and internal supervision.
- Government-policy: close a failing school after 1 year (legal possibility minister)

# Framework of inspection and decision rules

Central: pupil results (reading, writing, math) and learning process-indicators

- 27 core indicators (basic set)
- 10 key-indicators about results and process (decisive judgement)

*Weak:*

- insufficient pupil results (correction for social background)
- and:
- insufficient process (max. 1 key indicator)

*Failing:*

- insufficient pupil results (correction for social background)
- and:
- insufficient process (min. 2 key indicators)

## Characteristics of failing schools

- Lack of educational leadership (management and board)
- Lack of good qualified teachers
- Low expectations of pupils abilities
- Lack of functioning system for quality improvement and quality assuring.
- Quick changes in number or characteristics pupil population.
- Lack of pupil care and pupil monitoring system.
- Isolation (socio-geographic, denomination).
- Conflicts in team of teachers
- etc.

# Intervention Strategy

- Improvement period max. 2 years
- Plan of improvement schoolboard
- Plan of Inspection (Contract)
- Intensified inspection (at least once a half year)
- 'Black list' on the internet
- Half way inspection: assessment results improvements

## Number of failing schools in recent years

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
new	48	39	61	48	30	31	
improved	17	29	49	53	70	48	
merged/closed	0	0	0	7	7	3	
total number	55	86	96	108	96	49	32

- until 2009 increasing number new failing schools
- from 2009 increasing number improved failing schools



## Improving time

- before 2007: 0% improved within 2 years
- from 2005: 17 % improved within 2 years
- from 2009: 48 % improved within 2 years

## Sustainability

- hardly any fall-back
- continuous further improvement on key indicators over time



# Inspection and Support

- Separation between inspection and support: to keep independency.
- Initiatives government, regional and local authorities (financial support, monitoring)
- Supporting programmes of national educational councils (subsidized by government)
- Supporting programmes of other agencies
- Coöperation by exchange of information, taking part in training sessions

## Changes in inspection strategy since 2009

- Address the schoolboard directly
- From a curative to a preventive approach
- Early warning interventions: disposal of benchmark information to schoolboards, official warning if results are declining.
- Accent on role of schoolboard and schoolmanagement (governance and leadership)
- Accent on the quality of the teachers
- More powerful interventions: f.e. plan of intensified inspection, half-term schoolvisit to determine results so far, escalation steps when improvement stagnates
- More tailored interventions

## Reasons of success

- Increased sense of urgency.
- Learning process of school boards (awareness of responsibility).
- Stronger focus on result-based policy and ongoing improvement of quality
- Transparency of inspection data and indicators.

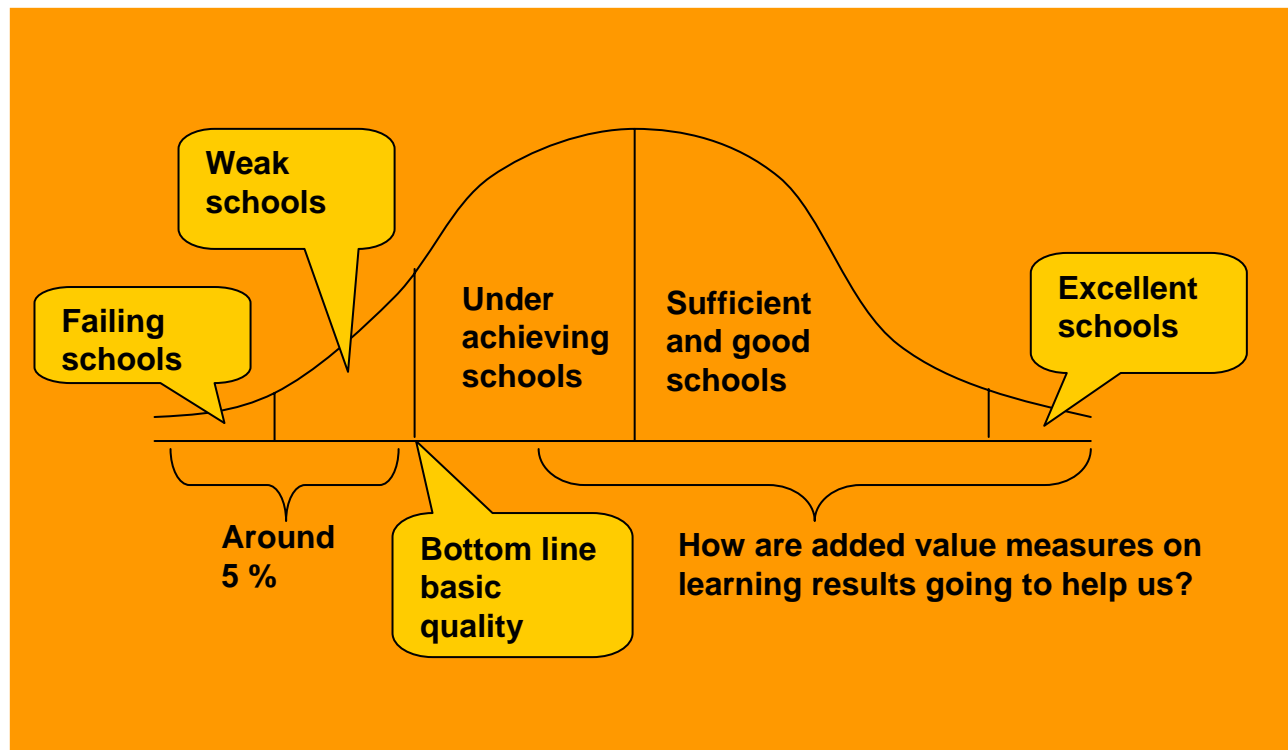
### Critical questions:

- Still new failing schools
- Teaching to the test/the inspection?
- Impact of inspection: virtuous and vicious circles
- Improvement not only the result of inspection
- Sustainability over longer period of time?

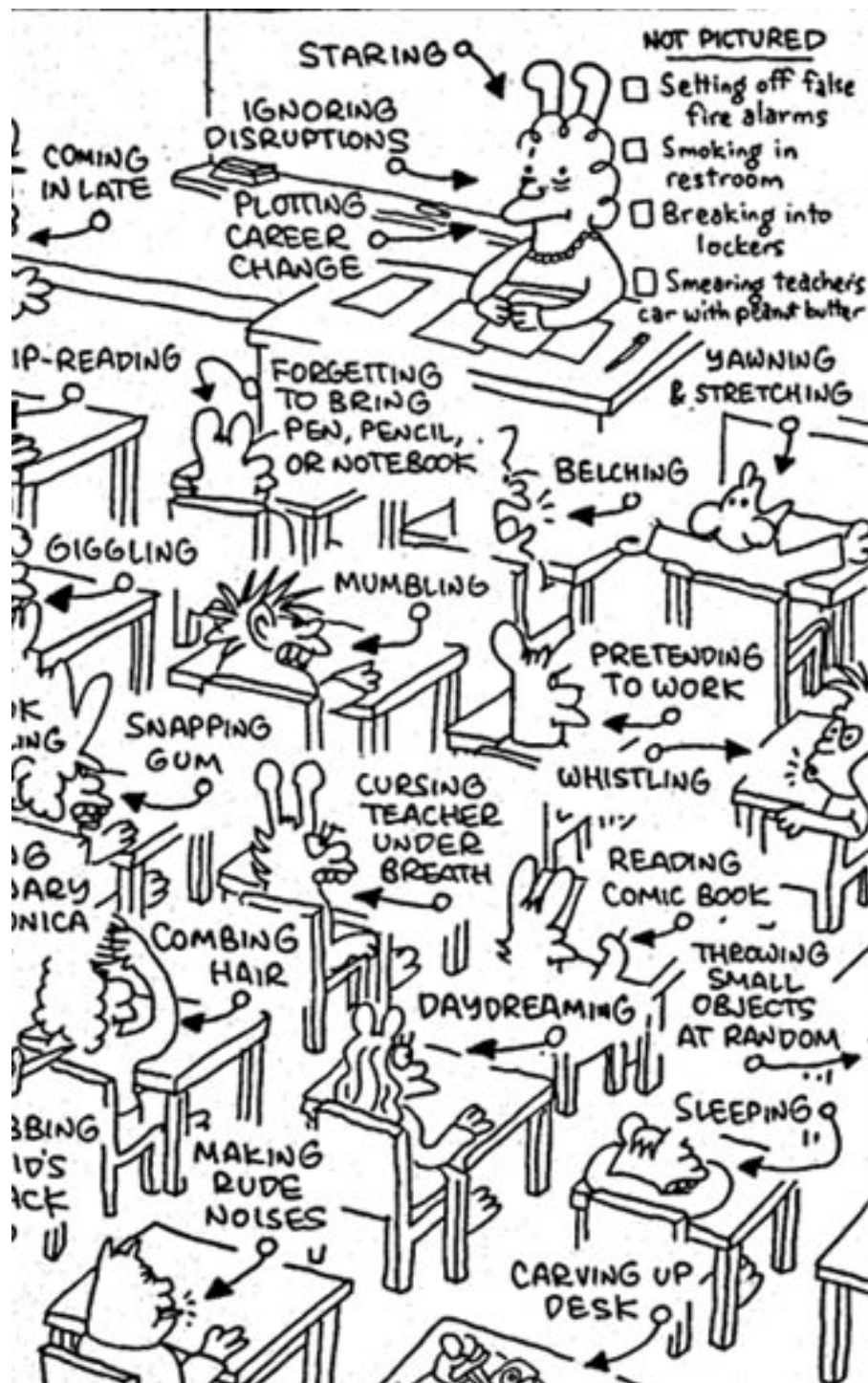
The future: 2015 and beyond...

Government policy: raise the bar

From improving failing schools to improving the system



The system can be best improved by investing in the middle categories!



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Thank you for your attention

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