support they provide can range from negotiated observation and assistance in the classroom, assisting middle-level leaders in curriculum planning and implementation, facilitating training and advising and assisting the SMT.

The QA support network also plays a monitoring role for the Ministry, through regular reports made to Schools Division and CCATS on the teaching and learning processes and the performance of schools.

The External Quality Assessment (EQA) Unit carries out external evaluations of schools’ performance in line with established national standards, to help schools move towards the achievement of these standards and to provide the MoE with a balanced view of schools’ progress. The EQA’s systematic monitoring and evaluation processes are described in their Handbook: ‘Looking at our Schools – effective self-evaluation through collaborative partnerships’, (2010) and in the ‘External Quality Assessment Manual’, (2010).

2.5 Student Groupings

The Ministry’s principles on teaching and learning (ref p3) are grounded in the belief that every child can learn and succeed; and that it is the responsibility of schools to help them do this. Furthermore extensive educational research worldwide has shown conclusively that streaming classes on the basis of ability disadvantages students in the longer term and gives rise to a culture of failure among substantial groups of learners. The Ministry’s overall policy, therefore, is to promote mixed ability grouping and differentiated teaching throughout the school system. Thus a project for de-streaming classes was initiated in 2005, with students joining P1 being randomly grouped, with the assistance of a computer package run by EMIS. By now all primary year groups should be de-streamed.

EMIS will continue to assist with groupings in primary schools, and schools’ own monitoring mechanisms as well as the QA support network will help to ensure the effective implementation of student groupings. (EMIS guidelines on student groupings, 2010 are being finalised).

2.6 Professional Development of Staff

Local

Professional development of staff can take the form of long or short term courses, or other specific training programmes linked to particular projects and subjects. They may be award-bearing (in which case they have to conform to the SQA Framework) or not. Such training programmes may be initiated by the school, by specific sections of the Ministry or by the School of Education of the University of Seychelles – or jointly by these institutions. Professional development (PD) activities may take place in-school or off-site.

PD activities at school level are co-ordinated by a PDF (Professional Development Facilitator), who is a member of the teaching staff appointed for the purpose. School-
based PD programmes are mandatory; they should be linked to the targets set in the school's Development Plan and should be determined in consultation with staff and school management.

Participation in locally organised off-site PD activities must be done in consultation with the headteacher and where appropriate, DG Schools.

**Overseas**

Participation in off-site PD activities and other training programmes overseas requires the permission of the relevant authorities, including the PS for Education, in consultation with the headteacher and DG Schools.