



**Estyn**

*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

A self-evaluation  
manual for

**special  
schools 2014**



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- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community learning;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
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- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ Welsh for adults;
- ▲ work-based learning; and
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- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the Welsh Government and others; and
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## Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce this revised edition of the self-evaluation manual for special schools. I believe that self-evaluation is becoming increasingly embedded across education and training in Wales, contributing to improving quality and raising the attainment and achievement of learners.

There is an increasing expectation that schools should have effective self-evaluation and improvement processes. While many pupils already achieve well in Wales and their attainments compare well with their counterparts in other countries, there is still a need to improve schools further. In particular, there are differences in outcomes within and between schools. Developing a culture of self-evaluation is vital to identifying and reducing variations in school performance.

As a reflective professional process, self-evaluation enables schools to get to know themselves better, identify their agenda for improvement and promote innovation and sector-leading practice. Crucially, where the self-evaluation process focuses on impact and outcomes, self-evaluation leads to improvements in the educational experiences and outcomes for pupils.

Schools, local authorities and the Welsh Government have complementary roles in driving forward improvements in self-evaluation. Estyn too has promoted the development of self-evaluation across all sectors for many years. In our Annual Reports, we recognise that many schools have good and improving self-evaluation systems. Our cycle of inspections from September 2010 places self-evaluation at the centre of the work of schools and inspection. Self-evaluation is also at the core of the School Effectiveness Framework, the policy framework that seeks to transform educational standards and provision over the next decade. Together, the School Effectiveness Framework and the Estyn Common Inspection Framework (CIF) reflect the developing context within which schools operate. These frameworks are firmly at the heart of the Welsh improvement policy agenda, providing challenge and support to schools and helping to build capacity, confidence and competence.

I am delighted to commend this manual to you in taking forward our collective commitment to continuous improvement and excellence for all.



**Ann Keane**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

## **1 Introduction**

The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to improve outcomes for pupils. When self-evaluation is an established part of the improvement planning cycle, it is a key management tool for development at all levels. As an annual process, self-evaluation informs strategic and improvement plans, helping schools to focus on their priorities for development.

There is no single formula or approach to self-evaluation. Schools are complex organisations and there are many different ways in which they can pursue the achievement of excellence in the various aspects of their work. Schools already use different self-evaluation frameworks, including those produced by local authorities and commercial toolkits. Many schools base their self-evaluation processes on Estyn's CIF.

Schools will be at different starting points and will undertake a journey to improvement in different directions and at a different pace according to their pupils' needs. Critically, whatever approach or direction taken, responsibility for continuous improvement and delivering a better service rests primarily with schools.

### **Who is this manual for?**

This manual is for everyone who works in schools to support and improve the standards and learning experiences of children and young people. The manual may also be helpful for stakeholders who work in partnership with schools, including parents/carers, local authorities, agencies, community groups and others.

### **What does this manual do?**

This manual is designed to support school self-evaluation activities and improvement planning. While the manual is comprehensive, it is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive. The manual does not cover all of the things which schools do as part of their self-evaluation process. However, it does focus on aspects of self-evaluation that inspection and research have shown to be particularly important. The manual starts by identifying these important aspects of self-evaluation, taking account of the School Effectiveness Framework and the National Purpose for Schools. The manual then provides information on evaluating the work of schools in the context of Estyn's CIF. In this section, there are questions for schools to help them evaluate the quality of their work.

## 2 Effective self-evaluation

### The process of self-evaluation

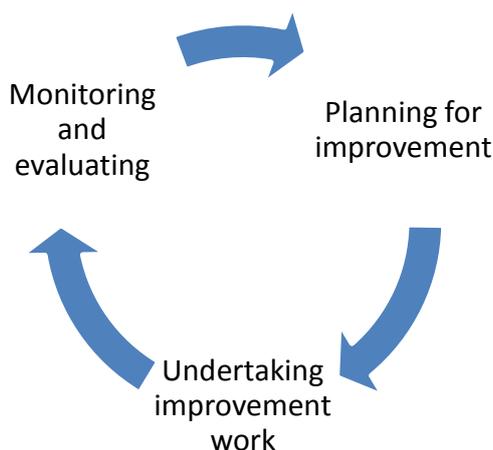
Self-evaluation is a process, not an event. It is the first, essential step in a cyclical process of bringing about change and improvement. It is based on professional reflection, challenge and support among practitioners. Effective self-evaluation involves taking wide-ranging decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for all pupils. Most of all, it is about striving for excellence. At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:

- **How well are we doing?**
- **How do we know?**
- **How can we improve things further?**

While every aspect of a school's provision is a legitimate focus for self-evaluation, the emphasis should always be on outcomes – on an evaluation of the impact of each aspect of provision on the standards and wellbeing of pupils.

The process of self-evaluation should be continuous and a regular part of the school's working life. Self-evaluation should be based on a wide range of information about strengths and areas for improvement which is collected throughout the year (though it will often be appropriate to conduct some aspects of self-evaluation at much longer intervals, and not necessarily each year). Schools should use information from self-evaluation to plan for improvements, undertake improvement work, and to ensure a regular cyclical process of monitoring and evaluation that leads to further improvement.

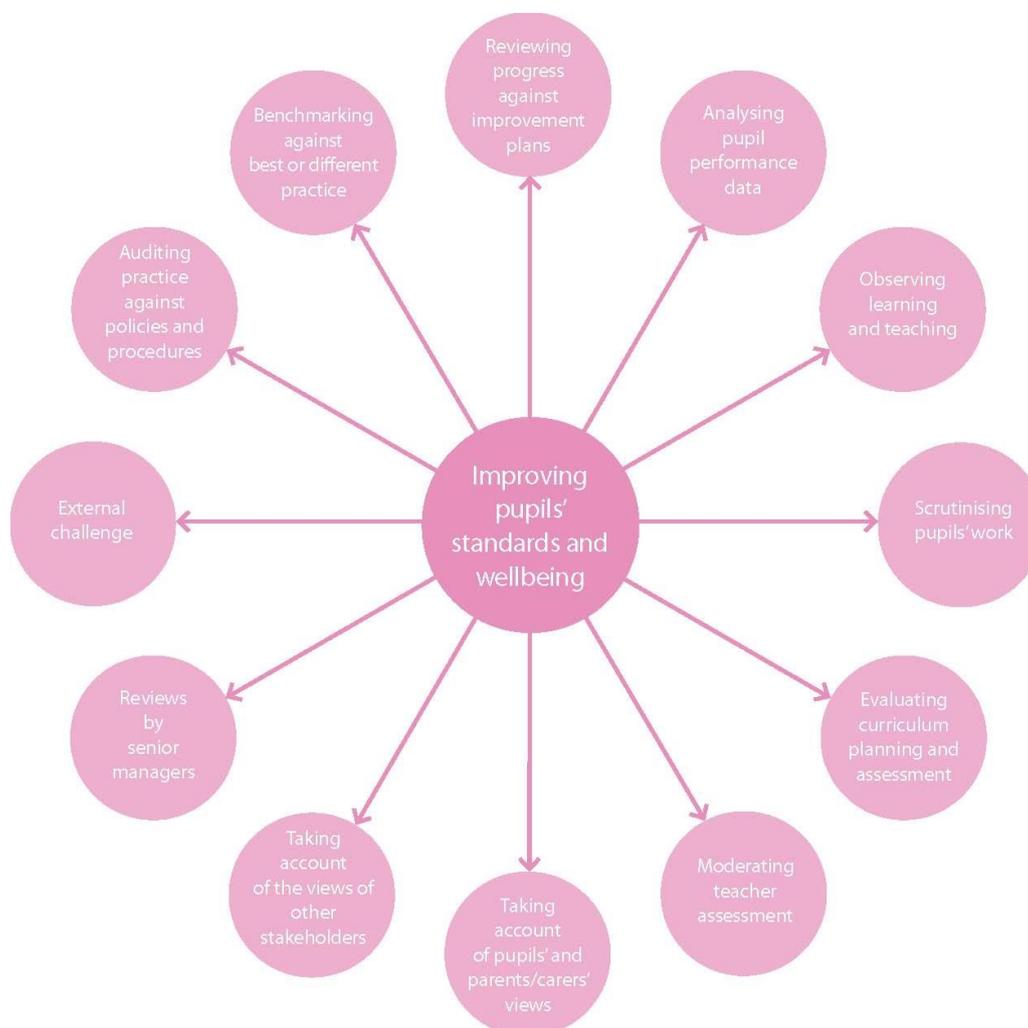
The diagram below shows the cyclical nature of effective self-evaluation.



It is a mistake to view self-evaluation as a one-off event. Schools should undertake a regular cycle of self-evaluation activities. This cycle may include different activities, at different times, for individual schools. It is likely to include the following regular activities:

- analysis of data from tests or assessments at an individual pupil, subject, pupil group, age group or whole-school level as appropriate;
- observations of lessons by appropriate peers and managers;
- evaluating the quality of pupils' written and practical work;
- evaluating the quality of curriculum planning and assessment, recording and reporting;
- moderating teacher assessment;
- sampling the views of pupils, staff, parents/carers or other stakeholders;
- reviews by managers and external organisations;
- auditing practice against policies and procedures, such as those for safeguarding or health and safety;
- benchmarking against best or different practice from other special; and
- reviewing progress against development plans.

### Typical activities in a programme of school self-evaluation



Self-evaluation is not an exercise that can be carried out by the headteacher or a task-group working in isolation. It can be influential only when **all staff** contribute to the process, are aware of the findings and take action based upon them.

Any self-evaluation programme should include **lesson observations**, in addition to those required for performance management purposes, because these observations

provide important evidence about pupils' achievement and progress in learning, and about the quality of teaching and assessment.

A lesson observation programme could include:

- observation of all staff each year by senior managers;
- observation of staff by senior managers as part of an evaluation of a topic or theme;
- observations by external visitors such as consultants, local authority advisers or teachers from other schools;
- observations by appropriate peers within departments as part of a departmental review by senior managers or as part of a department's own self-evaluation; and
- peer observations across subjects and year groups as part of a theme or to disseminate good practice.

Over time, this work should build up to provide a profile of lesson judgements, which can be used to come to a view on standards and teaching and highlight areas for improvement.

**Learner voice** is a key source of evidence of pupils' achievement, attitudes and wellbeing. It is also likely to be useful in evaluating the quality of teaching and assessment. Pupils, including those from different groups, should have opportunities, wherever possible, to be involved in school self-evaluation. This involvement may be through surveys, focus groups or the school council, with the school using interviews and questionnaires to gain pupils' views. Critically, schools will need to ensure that pupils are able to contribute to decision-making and improvement planning. In many special schools it is possible to gain pupils' views directly. However, we recognise that for some schools, who provide for pupils with more complex needs, this will not always be possible. Where pupils need support with communication and/or literacy, the school will need to consider how best to gain their views, for example by making use of an advocate, their support worker or an adapted questionnaire.

Self-evaluation should also take account of the views of a wide range of **stakeholders**, including teachers, governors, parents/carers, employers and the community served by the school. When schools involve stakeholders, staff benefit from gaining a greater insight into the strengths and areas for improvement, as well as shared ownership, collaboration and effective partnership.

### Key characteristics of self-evaluation

Effective self-evaluation:

- is open and honest;
- has pupils' achievements and experiences as the principal focus;
- is a continuous process and not just a 'snapshot';
- is embedded in strategic planning and draws on regular quality assurance procedures;
- involves all staff at all levels in assessing outcomes and performance;

- seeks the views of pupils systematically and consults other stakeholders, such as partners and employers, where appropriate;
- seeks to make judgements in the light of measurable performance data and to identify trends over time;
- leads to improvement plans which are monitored against clear targets and success criteria; and
- results in improvements in standards and quality for pupils.

The judgements made during self-evaluation should be:

- **secure** – based on sufficiently robust, reliable and accessible evidence;
- **first-hand** – based on direct observation;
- **reliable** – based on common, well-understood criteria;
- **valid** – accurately reflecting what is achieved and provided;
- **free of bias** – looking at all aspects objectively; and
- **corporate** – reflecting the collective view of staff and other stakeholders.

### 3 Self-evaluation and improvement planning

Self-evaluation is not an end in itself. Schools should use information from self-evaluation to plan for improvements and to ensure a regular cyclical process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning.

As well as providing immediate feedback for staff and managers, information from a programme of self-evaluation activities will contribute towards the **annually updated self-evaluation report** based on the CIF. This report provides an opportunity to identify strengths and celebrate and share good practice, as well as highlighting areas for improvement. The information collected from the programme of school self-evaluation activities should feed into improvement planning. There should therefore be a close match between the outcomes of the report and priorities in the **school improvement plan**.

It is appropriate that some aspects of quality and standards should be evaluated more frequently than others. The school's improvement planning framework needs to be flexible and responsive to matters that are, or ought to be, of current concern.

#### Key characteristics of school improvement plans

Effective improvement plans:

- are based on the outcomes of self-evaluation;
- contribute to self-evaluation processes and to further action planning;
- are contained in working documents that help to achieve the required changes;
- have clearly identified priorities, targets and timescales, and identify steps which will need to be taken to address issues;
- identify persons responsible for actions, timescales and the resources and support that will be needed;

- specify clear outcomes related to improvement in standards and quality, against which progress can be measured; and
- give details of how, when and by whom progress will be monitored and evaluated.

## **4 Self-evaluation and the School Effectiveness Framework**

The aim of the School Effectiveness Framework is to improve educational experiences and life-chances for all children and young people. It is designed to bring together existing programmes of action directed at school improvement.

Strong and effective self-evaluation processes will help schools achieve real and lasting improvement, and support the achievement of the National Purpose for Schools, which is identified by the School Effectiveness Framework as being to:

- enable all children and young people to develop their full potential by acquiring skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes. This includes personal, social and emotional skills, to enable them to become emotionally, socially and personally active citizens and lifelong pupils;
- promote a culture of social inclusion and respect for diversity, particularly through developing the wellbeing of pupils and personalising their learning;
- establish strong professional communities in schools where practitioners can develop and share their professional knowledge on learning and teaching;
- offer children and young people a curriculum that engages and motivates them to learn and to achieve their potential;
- provide a learning community for all engaged in school life, with children, young people and their families at the centre, and including governors, teachers, other school staff and adults training to work in schools;
- be a key player with other schools and partner service providers in planning and delivering integrated services for children and young people to improve their wellbeing; and
- provide or facilitate education so that schools contribute to meeting the needs of the community and engage the community as partners to ensure that all schools are community focused.

The School Effectiveness Framework recognises that schools need to work on developing their own and interdependent approaches to effectiveness. By capturing good practice and knowledge of what works, schools will be better placed to find new solutions for old and emerging problems. Collaboration with other schools and partners will help to identify and deliver improvement strategies and shared learning.

The School Effectiveness Framework advises schools to base their annually updated self-evaluation report on Estyn's CIF.

## 5 Self-evaluation and the Common Inspection Framework

The CIF provides comprehensive coverage of the key matters that schools should assess when conducting their self-evaluation. A school's annual self-evaluation report should be based on the CIF. This section of the manual provides questions on each of the quality indicators and aspects of the CIF.

The inspection arrangements recognise that schools have come a long way in developing their skills and experience in self-evaluation and planning for improvement. It is because of this progress that Estyn has taken a more proportionate approach to inspection from September 2010. The starting point for all inspections is the school's evaluation of its own performance. Inspectors do not inspect all aspects of work in depth during a core inspection. They sample evidence to test the school's own evaluation of its work.

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

#### How do we evaluate standards? (CIF 1.1)

Effective self-evaluation makes judgements in the light of measurable performance data. A rigorous analysis of this data enables schools to identify areas for improvement as well as good features. These analyses may raise some questions but the answers come from within the school.

In evaluating performance in special schools, the main focus should be on achievement rather than attainment. It will not always be possible or appropriate to compare results of attainment for pupils in special schools with national comparative data. However, in some schools, such as those catering for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, it may be appropriate for you to do so. In these cases you should take note of any relevant guidance, such as that in 1.1.1 below.

Schools should evaluate the progress that pupils make to reach targets, especially those set at annual reviews and in individual plans. What is important is to form a view on how far pupils fulfil their potential as learners. Schools should use any data they have to judge how well pupils make progress compared with what might be expected of them.

Special schools do not yet receive the All Wales Core Data Sets from the Welsh Government. The inspectorate will issue further guidance if these materials become available for special schools.

#### How good are results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment? (CIF 1.1.1)

In evaluating performance, schools should use a range of different analyses and not concentrate on one particular indicator or one type of analysis.

Evaluations of performance should be made over a period of time, usually three years where this is possible, rather than concentrating solely on performance in a single year. Schools should consider whether performance is improving, declining or fluctuating over time.

It is important to take account of small pupil numbers that may cause results to fluctuate year on year. In addition, analysis of performance should recognise the attainment of pupils who are out of year group and those whose progress has been delayed.

Comparison to national averages where available and appropriate should be used to identify whether a school's rate of progress is better than the national improvement, and to identify relative strengths or areas for development in trends in different indicators.

There is no national benchmark data at present for special schools to enable them to compare attainment in relation to National Curriculum assessments or external examinations with that of pupils with similar needs in similar schools.

Judgements about achievement should take account of pupils' achievements in relation to achieving agreed learning goals. The relative importance of particular learning outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) will differ according to the nature and severity of their individual needs.

Judgements should centre on pupils' progress. Schools should evaluate the progress their pupils make from a given starting point, relative to the context in which they learn. These comparisons should take into account value added data and the performance of similar providers using benchmark statistical data where this is available and appropriate.

### **Questions we should consider about results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment**

- As a school are we doing as well as we could be or is there any room for improvement?
- Are we doing as well, or even better, than we were three years ago?
- How well do pupils make progress to reach targets, especially those set at annual reviews and in individual plans? Do pupils make the progress that might be expected of them?
- In which subjects or areas of learning do pupils do best? In which areas do pupils do less well? What could be the reasons for this?
- Are pupils making enough progress from one key stage to another?
- In which learning areas, subjects or performance indicators do pupils do best? In which do they do less well?
- How many of our pupils leave school with recognised qualifications?
- How many of our school leavers are not engaged in education, employment and training?
- How many of our pupils move on to appropriate education, training, other provision or employment when they leave school?

### **How good are the standards of groups of pupils? (CIF 1.1.2)**

Schools should analyse the attainment of particular groups of pupils, including the performance of boys and girls, pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) and pupils with ALN. The full list of groups of pupils with ALN is included in Annex 6 of the

inspection guidance handbook. Schools should include those groups which are most relevant to their circumstances but should always include, where relevant, looked after children (LAC) and those with English as an additional language, learners from minority ethnic groups and gypsy and traveller children.

National trends in the difference in performance of boys and girls vary between different subjects and other indicators. A gender gap in performance in a school is only significant if it is greater or smaller than national averages in that subject or performance indicator.

We should consider whether those pupils who are entitled to FSM attain as well as they should. Analysis should include comparing the performance of pupils who are entitled to FSM with those who are not. It should also include a comparison of the performance of pupils entitled to FSM within our school with the performance of such pupils within the family, across the whole of Wales, and, if available, value-added data. We should investigate where the performance of FSM pupils is better or worse than the averages for the family or Wales where the gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils is greater or smaller than the gap for the family or for Wales.

### **Questions we should consider about standards of groups and pupils**

- How well does the performance of FSM pupils compare with that of non-FSM pupils in the school?
- How does any difference in performance between the two groups compare with local or national differences?
- Is the gap between boys' and girls' performance bigger or smaller than we could expect? Is there a consistent pattern or is the gap larger than average in particular subjects or areas of learning?
- Do individuals or particular groups of pupils with ALN achieve agreed learning goals?

### **How good are pupils' achievement and progress in learning? (CIF 1.1.3)**

Aside from using data, evaluation of pupils' achievement and progress should be based on lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and, where possible, discussions with pupils. We should evaluate how well pupils recall previous learning, develop thinking skills, acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills, and apply these to new situations. Where possible, we should evaluate the standards reached by pupils in lessons and judge whether these are appropriate to their age and ability. Judgements on achievement should recognise pupils' progress and development from a given starting point, relative to the context in which they learn. For pupils with ALN, judgements about achievement will be influenced by information about their individual needs and abilities. We should also consider evidence in pupils' individual education plans (IEP's) when making a judgement on the rate of progress of pupils make in relation to their ability.

Over time we should build up an ongoing profile of lesson judgements which comprise one source of evidence on standards. (At the same time we should build up a profile of the quality of teaching.)

Apart from lesson observation we can also evaluate standards through scrutiny of pupils' work, other means of recording pupils' progress and teachers' plans. Questionnaires for pupils, where appropriate, and parents/carers, and listening to the views of pupils, where possible, can also provide some useful information.

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' achievement and progress in learning**

- How well do pupils achieve in lessons?
- Do pupils recall previous learning?
- Do pupils acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills?
- Do pupils apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to new situations?
- Are pupils making the progress expected at their stage of learning?

### **How good are pupils' skills? (CIF 1.1.4)**

In evaluating skills, we need to focus on whether all pupils have the skills in communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) needed to access the whole curriculum, and how well the wider curriculum itself develops pupils' skills. We should also consider how well pupils are developing their thinking skills across the curriculum. Overall, we need to give most weight to literacy (particularly reading and writing) and numeracy skills. These are likely to have the greatest impact on improving access to all areas of the curriculum. In schools for pupils with the most complex needs, we should give particular consideration to how well pupils develop augmentative and alternative communication skills.

We need to consider any outcomes in:

- skills qualifications;
- GCSE and other accredited courses;
- key stage 3 assessments, where appropriate, in English, Welsh in Welsh-medium schools, mathematics and ICT; and
- where available, results of other relevant assessments, such as those of pupils' reading ability and the outcomes of statutory reading and numeracy tests, where applicable.

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' skills**

- Do all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, have the skills in communication, numeracy and ICT needed to access the whole curriculum?
- Do pupils develop skills well in the wider curriculum?
- If appropriate, do pupils achieve well in skills qualifications?
- Do pupils achieve well in key stage 3 assessments and GCSE and/or other accredited courses in English, Welsh in Welsh-medium schools, mathematics and ICT?
- Do pupils achieve well in the statutory reading and numeracy tests, where applicable, and any other relevant assessments, such as those of their reading ability?

- Do pupils apply their skills, where appropriate, without support?
- Do pupils who are involved in 'catch-up' programmes achieve well?
- Do pupils develop the skills that they need to make a successful transition into further education or training, employment or other provision?

### **How good are pupils' Welsh language skills? (CIF 1.1.5)**

In evaluating pupils' Welsh language skills, we need to take account of the linguistic background and context of our school and the area we serve.

#### **Questions we should consider about pupils' Welsh language skills, where appropriate**

- Do pupils attain well at all key stages, and at post-16, in Welsh, Welsh literature or Welsh second language?
- Do pupils make progress in lessons in Welsh and Welsh second language?
- Are pupils who are assessed in Welsh first language in the end of key stage 2 teacher assessment also assessed in Welsh first language at the end of key stage 3?

In Welsh-medium schools:

- Do pupils complete their coursework and final assessments in Welsh in the courses they have studied in key stage 4 and in post-16? Do pupils who join the school with little or no knowledge of Welsh achieve well?

In English-medium schools:

- Where appropriate, do pupils gain a recognised key stage 4 qualification in Welsh second language including the Welsh second language full GCSE course?
- Do pupils make progress in using Welsh in different contexts beyond their Welsh lessons, for example in other subjects, during registration periods and assemblies, and in extra-curricular activities?

### **How do we evaluate wellbeing? (CIF 1.2)**

The mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of young people is an essential pre-condition for successful learning. The aspects in this quality indicator are pupils' attitudes to keeping healthy and safe, the extent and quality of pupils' participation and enjoyment in learning, community involvement and decision-making, and pupils' social and life skills.

To evaluate wellbeing, we need to:

- take account of pupils' views wherever possible;
- consider the extent to which pupils participate in learning;
- judge whether pupils make decisions about things that affect their experiences in school; and
- consider whether pupils have the skills needed to improve their own learning, to work with others and to take responsibility for their actions and their work.

We need to obtain evidence about participation and enjoyment in learning, as well as behaviour and attitudes, through lesson observations. There are many other ways of gaining an insight into pupils' views through, for example, questionnaires and interviews with focus groups and the school council. Estyn has produced questionnaires for pupils, that schools can use regularly to identify trends and changes in attitude. The Estyn questionnaires are not the only ones available, and others may be used, especially if we wish to focus on specific issues in detail.

Regular surveys of pupils' views, as well as listening carefully to what pupils have to say in school councils and in similar situations, can provide good evidence for evaluating wellbeing.

Parent questionnaires are more likely to provide evidence on provision rather than outcomes. Even so, they may still provide a useful perspective. The Estyn parent questionnaire, for example, may provide some insight about pupils' health, safety and behaviour, and how well pupils like school.

Although some of the evidence for this quality indicator will depend on pupils' perceptions and lesson observations, there is also some useful outcome data. This includes attendance rates and data associated with behaviour, such as exclusions or referrals to pastoral staff and outside agencies.

### **How good are pupils' attitudes to keeping healthy and safe? (CIF 1.2.1)**

When considering the extent to which pupils feel healthy, we need to assess whether pupils have a secure understanding of how they can become healthy, both through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake.

A useful source of evidence is the numbers of pupils taking up healthy options in school lunches or through their own packed lunches. Another useful source is the numbers engaged in physical activity, for example the numbers that undertake at least two hours of physical activity each week.

When considering the extent to which pupils feel safe, we may look at whether pupils feel free from physical and verbal abuse in school. A systematic and structured review of the incidence of bullying or harassment will help provide some evidence of the extent to which pupils feel safe.

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' attitudes to keeping healthy**

- How well do pupils understand how they can become healthy, both through what they eat and through physical activity?
- To what extent do pupils take up healthy options in school lunches or through their own packed lunches?
- How many pupils engage in regular physical activity, for example for at least two hours each week?
- Do pupils develop the personal and learning skills that they need to live more independently where possible?

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' attitudes to keeping safe**

- To what extent do pupils feel free from physical and verbal abuse in school?

- Are there incidents of bullying or harassment? Is the number increasing or decreasing over time?

### **How much do pupils participate in and enjoy their learning? (CIF 1.2.2)**

When evaluating participation and enjoyment in learning we need to consider attendance, behaviour and attitudes, and the extent to which pupils have a say in what and how they learn.

When evaluating attendance, we need to consider the overall attendance rate, noting any variations between particular groups of pupils. We should compare attendance rates with national figures and particularly those of similar schools. We can get this data through the All Wales Core Data Set. It may seem appropriate to see how a school performs in relation to national norms, but it is the benchmark against similar schools that should normally guide any evaluations.

We should compare the school's rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusions with national figures and those of similar schools. We could also consider the extent to which pupils with a history of exclusion, in their current or previous school, demonstrate good behaviour and attitudes to learning.

When evaluating behaviour and attitudes, we should consider the extent to which pupils demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Observation of pupils' behaviour should be a common feature in the programme of classroom observations. However, we need to make sure that observers are looking for the same things and have common and agreed expectations for behaviour. We should observe whether pupils are considerate and courteous, and relate well to each other and adults. In addition, we should look at pupils' attitudes to learning, in particular their interest in their work, their ability to sustain concentration and how well they engage in tasks.

When evaluating what input pupils have to what and how they learn, we should consider:

- whether pupils' views about what and how they learn are taken seriously;
- how pupils discuss the topics to be covered and help to plan schemes of work and activities; and
- whether pupils make choices about how and what they learn.

In looking at this aspect in depth, it is useful to use the Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales.

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' attendance**

- How well do overall attendance rates compare with the national figure and similar schools?
- Are there significant variations between particular groups of pupils?

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' behaviour and attitudes**

- Do pupils demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school?
- Do pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning?

- Do rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusions compare well with national figures and those of similar schools?
- Is the trend in the number of referrals for poor behaviour and poor work improving?
- Do pupils with a history of exclusion show good behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning?

### **Questions we should consider about the input pupils have into what and how they learn**

- To what extent do pupils make choices about how and what they learn?
- Are pupils' views about what and how they learn taken seriously?
- Do pupils discuss the topics to be taught and help to plan schemes of work and activities?

### **What is the extent of pupils' community involvement and decision-making? (CIF 1.2.3)**

We should evaluate the extent to which pupils, including those from different groups, take on responsibilities and play a part in the school and wider community.

We should consider pupils' participation in decision-making, including the effectiveness of the school council. We should judge the extent to which the school council gives pupils an opportunity to be involved in decision-making, gives them responsibility and makes them feel valued. It is useful to check the impact of the school council and to see whether there is a track record of significant change as a result of the work of the council. Although pupils on school councils usually have a role in promoting environmental issues and healthier lifestyles, they are less involved in activities concerned with inclusion such as anti-bullying campaigns and bullying control systems.

In addition to the school council, we should also consider the extent to which all pupils, including those from different groups, are involved in making decisions about their life in school. There may be a range of mechanisms that allow this to happen and the key task is to see whether all pupils genuinely feel that they can contribute.

### **Questions we should consider about community involvement and decision-making**

- To what extent do pupils take part in extra-curricular activities, such as school plays, music and sports?
- How often do pupils take part in activities in the community outside the school, or participate in fund-raising for charities?
- Do many pupils volunteer to help with school events?
- To what extent are pupils involved in discussions about learning and teaching, and what impact does this have?
- Are all pupils, including those from different groups, involved in making decisions about their life in school, for example through promoting environmental issues and healthier lifestyles?
- Are pupils involved in influencing policy development, such as by helping to

prepare the school improvement plan or appointing new staff members, where applicable?

- Are there structures to ensure good liaison between school council and the governing body or management committee?
- Are pupils involved in school self-evaluation?
- Does the school council have an impact? Does it have a track record of success as a result of its work?
- Has the school council been given the opportunity to nominate two representatives to be associate pupil governors on the governing body or management committee, where applicable?

### **How good are pupils' social and life skills? (CIF 1.2.4)**

When evaluating pupils' social and life skills, we need to consider how well pupils show respect, care and concern for others, and whether they take on responsibility for their actions and their work. We should also consider the emotional skills of pupils, including their self-confidence and self-esteem.

In addition, we should examine whether pupils have the skills needed to improve their own learning, to work with others, to solve problems and to develop their thinking to move on to the next stage of learning. We should consider how well they are prepared for life and work outside school.

### **Questions we should consider about pupils' social and life skills**

- How well are pupils prepared for life and work outside school?
- Do pupils show respect, care and concern for others?
- To what extent do pupils take responsibility for their actions and their work?
- How well developed are the emotional skills of pupils, including their self-confidence and self-esteem?
- Do pupils have the skills needed to improve their own learning, work with others, solve problems and develop their thinking to move on to the next stage of learning?

## **Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

This section includes important aspects of provision, including the curriculum, teaching and assessment, care support and guidance, and the learning environment. The focus here should not only be on the quality of the provision but also on the impact of provision on pupils' standards and wellbeing. The function of the school's provision is to help make standards and wellbeing as good as they can be.

### **How do we evaluate learning experiences? (CIF 2.1)**

As schools we are free to organise and deliver the curriculum in the way that best suits their circumstances and needs, as long as we cover statutory requirements such as the Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales, the National Curriculum and religious education. The main issue in evaluating the curriculum is how well its organisation and delivery meet the needs of pupils. The

curriculum should be co-ordinated to ensure that the programme is appropriate for individual pupils and fulfils the requirements of government guidance.

It is worth examining carefully the arrangements for grouping pupils through arrangements such as setting or mixed-ability grouping. In particular it is a good idea to look at the impact of any gender imbalance, or over-large or exceptionally small classes and withdrawal groups.

It is not just the curriculum as shown on the timetable that we should consider. We should also look at the nature and extent of out-of-school learning, including sports, clubs, visits, special events, links with the community and other extra-curricular activities. It is important to consider the effectiveness of arrangements for delivering these and how they cohere with mainstream curriculum planning.

### **How well do we meet the needs of pupils, employers and the community? (CIF 2.1.1)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we meet the needs of pupils, employers and the community**

- To what extent does the curriculum allow pupils to receive learning experiences that are engaging, challenging and stimulating?
- What is the effect of our systems for grouping pupils, taking account of gender balance and class sizes?
- If withdrawal classes are used in particular year groups or subjects, what is the impact on pupils' learning experiences?
- If any pupils are disappplied from aspects of the National Curriculum, do they have access to an appropriate and balanced curriculum?
- Does the curriculum build appropriately on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move between key stages?
- Are courses equally accessible to all, and are any constraints on pupils' choices in their best interests?
- Do pupils have access to appropriate qualifications that meet their interests, abilities and learning styles?
- Do we provide opportunities and pathways that enable pupils to access a range of formal, non-formal and informal elements?
- Does the key stage 4 and post-16 curriculum link with the local curriculum in relation to the 14-19 Learning Pathways and the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009)?
- Are we successful in overcoming barriers to pupils' learning?
- Where appropriate, are work-focused experience and community participation parts of the learning core in our curriculum?
- Do out-of-school learning and extra-curricular activities impact on pupils' experiences and learning?

### **How well do we provide for skills? (CIF 2.1.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we provide for skills**

- To what extent do learning activities across the curriculum meet pupils' needs in

gaining and using skills, particularly the literacy skills of reading and writing and pupils' numeracy skills?

- Do we make sure pupils' development of skills takes place equally well in Welsh and/or English?
- Is the provision for skills properly co-ordinated so that there is coherence in pupils' experiences across the curriculum?
- Is the provision for skills monitored and evaluated across the curriculum?

### **How well do we provide for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension? (CIF 2.1.3)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we provide for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension**

- To what extent does our provision for Welsh language development enable pupils to achieve good standards, taking account of the linguistic background and context of the school?
- How well do we reflect Welsh Government policy, objectives and guidelines as identified in documents such as 'Our Language: Its Future', 'Iaith Pawb' and the Welsh-medium Education Strategy?
- How well do we follow the local authority language policy?
- How aware are our pupils of the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming increasingly bilingual?
- Where appropriate, do we encourage pupils to aim for and achieve qualifications in Welsh?
- How well do we contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales?

### **How well do we provide education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC)? (CIF 2.1.4)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we provide for ESDGC**

- How well do we ensure that ESDGC occurs in individual subjects and across the curriculum as a whole?
- To what extent do we give pupils opportunities to develop ESDGC through extra-curricular work and projects?
- How well do we measure the impact of ESDGC?
- As a school, do we act sustainably?
- Do we enable pupils to recognise the importance of taking individual responsibility and action to make the world a better place?
- Do we enable pupils to gain an appropriate level of awareness and understanding about sustainable development, and the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values necessary to become a global citizen?

### **How do we evaluate teaching? (CIF 2.2)**

High-quality teaching is the foundation on which effective educational performance is

built, enabling pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills.

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching are central to judging the effectiveness of the quality of education and training. This process needs to centre on classroom observation. Evaluation of the information on standards may lead to judgements about what is going well and not so well, but it is only through classroom observation that a school will find out the reasons why. The observation and evaluation of teaching should be based on clear and well-understood criteria. The key task in judging the quality of teaching is the impact it has on the standards achieved. It should not focus on the use of a particular process in isolation from its impact. Similarly, when scrutinising assessment, the focus should be on what impact it has on learning.

### **How well do we evaluate the range and quality of teaching approaches? (CIF 2.2.1)**

#### **Questions we should consider about the range and quality of teaching approaches**

- Do we have high enough expectations of all pupils?
- Do our teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge?
- Do teachers plan effectively and have clear objectives for taught sessions and other learning experiences?
- Do teachers have a range of teaching and training methods and resources to interest pupils and to stimulate and to challenge them to achieve highly?
- Are we consistent in our use of approaches to communication such as the use of technology, and or signs and symbols?
- Are we successful in providing demanding work to meet the needs of all pupils, for example those with ALN?
- Do we provide good language models for pupils?
- Do we establish good working relationships that foster learning?
- Do we manage pupils' behaviour effectively?
- Do we use learning support staff effectively?

### **How well do we raise pupils' achievement through assessment of and for learning? (CIF 2.2.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we assess**

- Do pupils regularly review their own learning, understand their progress and contribute to setting their own learning targets?
- Do we use different forms of feedback effectively to inform pupils about their learning?
- Are we consistent in the quality and amount of feedback given to pupils?
- Do we encourage pupils to take note of feedback?
- Do we make sure that assessments are valid and reliable?
- How well does the assessment process inform future planning?
- How well do we analyse assessment findings, including National Curriculum assessments and the outcomes of the national reading and numeracy tests?

- Do we maintain clear, systematic, manageable and useful records on each pupil? Do we use records to effectively track pupils' progress, compare outcomes with benchmarks and intervene in individual cases if necessary?
- Do we produce reports on pupils that are clear, consistent and informative, and set out areas for improvement?
- Do we enable pupils to contribute to the contents of reports, where appropriate?
- Do parents/carers understand assessment procedures and have access to records and reports relating to their children?
- Do we encourage parents/carers to respond to reports on progress?

### **How do we evaluate care, support and guidance? (CIF 2.3)**

The focus here should be on the impact of care, support and guidance on pupils' standards and wellbeing rather than merely on the procedures and arrangements.

It is vital that any evaluation of care, support and guidance looks at the extent to which the arrangements have a beneficial effect on vulnerable pupils. It is also important to keep in mind that there should be a clear link between any judgements made about care, support and guidance, and judgements about standards and wellbeing.

### **How well do we meet the provision for health and wellbeing, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? (CIF 2.3.1)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we provide for health and wellbeing**

- Do we have appropriate and effective policies and arrangements for promoting healthy living and pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing? How well do we support pupils to achieve these?
- Do we help pupils to manage their feelings and develop self-awareness and self-respect?
- How well do we encourage pupils to be healthy and provide for their physical development by ensuring they consider their nutrition, exercise, personal hygiene, safety and healthy choices?
- Do we meet the requirements of the healthy eating and drinking measure?
- Do we consider the views of pupils and parents/carers often enough?
- Does our provision for education about sex and relationships and about substance misuse support pupils' development and understanding?
- Do we have suitable arrangements to report health and safety issues?
- Do we have effective arrangements for dealing with discrimination, harassment and bullying?
- Does our anti-bullying policy include how we prevent and eliminate sexism, racism and intolerance of diversity?
- How well do we implement our anti-bullying policy and how aware are all of our staff, pupils and parents of this policy?
- Is our personal and social education provision effective and well-delivered, and do pupils benefit enough from it?
- How well do we help pupils to improve their own learning and work with others?

- Do our pupils enjoy life in school?
- How effectively do we promote good behaviour and attendance?
- How well are policies to promote good behaviour and prevent exclusions clearly understood by all pupils, parents/carers and staff, and how consistently are they applied?

### **Questions we should consider about how well we provide for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- Do we encourage our pupils to develop a sense of curiosity through reflection on their own and other people's lives and beliefs, their environment and the human condition?
- Do we consider life's fundamental questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions as well as from pupils' own experience and viewpoint?
- Do we foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice?
- Do we promote principles that help pupils to distinguish right from wrong?
- Do we encourage pupils to take responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of living in a community?
- Do pupils learn how to relate to others and take responsibility for their own actions?
- Do we have processes for pupils to discuss and agree group rules?
- Do our pupils contribute to decision-making in the school?
- Do we contribute well to the local community, including through regular extra-curricular activities?
- Do we encourage pupils to engage with the arts, sports and other cultural activities through their studies and extra-curricular activities?

### **Questions we should consider about how well we provide for collective worship**

- Do our acts of collective worship contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- Do our acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements?

### **How well are pupils supported with specialist services, information and guidance? (CIF 2.3.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well our pupils are supported with specialist services, information and guidance**

- Do we provide pupils with individual support on educational and other issues?
- Do we provide access to a wide range of information for pupils?
- How well do we fulfil our responsibilities for guidance?
- Do we enable pupils to make use of professional support both from within the school and from specialist services?
- Do we liaise effectively with specialist agencies such as the police, health, psychological, counselling and social services?
- Does the quality of guidance and advice help pupils, students and parents/carers make choices about courses in key stage 4 and post 16 and, where there are

choices available, in key stage 3?

- Does the quality of information provided to pupils and parents/carers in course handbooks and other materials provide appropriate guidance?
- Do we ensure that we have effective arrangements to ensure that all pupils, where appropriate, receive their basic entitlement to guidance from an impartial learning coach?
- Do we provide good impartial advice to pupils on careers or moving on to other provision?
- Do we consider the overall coherence and effectiveness of the provision for personal and specialist support?

### **How good are our safeguarding arrangements? (CIF 2.3.3)**

#### **Questions we should consider about our safeguarding arrangements**

- Are our arrangements for safeguarding children and/or vulnerable adults appropriate and do we comply with best practice?
- Do we identify children in need or at risk of significant harm by maintaining a record of the suitability of the staff and having appropriate arrangements for child protection?
- Do our policies and procedures ensure that all staff are trained, that they respond and comply with our safeguarding arrangements and promote safe practices and a culture of safety?
- How secure are the school buildings and site?
- Does our policy set out:
  - ▲ the names senior member of staff's responsibilities for dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues, and for providing advice/support to other staff;
  - ▲ the designated governor's responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding;
  - ▲ clear procedures that reflect the current regulations; and
  - ▲ arrangements for training?
- How well do we promote the prevention and elimination of oppressive behaviour including bullying, sexism and racism?
- Are our policies and procedures effective in dealing with specific instances of discrimination or oppressive behaviour?
- Do we have effective recruitment, disciplinary and reporting arrangements to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers, and do our arrangements meet legal requirements?
- Do we have appropriate policies, procedures and reporting arrangements in relation to physical interventions and withdrawal?

### **How well do we meet the needs of pupils with ALN? (CIF 2.3.4)**

#### **Questions we should consider about how well we meet the needs of pupils with ALN**

- Do we have effective arrangements for the identification and monitoring of ALN?
- Do our pupils with ALN receive the short-term or long-term support that they need?

- Do we offer pupils with ALN access to all areas of the curriculum, including the subjects of the National Curriculum unless disapplication is specified in individual statements?
- Do grouping and support systems meet the range of pupils' needs without adversely affecting the breadth, balance and continuity of the pupils' curriculum?
- Do we integrate, support and provide for pupils with ALN within mainstream classes and in special groups, so that they can achieve appropriate standards?
- Does the quality of support for pupils help them achieve the objectives set in individual education plans?
- How well do we support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, including the appropriateness of 'time out' arrangements?
- Do we conduct regular reviews of progress, including annual reviews?
- Do our assessment, recording and reporting procedures satisfy statutory requirements?
- Do we consult parents/carers regularly?
- Do we evaluate the adequacy and usefulness of contributions from learning support assistants, support teachers, educational psychologists, medical, paramedical and nursing specialists, and other external agencies?

### **How do we evaluate the learning environment? (CIF 2.4)**

We need to provide a learning environment that helps pupils to succeed as well as they can. To be fully effective, our school needs to be an inclusive community in which pupils receive equal access to all areas of the school's provision. In effective schools, there is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

It is also important that a school has enough good quality resources and accommodation that are well matched to pupils' learning needs. In addition, the accommodation needs to be well-maintained.

### **How well do we evaluate the ethos, equality and diversity of our school? (CIF 2.4.1)**

#### **Questions we should consider about our ethos and provision for equality and diversity**

- Have we established a school ethos that is inclusive and contributes towards community cohesion? Do we take into account and value the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and act appropriately on this information?
- Do we offer equal access to the curriculum and challenge stereotypes in pupils' attitudes, choices, expectations and achievements?
- Do we analyse and where appropriate address gender gaps in subjects? Do we develop tolerant attitudes and ensure that all pupils and staff are free from harassment?
- Do we take reasonable steps to ensure that current and prospective pupils with disabilities do not suffer less favourable treatment in school or in respect of admissions and exclusions?
- Do we have a well-understood equality scheme that promotes equal

opportunities and human rights? Does our policy meet statutory requirements?  
Do we have an action plan that ensures delivery of the policy?

- Do we provide appropriate equality training for staff?
- Do we monitor and effectively address any related issues or complaints that arise?

### **How well do we ensure that the physical environment is appropriate for pupils' needs? (CIF 2.4.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about whether our physical environment is appropriate for pupils' needs**

- Are resources well matched to pupils' needs?
- Does the accommodation provide a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment to support teaching and learning?
- Is the accommodation sufficient for the number of pupils and the activities offered?
- Are the toilet and changing facilities appropriate for pupils' needs?
- Are the buildings and grounds maintained appropriately?

### **Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Leadership is concerned with:

- building and co-ordinating a team whose members have a common purpose;
- encouraging individuals to contribute to the common purpose; and
- developing a capacity to reflect critically on what is being done and how it can be improved.

The most crucial and central role is played by the headteacher. Any evaluation of that role needs to focus on how effective he or she is in those aspects of the school's work which bear most directly on improving provision, standards and wellbeing.

Effective school leadership also involves building distributed leadership and ensuring that staff with leadership and management roles make an important contribution.

It ensures that staff understand and are committed to their job descriptions. Staff need to focus on how their work in their role can lead to improvements.

Effective school leadership also ensures that pupils are properly encouraged and supported to become involved in decision-making on issues that affect their learning and wellbeing.

Successful leadership enables staff, governing bodies and pupils to be involved in the formulation of aims, values and policies, and in the procedures which arise from them. Successful leadership teams work effectively together and have a shared commitment to excellence.

### **How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our leadership? (CIF 3.1)**

When thinking about strategic direction, we need to consider the extent to which we have clear aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that are focused on meeting

pupils' needs. Good plans are appropriately focused, implemented and monitored in a timely way.

Setting out and communicating a clear sense of direction, and having suitable plans and processes in place, are not ends in themselves. Plans and processes are only as good as the extent to which they are effective in sustaining high quality and improving provision and standards. Good leadership must have a positive impact.

We need to consider how well the governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and takes full account of relevant legislation and guidance. We also need to consider how well the governors not only support the school, but also challenge it to do better.

### **How good is our strategic direction and what is the impact of our leadership? (CIF 3.1.1)**

#### **Questions we should consider about our strategic direction**

- Do we have clear aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that are focused on meeting pupils' needs?
- Are our plans appropriately focused and are they being implemented and monitored in a timely way?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined, and are the spans of responsibility in the school leadership group viable and balanced?
- Do all staff understand and fulfil their roles in direct relation to specific strategic aims, plans and responsibilities?
- Do leaders manage their own time effectively and prioritise activities responsively?
- Do meetings focus on important issues about performance and core business, and generate clear action points which are carried out as agreed?
- Are our management and committee structures coherent with the strategic direction of the school and do they address core issues?
- How well do we use data to monitor performance?
- Do we communicate high expectations to those we manage?
- Do we agree and achieve challenging and realistic targets for ourselves and others?
- Do we negotiate and co-operate well with internal staff and outside agencies?

#### **Questions we should consider about the impact of leadership?**

- Do we communicate the vision for our school well, and explore how to achieve it, in collaboration with others?
- Do we model and promote behaviours and values that contribute positively to creating a school ethos in which our pupils and staff feel valued?
- Do we actively support and challenge everyone to do their best?
- Do we build on shared understanding and distributed leadership to create a responsive learning culture in our school?
- Do we share convincingly, with our stakeholders and others in our school community, a common mission to deliver education of the best quality?
- How well do we manage the performance of our staff in order to help them to

improve their practice?

- Do we address underperformance robustly and directly where necessary?
- Does our performance management identify individual and whole-school training and development needs clearly?
- Do we prioritise these appropriately and address them fully?
- Do all our staff have targets for improvement that support the delivery of the strategic aims in our school improvement and other action plans?
- Do performance management processes help to improve the quality of our teaching and learning, as well as pupil outcomes?

### **Questions we should consider about how well we meet national and local priorities**

- Are we clear about local and especially national priorities, and do we have a consistent and systematic view and strategy about how we will respond to them?
- Are we successful in delivering to national priorities, including:
  - ▲ the School Effectiveness Framework;
  - ▲ The Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds;
  - ▲ National Literacy and Numeracy Framework;
  - ▲ Welsh Government guidance on 'Tackling Child Poverty' and 'The Child Poverty strategy'
  - ▲ Learning Pathways 14-19, including meeting the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009);
  - ▲ the Transformation agenda;
  - ▲ the Welsh Government's seven core aims based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
  - ▲ the Children and Young People's Partnership plan; and
  - ▲ local partnerships and consortia agreements?
- Do we appreciate the purpose of these priorities and how they can improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing?
- Do we respond to the educational challenges of the local area by working with other schools, agencies and the local authority?

### **How good is the work of our governors? (CIF 3.1.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about the work of our governors**

- How well do our governors understand their roles?
- How well do they fulfil their statutory obligations and take account of relevant legislation and guidance?
- Do they have good information about the performance of our school and issues that affect it?
- Do they provide a sense of direction for the work of our school?
- Do they support our school as critical friends, and hold us to account for the standards and quality we achieve?
- Do they take reasonable steps to inform pupils, members of staff, parents/carers or any other person of the procedures if they wish to make a complaint or appeal?
- Do they make sure that complaints are dealt with promptly by disinterested parties?

## **How do we improve the quality of what we do? (CIF 3.2)**

The key purpose of this manual is to improve quality through effective self-evaluation. The first part of the manual and all of the sections on each key question and each quality indicator will help you to evaluate your provision and its impact on standards and wellbeing. For the first aspect of quality indicator **3.2 (3.2.1 self-evaluation, including listening to pupils and others)**, there are some broad principles about self-evaluation that complement rather than repeat other sections of the manual.

When self-evaluation becomes a reflective professional process, it helps schools get to know themselves well, identify their agenda for improvement and promote sector-leading practice.

The processes of self-evaluation and improvement planning should be a regular and routine part of our school's working life. The focus of self-evaluation should be on identifying priorities for development, monitoring provision and assessing outcomes. The process should involve a rigorous review of all aspects of school life and, most importantly, how these impact on the standards that pupils achieve. A key consideration is whether our school is managed on the basis of an accurate assessment of strengths and weaknesses. Our leadership and management are unlikely to be good if self-evaluation procedures are not effective.

Improvement planning should flow naturally from our self-evaluation activities. The priorities in any improvement plan should be based on the findings of our self-evaluation. If our improvement planning is good, then we should have a well evidenced track record of improvements.

Where necessary, there will need to be direct intervention and support to improve performance. It should not be seen as a response to failure, but instead it should be seen as intervention and support that leads to substantive improvements. Intervention and support for some more vulnerable groups of pupils are likely to involve working across the school as a whole as well as with other agencies.

## **How well do we carry out self-evaluation, including listening to pupils and others? (CIF 3.2.1)**

### **Questions we should consider about self-evaluation**

- Do we use evidence to identify underperformance or coasting performance?
- Is self-evaluation a regular part of our school's working life and embedded in our strategic planning?
- Do we carry out thorough evaluation and monitoring of data on standards and the quality of education, including consideration of trends and progress over time?
- Do we draw on first-hand evidence about the quality of teaching and learning?
- Do we involve all staff in assessing outcomes and their own performance?
- Do we encourage pupils to share their views and raise issues?
- Do we take account of the views of our staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders?
- Where appropriate, do we draw upon reviews by external agencies?

## **How do we plan and secure improvement? (CIF 3.2.2)**

### **Questions we should consider about planning and securing improvement**

- Does our self-evaluation activity lead to the formulation of our improvement plans?
- Do we use information from self-evaluation to set priorities and appropriately challenging targets for improvement?
- Have we prioritised the matters that we wish to improve?
- Are we implementing sound strategies that are likely to bring about the desired improvements?
- Do all staff play their part in implementing the strategies?
- Where necessary, do we act quickly and provide support to improve performance?
- Have we defined the actions for improvement in specified and realistic timescales, and allocated responsibility for their delivery?
- Have we made sure that our priorities are supported by the allocation of resources?
- Have our actions had a positive effect and, where relevant, led to measurable improvements in standards and quality?
- Do we have a good or excellent track record in making improvements over recent years?

## **How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership working? (CIF 3.3)**

We all share the aim of working in partnership to improve provision, standards and wellbeing. To be effective at working with others, schools need to:

- be relevant to our local community and to the lives of children and young people outside school and school hours;
- engage with families and the broader community, including businesses, external agencies and the voluntary sector; and
- work in a joined-up way with other providers and agencies to improve the standards and wellbeing of individual pupils.

For schools in the most disadvantaged communities, the community focus is especially important. It is here that schools can play a major role in providing the experiences and opportunities that are available to pupils in more prosperous areas. Schools alone cannot break the link between poverty and underachievement. Research stresses the need for integrated and broad-based approaches that involve a number of agencies working together.

We should not lose sight of the aim of partnership working. It is not done for its own sake or to respond to external demands. It should lead to better provision and improved standards and wellbeing. The test of any aspect of partnership working is whether it can have a clear, demonstrable and beneficial effect on pupils.

We need to consider how well our school collaborates with partners to deliver coherent programmes and choices. To do this, the school needs to have effective

structures and processes which contribute well to joint working practices. We should consider how our staff work with partners to plan, manage, and quality assure provision, for example through pooling our funding and resources.

When considering the planning and provision of 14-19 education, we need to consider the effectiveness of our partnership with other schools, further education institutions and work-based learning providers. These partnerships should provide access to a range of suitable vocational and general education courses.

Where there is regular movement of pupils to or from the school as part of partnership activity, we should consider how safely and efficiently we arrange these day-to-day activities. We should consider the impact of partnership working on improving outcomes, particularly achievement, for those pupils who work offsite as well as pupils who attend our school for their courses. A good test of the effectiveness of the school's partnership working is how well leaders monitor and evaluate the standards and provision of their pupils on collaborative courses in other providers. Do we know what is going on and has action been taken when weaknesses have been discovered?

### **How strategically do we work with our partners to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing? (CIF 3.3.1)**

We need to consider how strategically our school works with its partners to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Partners include:

- parents/carers;
- other schools and post-16 providers in the area network;
- the local authority education services for children and young people;
- the community;
- local employers;
- a range of multi-disciplinary agencies and voluntary organisations; and
- initial teacher training institutions.

Our school should be clear about its role and responsibilities within any formal partnerships. The key matter is how well our school uses strategic partnerships to help to build our capacity for continuous improvement.

Partnerships will depend on good liaison, trust and clear communication between partners.

### **Questions we should consider about strategic partnerships**

- Do we play a key role in relevant and effective partnerships that benefit our pupils?
- Do we work in a joined-up way with other providers and agencies to improve the standards and wellbeing of individual pupils?
- Are we clear about our role and responsibilities within our partnerships?
- Do we use strategic partnerships to help us build our capacity for continuous

improvement?

- Do we ensure that there is good liaison, trust and clear communication between our school and our partners?
- Do we engage with families and the broader community, including businesses, external agencies and the voluntary sector, to benefit our pupils?

### **How well do we collaborate with partners to deliver coherent programmes and choices? (CIF 3.3.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance**

- Do we have effective structures and processes which contribute well to joint working practices?
- How well do we work with partners to plan, manage and assure the quality of provision?

#### **Questions we should ask ourselves about our work with partner schools**

- How well do we work with our partner schools to develop continuity in learning and wellbeing?
- How well do we work with our partner schools to moderate and assure the quality of the assessment of pupils' work and courses?
- How well do we work with our partner schools to use and share resources effectively?

#### **Questions we should ask ourselves about our work with our partners in 14-19 education**

- How well do we work with our partners to ensure our pupils have access to a range of suitable vocational and general education courses?
- Do we ensure that our pupils access the courses in an efficient and safe way?
- Do we ensure that partnership working improves outcomes, particularly achievement?
- How well do we monitor and evaluate the standards and provision of collaborative courses in other providers?
- Do we know what is going on and has action been taken when weaknesses have been discovered?

### **How do we evaluate resource management? (CIF 3.4)**

Leadership requires that resources, including staff, time and finances, are used effectively to improve provision, standards and wellbeing. When evaluating the management of resources, we should look at the quality of our plans and strategies to ensure that we deliver value for money.

One important task is to judge how efficiently and effectively we plan and carry out strategies to manage our staff and available resources. We should be aware that there may be some features of our management that contribute to or detract from the efficient management of resources.

A professional learning community is a group of teachers who are responsible for driving change in their own school and/or across a network of schools. It might include networks within the local authority and other groups of schools.

Professional learning communities are a way of securing higher standards and wellbeing through teacher collaboration within, between and across schools. Teachers can work together to share and develop professional expertise and knowledge that will positively impact upon pupil outcomes. Professional learning communities can give schools access to emerging knowledge about school leadership, learning, teaching and wellbeing.

Each school should be developing as a strong learning community and achieving a culture of collaboration within and across schools. This process needs arrangements to support the involvement of all staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

We also need to scrutinise the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for Continuous Professional Development.

When we look at financial matters, we should not look only at the detail of our financial budgets. In evaluating resource management, the focus should be on the extent to which our school's spending decisions and broad financial planning are based on priorities for expenditure and on improvement over time.

Another important focus for evaluating value for money is whether our school is effective in achieving good or excellent outcomes for pupils. It might be useful to try to make an overall evaluation of value for money. This means judging whether our school offers excellent, good, adequate or unsatisfactory value for money in terms of the use of its allocated budget.

### **How well do we manage our staff and resources? (CIF 3.4.1)**

#### **Questions we should consider about managing staff and resources**

- Is our school appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum effectively?<sup>1</sup>
- Do we deploy our staff to make best use of their time, expertise and experience?
- Do we identify and meet the development needs of all our staff through appraisal and performance management systems?
- Do we make effective use of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time?
- Do we employ appropriate strategies and processes to meet the statutory requirements of the National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' (January 2003)?

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 80 refers to a section in 'School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document' (STPCD). This details what teachers/subject co-ordinators will be required to do:  
80. Teachers are expected to contribute, both orally and in writing as appropriate, to curriculum development by sharing their professional expertise with colleagues and advising on effective practice. This does not mean that they can be expected to take on the responsibility of, and accountability for, a subject area or to manage other teachers without appropriate additional payment. Responsibilities of this nature should be part of a post that is in the leadership group or linked to a post which attracts a TLR on the basis set out in paragraph 21.

- How well do we manage and deploy our teaching assistants and non-teaching staff?
- Do we provide the best standards of accommodation possible within our budget? Do pupils have enough appropriate learning resources?

### **Questions we should consider about networks of professional practice**

- Are staff involved in professional learning communities within and beyond the school?
- Does our involvement in professional learning communities give us access to emerging knowledge about school leadership, learning, teaching and wellbeing?
- Are we developing as a strong learning community and achieving a culture of collaboration within our own and with other schools?
- Do our arrangements support the active engagement of all our staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills, including participation in whole-school professional learning experiences?
- Are all our staff supported by continuous professional development?
- Are all our staff acquiring new knowledge and skills to develop innovative approaches to learning and teaching?
- Are all our appropriate staff involved in direct classroom observation?
- Do we share good practice with other teachers and adults within and beyond our school?
- Do we reflect on our own practice and evaluate the impact of professional learning on our pupils' learning and wellbeing?

### **Questions we should consider about financial matters**

- Are our spending decisions and broad financial planning based on priorities for expenditure and improvement over time?
- Do we know the costs of existing programmes and activities, keep them under review and question whether they are cost-effective, for instance in relation to non-viable class sizes?
- Do we identify priorities and areas for development, and allocate resources appropriately and according to clear criteria that reflect our agreed objectives?
- Do we have systematic and accurate budgeting arrangements, including appropriate arrangements for contingencies?
- Do we have a sensible balance between the responsibilities undertaken by governors and those delegated to the headteacher and staff?

### **Do we provide value for money? (CIF 3.4.2)**

#### **Questions we should consider about value for money**

- Is our provision effective in securing appropriate outcomes for our pupils?
- Do we balance the effectiveness of our provision against costs, including staffing costs?
- Do we make good use of the funding we receive?

## 6 Self-evaluation and inspection

Schools should use information from self-evaluation to feed into their strategic planning. An annually updated self-evaluation report provides an opportunity to identify strengths, and celebrate and share good practice. This report should identify areas for school improvement, which can be prioritised in improvement planning. The School Effectiveness Framework recognises the importance of annual school self-evaluation updates based on the CIF.

Inspections provide an important external evaluation of the work of schools over a six-year cycle. Inspection can help schools to focus on what needs to be done and on how to bring about a step change in the quality and consistency of learning.

The starting point for inspection is the school's evaluation of its own performance, supported by relevant performance information. Inspectors will not inspect all aspects of work in depth during inspection. The **school's self-evaluation report** will determine how inspectors sample evidence to test the school's evaluation of its work. This self-evaluation report should not be one that has just been written for an inspection. Instead it should develop from the ongoing self-evaluation activities.

A good self-evaluation report should:

- be evaluative and concise;
- identify areas of improvement as well as good features;
- indicate excellent and sector-leading practice, where appropriate;
- give clear judgements on each quality indicator in the CIF (though these need not necessarily be updated each year);
- ensure that judgements derive from evidence and include cross-references to it;
- provide and comment on statistical data about outcomes over recent years;
- refer to recent assessments or reviews of provision;
- relate clearly to an improvement plan and targets; and
- provide cross-references to the evidence that support its evaluations.

The following documents can also be found on the Estyn website:

- arrangements for core inspections in special schools and pupil referral units; and
- a template for a self-evaluation report based on the CIF;
- supplementary guidance on a range of inspection issues; and
- survey reports covering a wide range of topical and relevant issues.