Together Towards Improvement

A Process For Self-Evaluation

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FOREWORD BY CHIEF INSPECTOR, MISS M MATCHETT

The Inspectorate has long recognised that the greatest likelihood for improvement, particularly improvement to be sustained over time, occurs when a school has established a positive culture and commitment to professional growth. To bring about improvement a school must look at itself honestly, take stock of where it is, base its evaluation on evidence, including evidence from external evaluation such as inspection, and reach a realistic view of itself. Through rigorous self-evaluation a school can recognise its strengths and put in place processes to ensure that those areas identified as strengths continue to flourish, while other areas in need of improvement are prioritised and developed.

The Inspectorate acknowledges the progress already made by schools in using self-evaluation to improve learning and teaching. This work on self-evaluation has been facilitated and supported by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and The Regional Training Unit (RTU).

To support self-evaluation, the Inspectorate has published a series of documents which include 'Evaluating Schools', Evaluating Subjects, Improving Subjects, 'Evaluating Pre-school Education', 'Quality Assurance in the Youth Sector' and 'Improving Quality: Raising Standards' in Further Education and Training. The guidance provided in 'Together Towards Improvement' (TTI) promotes a process and sets a context in which these other documents can be used effectively. TTI provides guidance for the principal and staff in all schools, no matter how large or small or well-versed in self-evaluation, to develop the process in a systematic way.

Self-evaluation is not an end in itself. The process and the action which follows, when implemented effectively, will help to bring about important improvements in the quality of learning and teaching, the experiences of the pupils and the standards that they attain.

Those undertaking this process must be willing to make it rigorous, reflect on current practice, accept praise and criticism, and make changes to

their practice, where necessary. They should take into consideration the views of all those involved with the school and be willing to act on them.

There are many ways of determining the current provision within the school and gathering information to make an evaluation, but the quality of learning and teaching is paramount; for example, classroom observation by the principal, co-ordinators or peers, and the subsequent discussions about the outcomes, are key elements in any self-evaluation process.

Through the process of self-evaluation the strengths of the school in the area being evaluated, as well as areas for improvement, will be identified. It is important that a school celebrates and maintains the strengths but also crucially takes action to address the areas for improvement.

The TTI materials have been developed and improved through piloting in a number of schools and consultation with other groups which support the work. The Inspectorate will continue to work with all involved to promote the development of self-evaluation and, where appropriate, will issue further guidance.

The continuing development of self-evaluation in schools raises the question of its relationship to external inspection. Self-evaluation is already an element in Quality Assurance Inspections, Two-Part Focused Inspections in post-primary schools and Unannounced Inspections; for these inspections the schools provide an evaluation of some aspect of their work which the Inspectorate quality assures. The Inspectorate is considering further the place of self-evaluation in other school inspections.

I hope you find these materials useful and that the culture of self-evaluation develops and flourishes in your school and most importantly, brings about improvements in the experiences of the pupils, the quality of learning and teaching and the standards which the pupils attain.

Marion J Matchett.

Marion J Matchett
Chief inspector

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, there is the realisation that if improvement in school provision is to be initiated and sustained effectively, then it is crucial that the "culture" of self-evaluation is promoted and that the "process" of self-evaluation is embedded within a school's way of working.

These materials are but one of a range of resources that may be used to help foster that culture and support the process of self-critical evaluation of current practices, with the aim of improving the quality of the pupils' experiences and the standards they achieve.

The materials give guidance on:

- the points to be considered by a school when planning to use the process of self-evaluation in order to improve the quality of its learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement;

- the key features of the self-evaluation process;

- identifying the focus for self-evaluation;

- the use of a set of quality indicators.

The materials are structured to allow those who engage in the process of self-evaluation to select and evaluate any aspect or aspects of their work with the aim of improving the quality of learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement in the school.

It is recognised that already many schools:

- engage in the process of review and evaluation;

- are becoming more self-critical of their work;

- recognise where improvements are needed;

- are implementing programmes and processes which aim to improve their practice and raise the standards of achievement.

Within the system there are already many documents, such as, 'Evaluating Schools', 'Evaluating Pastoral Care' and the subject evaluation and improvement documents, which are helpful to schools and teachers who engage in self-evaluation work. Teachers have commented on the usefulness of these publications and many have carried out work within their own schools to modify their guidance documentation, and to review and evaluate the quality of their work.

WHAT IS SELF-EVALUATION?

Self-evaluation is a process through which an individual teacher, groups of staff, the staff as a whole and senior management:

◗ reflect on their current practice;

◗ identify and celebrate the strengths of the school;

◗ identify and address areas for improvement in their work;

◗ engage in personal and shared professional development; and

◗ focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement in the school.

Self-evaluation is a systematic process involving the staff and governors and, where necessary, other members of the school community, such as, parents and pupils.

The process of self-evaluation:

◗ is ongoing and sharply-focused, and involves monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of existing provision and the pupils' achievements;

◗ recognises the need for the staff and governors to have a clear and agreed view of the school's current stage of development and, through school development planning, to identify priorities which will have a positive effect on learning and teaching;

◗ informs and influences classroom practice and the quality of learning and teaching, and promotes development and improvement; and

◗ requires the staff to evaluate their work critically, reflect on the extent to which expectations are being realised in the work of the school, and establish a clear vision and future direction for the school.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SELF-EVALUATION?

The purpose of self-evaluation is to:

- promote school effectiveness;

- improve the quality of learning and teaching;

- improve the experiences of the pupils; and

- raise the standards which the pupils attain.

These materials provide a framework which may be useful to:

- support individual schools with the development of their self-evaluation processes;

- help schools to identify their strengths and areas for improvement;

- assist the principal, staff, and governors to incorporate action for improvement into the school development plan.

IS YOUR SCHOOL READY TO ENGAGE IN THE PROCESS OF SELF-EVALUATION?

The process of self-evaluation requires willingness and commitment from all who are involved in the life and work of the school. Governors, management, teachers and parents need to evaluate, openly and honestly, the work of the school and their particular contribution to what the school is achieving and is seeking to improve.

The most important step is to establish a climate where all involved are encouraged to be open about their work, evaluate, and, where necessary, improve on their own performance. If an appropriate culture of self-evaluation is to be established, all those involved, from senior management to the most recently appointed teacher, should be willing to reflect on current practice, accept praise and criticism, and make changes where necessary. The recognition of past achievements and the affirmation of good practice are essential as a foundation for self-evaluation.

Whatever the circumstances:

- the procedures used in the process of self-evaluation should be rigorous, comprehensive and fit for purpose;

- all those involved should be aware of the methods to be adopted and of their part in, and contribution to, the process;

- the evidence obtained should be both qualitative and quantitative and be externally verifiable;

- the sources of the evidence should include school and departmental documentation;

- the views of pupils, teachers, parents and the Board of Governors should be taken into consideration;

- observation of classroom practice should be an integral part of the process of self-evaluation;

- the outcomes of the evaluation should lead to action to achieve the intended improvements in teaching and learning.

Points for Initial Consideration and Discussion by those who Plan to Engage in the Process of Self-Evaluation

Is there sufficient openness and commitment to improvement among the staff to support and sustain the process of self-evaluation within the school?

Have the senior managers of the school planned thoughtfully for the self-evaluation process to ensure that it can be managed within the constraints of the school's work, staff deployment and the time available?

What existing procedures are already in place to identify and share good practice throughout the school?

What processes are already in place to help the school achieve continuous improvement through the evaluation of the quality of its own provision and the outcomes for the pupils?

What steps has the school taken, or intends to take, to ensure that the process of self-evaluation becomes an intrinsic part of the school's way of working to improve continuously the quality of learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement?

Do the governors and the staff have a shared understanding of and commitment to, the process of internal evaluation of an aspect or aspects of the work of the school, in order to promote further improvement in learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement?

What external support does the school anticipate it will need to help it develop the process of self-evaluation?

Arising from these discussions, the staff should be able to reflect on the extent to which the following statements describe the work of their school.

Within the school there is:

A self-evaluative way of working which is open, transparent and promotes a reflective culture.

A recognition of past achievements and the affirmation of good practice as foundations on which to build and move forward.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the pupils' work and progress.

An understanding that self-evaluation is an ongoing process and not a one-off event in the life of the school.

Planned staff development/in-service training to raise confidence, and to facilitate the development of a shared understanding of the process of self-evaluation.

An agreed approach to self-evaluation which is reflected consistently in the school policy documents.

Effective management which provides an appropriate allocation of time and resources to support and complete developmental work.

Shared evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching.

Identification of priorities and the setting of measurable, achievable targets which reflect the context of the school.

A positive ethos of promoting achievement for the good of the pupils.

A shared team approach where all members of the school community believe they are valued.

Thoughtful and informed examination of the processes of learning and teaching.

Analysis of available, relevant information and assessment data on the school, and on the attainments of the pupils which is used effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

IDENTIFYING THE FOCUS FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Once the essential culture for self-evaluation has been established within the school, the processes and ways of working developed during the early stage will provide the staff with a way of working which they can apply to any aspect of the school's work.

The choice of theme for self-evaluation is crucial and should match the experience of the staff in evaluation. Many schools have a tradition of self-evaluation, and the procedures are well embedded in the school ethos and way of working.

Other schools may be at a very early stage in developing the process of self-evaluation. In such schools there may be factors such as, a relatively new staff or a recently appointed principal, where confidence and openness are just being established. Such schools may find it helpful to choose a narrowly focused area for their first self-evaluative activity. A school can build on the experience gained to examine the findings, to improve their methods of evaluation and/or to broaden the scope of their internal evaluation work.

The size of school or subject department is also a critical feature. Where there is a small number of staff and limited time available for them to review their practice, it is still important that the procedures for self-evaluation become part of the school ethos, and are part of the everyday life and work of the group of teachers. In larger schools it is important for all the staff to become involved and be part of the process to ensure consistency.
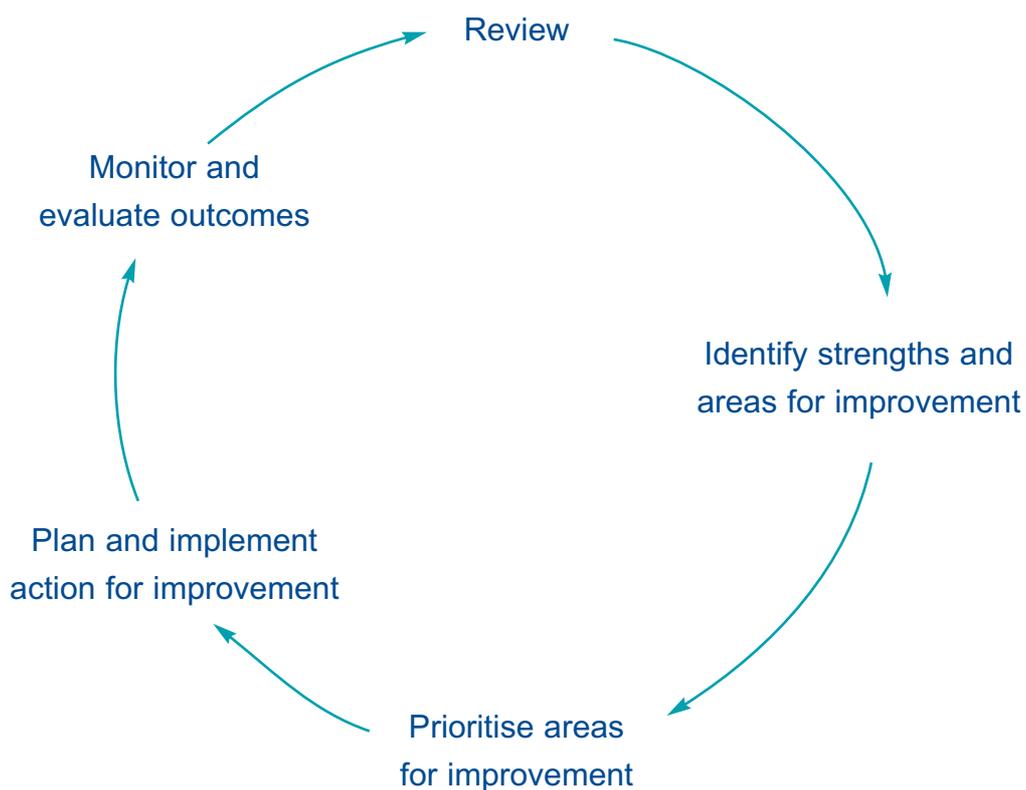
Other factors may influence the choice of focus for self-evaluation. For example:

- the areas for improvement identified during an inspection;
- the grades obtained in external examinations; or
- comments from parents or pupils.

These influences help the school to identify its priorities and the areas which require improvement, particularly in relation to ethos, learning and teaching, and the standards of the pupils' achievement.

THE PROCESS OF SELF-EVALUATION

In order for a school to examine the quality and effectiveness of its work, a systematic process of self-evaluation should be designed and adopted as illustrated below:

Review

Monitor and
evaluate outcomes

Identify strengths and
areas for improvement

Plan and implement
action for improvement

Prioritise areas
for improvement

The operational aspects of conducting a self-evaluation are set out in pages 32-36.

The Quality Indicators

THE QUALITY INDICATORS

Inspectors have identified, based on observed practice in schools, key quality indicators and features of practice which lead to outcomes that have been assessed as good.

These key Quality Indicators can also be used by the school to evaluate the quality of its provision.

The indicators are grouped under three headings as set out below:

1. **Ethos**

    1.1   Climate of the School

    1.2   Links with Parents

    1.3   Pastoral Care

2. **Learning and Teaching**

    2.1   Planning for the Curriculum

    2.2   Learning

    2.3   Teaching

    2.4   The Teachers' Assessment of the Pupils' Work

    2.5   Implementation of the Curriculum

    2.6   Attainment

    2.7   Assessment, Recording and Reporting

    2.8   Implementation of The Code of Practice for SEN provision

3. **Management**

   3.1   The Effectiveness of the Principal

   3.2   The Effectiveness of Teachers with Specific Responsibilities

   3.3   Monitoring and Evaluation

   3.4   Action to Improve Learning

   3.5   Staff Development

   3.6   Staff Deployment

   3.7   Links with Other Schools and Agencies

   3.8   Accommodation

   3.9   Resources

On the following pages, the features of each individual indicator are set out along with characteristics of good practice.

Each individual indicator is listed on a separate page so that it may be photocopied easily for the staff to discuss, decide on the evidence to be collected, and to evaluate the school's performance against the characteristics.

In practice, a school may decide, as a starting point, to undertake evaluation using one indicator and, when appropriate, move on to another.

SECTION 1: ETHOS

The discernible and distinctive character, atmosphere and expectations of the school which enable it to promote the all-round development of its pupils.

Indicator 1.1: Climate of the School

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Sense of purpose and identity	• The staff and pupils demonstrate a strong sense of identity with, and loyalty to, the school; all those associated with the school are committed fully to the well-being and development of the pupils.
• Quality of the learning environment	• The school provides a welcoming, attractive and stimulating environment which supports the pupils' learning and celebrates their academic and non-academic achievements.
• Morale and relationships	• The morale of staff and pupils is high; the good relationships at all levels enable the staff and pupils to work well together in a supportive and purposeful way.
• Expectations of pupils and staff	• The staff and pupils have high but realistic expectations of what can be achieved; these expectations are reflected in good standards of work.
• Pupils' behaviour	• The pupils have high levels of confidence and self-esteem; they respect one another, the staff, and the school environment; they are helped to understand and co-operate with necessary rules and routines by the school's well-judged and positive approaches to discipline.

Indicator 1.2: The Links with Parents

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Relationships with parents	• The staff regard the support and contribution of parents as key elements in the success of the school. Parents value the work of the school and feel welcome and secure in approaching the principal and staff.
• Communication and information	• The parents receive clear information about the aims, organisation and day-to-day life and work of the school. There are good opportunities for parents and staff to share information relevant to the pupils' development and learning. The parents are provided with clear information about their children's progress and achievements.
• Involvement in the pupils' education	• The parents are given information about the school's curriculum. They are encouraged to become involved with the work of their children and receive the appropriate support. Steps are taken to involve them actively in relevant aspects of school life.
• Response to parents' views and enquiries	• The views of the parents are sought systematically and are taken into account when the school reviews its curriculum, organisation and provision. The staff ensure that parental enquiries or concerns are dealt with sympathetically, promptly and effectively.

Indicator 1.3: Pastoral Care

Feature	Characteristics of Good Practice
• A caring atmosphere	• The school has a caring ethos and all the staff show a strong commitment to the care and welfare of the pupils. The pupils feel secure and free from emotional and physical harm; they understand that their concerns will be listened to sympathetically and appropriate action taken.
• Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare	• The school has comprehensive policies on appropriate welfare issues including bullying, drug awareness, health education and discipline which are in line with relevant DE guidance; the staff adopt practices which ensure that these policies are implemented fully. As a result, the pupils develop relevant personal and social skills and understanding which help them to respond appropriately to situations affecting their welfare.
• Child protection	• The school implements fully a child protection policy which is in line with the requirements of DE Circular 99/10 Pastoral Care.

Section 2: LEARNING AND TEACHING

Learning and teaching are at the very heart of a school's work. The relationship between learning and teaching is complex but the quality of teaching bears directly on the effectiveness of learning.

Indicator 2.1: Planning for the Curriculum

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
Comprehensiveness	• The school has clear, coherent planning for all areas of the NI curriculum which guides effectively the work of individual teachers and the staff as a whole. The planning reflects the school's aims and policies; it provides a long-term overview of the curriculum and also guides the teachers' day-to-day work in the classroom.
Breadth, balance and progression	• Each area of the curriculum is planned to ensure that the programme of learning is broad and balanced, and promotes continuity and steady progression in the pupils' learning.
Clear learning outcomes	• The planning identifies clearly the knowledge, skills and understanding which the children are expected to acquire at each stage.
Meeting individual needs	• The curriculum is planned to take account of the pupils' differing stages of development, abilities, and attainments and to ensure that their individual needs are met.
Evaluation	• There is careful evaluation of the pupils' responses to the taught curriculum which is seen by the staff as an integral part of their work and informs future planning.

Indicator 2.2: Learning

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Levels of motivation and attitudes to learning	• The pupils work well with their teachers in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They are at ease, well behaved and demonstrate self-discipline. The pupils display interest in, and persevere with, their tasks; they show enjoyment in their learning and achievements. They respond well in class, take a pride in their work and show by their interest and attention that they value the contribution made by others.
• Systematic acquisition of skills and concepts and the ability to apply them	• All pupils are making good progress across the NI Curriculum, in line with their prior attainment and abilities, and achieve standards in line with their abilities. They can talk with knowledge and understanding about what they are doing, and they can apply what they have learned in a variety of contexts.
• Development as independent pupils	• The pupils take personal responsibility for their learning, think independently and become involved actively in the learning process. They show initiative and confidence in using resources effectively and are increasingly independent in their use of equipment, materials and information and communications technology.
• Interaction with others	• The pupils collaborate effectively in a variety of situations involving groups of different composition and size. They listen attentively to one another and take account of the opinions and views expressed; they can plan and complete tasks co-operatively.

Indicator 2.3: Teaching

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Climate for learning	• The teachers create a purposeful, supportive and safe environment for learning. They motivate the pupils and engage them actively in their work. They encourage all the pupils to become involved and value their contributions and efforts. They use praise appropriately.
• Range and appropriateness of the teaching approaches	• Teaching approaches include a well-judged balance of whole-class, group and individual activities. The teachers make use of a wide range of teaching methods and are skilled at using questions to promote learning. The teachers encourage the pupils' abilities to think and do for themselves through open-ended tasks, problem-solving, investigation and personal research. The pupils' own ideas and interests are used appropriately as starting points for learning activities.
• Meeting the needs of the pupils	• The teachers' expectations are realistically high and are reflected in appropriate planned learning outcomes. The tasks and activities are matched well to the needs and abilities of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs; the activities are well-paced and challenging. The learning and teaching approaches are such that pupils are likely to achieve suitably high standards.
• Classroom management	• The teachers make the best possible use of the time available to promote learning; the teaching activities and the pupils' tasks are designed accordingly. The teachers organise classroom routines efficiently and prepare adequate and suitable resources which are readily accessible when required. They maximise the use of any classroom assistants or support staff for the benefit of the pupils.

Indicator 2.4: The Teachers' Assessment of the Pupils' Work

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Appropriateness of assessment strategies	• The teachers use varied forms of assessment, including teachers' observations, discussions with pupils, marking, written tests and other structured assessment tools, which are matched well to the pupils' ages and stages of development. The assessment tasks have clearly identified purposes which are understood by the pupils.
• Quality of marking and feedback to pupils	• The pupils' work is regularly, frequently and consistently marked in ways which highlight the strengths and shortcomings, and are well understood by the pupils and their parents. The pupils receive clear guidance, sometimes in the form of written comments, on the quality of their work and effort and have the opportunity to discuss, reflect on and improve their achievements.
• Use of assessment to inform teaching and improve learning	• Assessment is an integral part of planning, learning and teaching. The level and nature of the pupils' prior attainments guide the selection and use of teaching methods and subject content; the pupils' strengths are consolidated and their weaknesses are addressed.

Indicator 2.5: Implementation of the Curriculum

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Curricular breadth, balance, continuity and progression	• The curriculum is broad and balanced and is in line with the NIC and relevant guidance and Circulars from DE. The various elements are linked together to create a coherent programme which progresses steadily across years 1 – 12 (14). It caters well for the range of pupils' interests, strengths and needs and provides for their growing independence as pupils. Where extra-curricular activities are provided, they are well planned to complement the whole curriculum.
• Integration of learning across the curriculum	• Key elements of the pupils' development have been identified in line with the school's aims. These elements, for example, application of number, communication, ICT, problem-solving and personal and social skills, are integrated fully within the curriculum and are promoted consistently across the subject areas.
• Effectiveness of timetabling/organisation of classes	• The organisation of classes and the timetables enable the curriculum to be delivered efficiently, giving appropriate time and emphasis to each curricular area and subject. All pupils have equal access to the full range of the curriculum. Specific arrangements, including, for example, support for special educational needs or music tutorials, are organised efficiently and in the best interests of the pupils.

Indicator 2.6: Attainment

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• The pupils' progress and attainment	• The school's measures of the pupils' attainment, including the statutory assessment at the end of each key stage, show that from year to year the pupils make consistent and appropriate progress commensurate with their abilities.
• Key Stage results in relation to comparable schools	• The results of statutory assessment at the end of each key stage exceed those achieved by similar schools as identified in the NI Benchmarking Data.

Indicator 2.7: Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• The quality of the school's assessment policy	• The school's assessment policy is agreed and understood by all the staff and emphasises the needs of individual pupils. The policy provides clear guidance about the purposes of assessment, the methods to be used, the range and types of evidence to be retained, and the uses to be made of assessment information.
• The implementation of the assessment policy	• The pupils' progress and attainment are monitored and recorded carefully and consistently in all classes, and the arrangements are in line with statutory requirements. The information gathered, including that from the end of Key Stage assessments, is used effectively by the teachers to inform learning and teaching. The pupils are involved in an element of self-assessment and in discussing their progress with their teachers. Many pupils have a realistic awareness of how they are progressing and how they might improve.
• The pupils' records, including Record of Achievement, and the use made of them	• The records provide an accurate overview of each pupil's progress within the formal curriculum and celebrate their other achievements. The system used is manageable and provides information which is easily accessed. The records are used appropriately to contribute to the pupils' Records of Achievement, and in reporting to parents.
• The procedures for communicating with parents and the information given on each pupil's achievements and progress	• The school communicates to parents, both orally and in written form, a clear picture of their children's progress and achievement. The parents are invited to respond to the reports during regular consultations with the teachers.

Indicator 2.8: The Implementation of the Code of Practice for SEN Provision

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Role and effectiveness of the SENCO	• The SENCO has a good understanding of the requirements of the Code of Practice and has established appropriate structures and procedures to ensure that the Code is implemented effectively by all members of staff. The status of the SENCO within the school reflects their leadership role and responsibilities. The SENCO maintains effective links with other professionals and support agencies, and has received appropriate training.
• Identification, diagnosis and planning	• The school identifies, and determines accurately, the special educational needs of individual pupils. The information gained is used to plan provision which matches closely the pupils' identified needs and is co-ordinated effectively. Where needed, clear and realistic Education Plans are compiled through appropriate consultation with, for example, parents and class teachers, and, where appropriate, pupils.
• Record-keeping and review	• Suitably detailed records are maintained for individual pupils, identifying the gains being made. There are regular reviews to ensure that the pupils are benefiting from the programme of support and are making discernible progress, and to identify further provision needed. Parents are consulted appropriately, encouraged to support the work of the school and informed frequently and regularly of progress.
• Suitability and effectiveness of provision	• The pupils are confident, suitably challenged, motivated and are making progress. They experience a broad programme in which there is a balance between the acquisition of basic skills and the use of these skills to access the areas of study and for purposes which the pupils see as interesting and relevant. The teachers' expectations of the pupils are realistic and based on a recognition of their strengths as well as their weaknesses. The school makes appropriate use of the finances allocated for special needs. The range of resources used support and enhance the pupils' learning.

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SECTION 3: MANAGEMENT

Learning and teaching are supported and enhanced by efficient and effective management arrangements. These are essentially the responsibility of the principal, in collaboration with the Board of Governors. At their best, these arrangements ensure that the contribution of each member of staff is valued, that relationships among staff are harmonious and that morale is high. Further, all pupils gain optimum benefit from the range of resources, human and material, available to the school.

Indicator 3.1: The Effectiveness of the Principal

Feature	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Leadership qualities	• The principal inspires confidence and respect among the staff and pupils and promotes in them a sense of their own worth. The principal provides a good role model for the staff, promotes high standards and sets a positive tone for the work of the school. He or she provides clear and realistic direction based on a sound knowledge of, and vision for, the school. Goals and realistic expectations of what the school can achieve for its pupils are shared with all the staff.
• Professional standing and management competence	• The principal evaluates regularly and objectively the work of the school as a basis for improving provision and, when difficult decisions are required, takes these effectively. There is efficient management of the human, financial and material resources, matched to the school's needs and priorities.
• Communication and teamwork	• The principal communicates effectively with the staff and others within the school community. S/he promotes constructive working relationships among the staff and generates a strong sense of team spirit. The principal involves the staff appropriately in decision-making and draws on the expertise and special interests of individuals in developing the work of the school.

Indicator 3.2: The Effectiveness of the Teachers with Specific Responsibilities

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Appropriateness of roles and responsibilities	• There is a good match between the needs of the school and the nature and range of delegated responsibilities. All teachers with specific responsibilities have a full understanding of what these entail.
• Individual and corporate effectiveness	• Teachers with specific responsibilities produce work of a high standard and provide good role models for other staff. They carry out their responsibilities effectively. They promote, and contribute constructively to, teamwork in order to develop aspects of the school's provision. They have a positive influence and significant impact on the whole of the school.

Indicator 3.3: Monitoring and Evaluation

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's provision	• There are systematic and manageable procedures which enable the staff to make valid judgements about the quality of the school's provision. The procedures are implemented consistently, and make thoughtful use of a range of approaches to, and sources of guidance about, evaluation to meet the needs of the school.
• Use of data and other evidence	• The principal focus of attention is on the quality of the pupils' work and their attainments. The measures used include the use of assessment outcomes, other suitable performance indicators and evidence from both internal and external sources. Procedures, including the use of CLASS, enable the school to interpret information and trends from the data gathered.
• Involvement of staff	• All the staff accept and understand the need for careful evaluation of the quality of the school's provision. They reflect in a constructively self-critical way on their own practice and collaborate as a team to monitor and evaluate the work of the school as a whole.
• Action taken	• Planning is refined to meet the outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation.

Indicator 3.4: Action to Improve Learning

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Identification of priorities	• Through focusing on the work of the pupils and the standards they achieve, the staff identify, in a systematic manner, the strengths and weaknesses, and determine appropriate priorities and targets for development. These priorities and targets emphasise improvements in the pupils' learning.
• Planning for improvement	• Strategies to address the school's priorities for development are identified and incorporated into a staged and coherent plan. This plan includes details of the action to be taken, the timescale set, the resources required and the success criteria to be used. All the staff are aware of and accept the implications which the proposed action has for their classroom practice and the organisation of the school as a whole.
• Implementation	• The staff are involved fully in, and demonstrate their commitment to, the implementation of the plan. Required action is taken in line with the timescales and resource allocations detailed and good progress is made towards achieving the targets set.
• Review procedures	• Appropriate evidence related to the priorities and targets is collected, analysed and used to determine the effectiveness of the planned action. Success is recognised and suitable areas for further development are identified and addressed.

Indicator 3.5: Staff Development

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Effectiveness in meeting the priorities of the school	• The priorities for staff development are identified clearly and are matched closely to the needs of the school outlined in the school development plan. These priorities are met effectively through carefully selected school or centre based INSET or other support. Time is available and managed effectively to facilitate staff development.
• Effectiveness in improving the expertise and professional understanding of teachers	• The school identifies the needs of individual teachers and encourages staff to improve their expertise and acquire further qualifications which have both professional and personal benefits.
• Effect of the staff development programme on learning and teaching	• There is clear evidence that staff development has improved the quality of the learning and teaching.

Indicator 3.6: Staff Deployment

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Effectiveness of deployment of teaching staff	• Allocated finances are used to ensure that there are sufficient teaching staff. The teachers are deployed in ways which meet the needs of the pupils, utilise their expertise, interests and specialist knowledge. There are appropriate arrangements for those teachers needing support to carry out their established or newly acquired duties and/or responsibilities.
• Effectiveness of deployment of ancillary staff	• Allocated finances are used to provide sufficient and suitably qualified ancillary staff. The roles and duties of these staff are defined appropriately and good use is made of their experience and expertise. The ancillary staff are deployed in ways which best meet the needs of the pupils and teachers. They make a significant contribution to the work of the school. There are suitable opportunities for staff training and support.

## Indicator 3.7: Links with Other Schools and Agencies

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
Range, purpose and effectiveness of contacts with:	
• other educational establishments	• The school has well developed curricular and pastoral links with other schools and relevant educational establishments. The systematic exchange of relevant information about pupils' learning needs helps to ensure that they transfer smoothly to other schools.
• the wider community	• The pupils are involved with the local and wider community, for example, in cultural, charitable, musical, recreational or environmental activities. Regular contacts with local people and institutions help foster positive attitudes and values among the pupils.
• statutory and support agencies	• The school maintains effective links with statutory organisations, including educational psychologists, medical services, social work and other agencies. The advice and help of other professionals are valued highly.

Indicator 3.8: Accommodation

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Sufficiency, quality and appropriateness	• The accommodation and facilities provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment well-suited to supporting the curricular activities of pupils, the work of staff and social and leisure activities where applicable. Accommodation is clean and is in a good state of decoration and repair. The premises are secure and safe. There is a clearly understood policy on safety and security, including evacuation procedures. Fixtures, fitting and furniture match educational needs; they are of high quality and in good condition. Access is suitable to the needs of all users.
• Use made	• All the available accommodation is used effectively and efficiently to meet the curricular, pastoral and social needs of the pupils.

Indicator 3.9: Resources

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Sufficiency, quality and appropriateness	• The acquisition of resources is managed effectively; the range and quality within the school as a whole, and within individual classes, are sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils in all areas of the curriculum. The resources are attractive and in good condition.
• Use made	• The resources are easily accessible to teachers and pupils. Teachers make regular, frequent and flexible use of resources which are fit for purpose and are appropriate to the pupils' ages and stages of development.
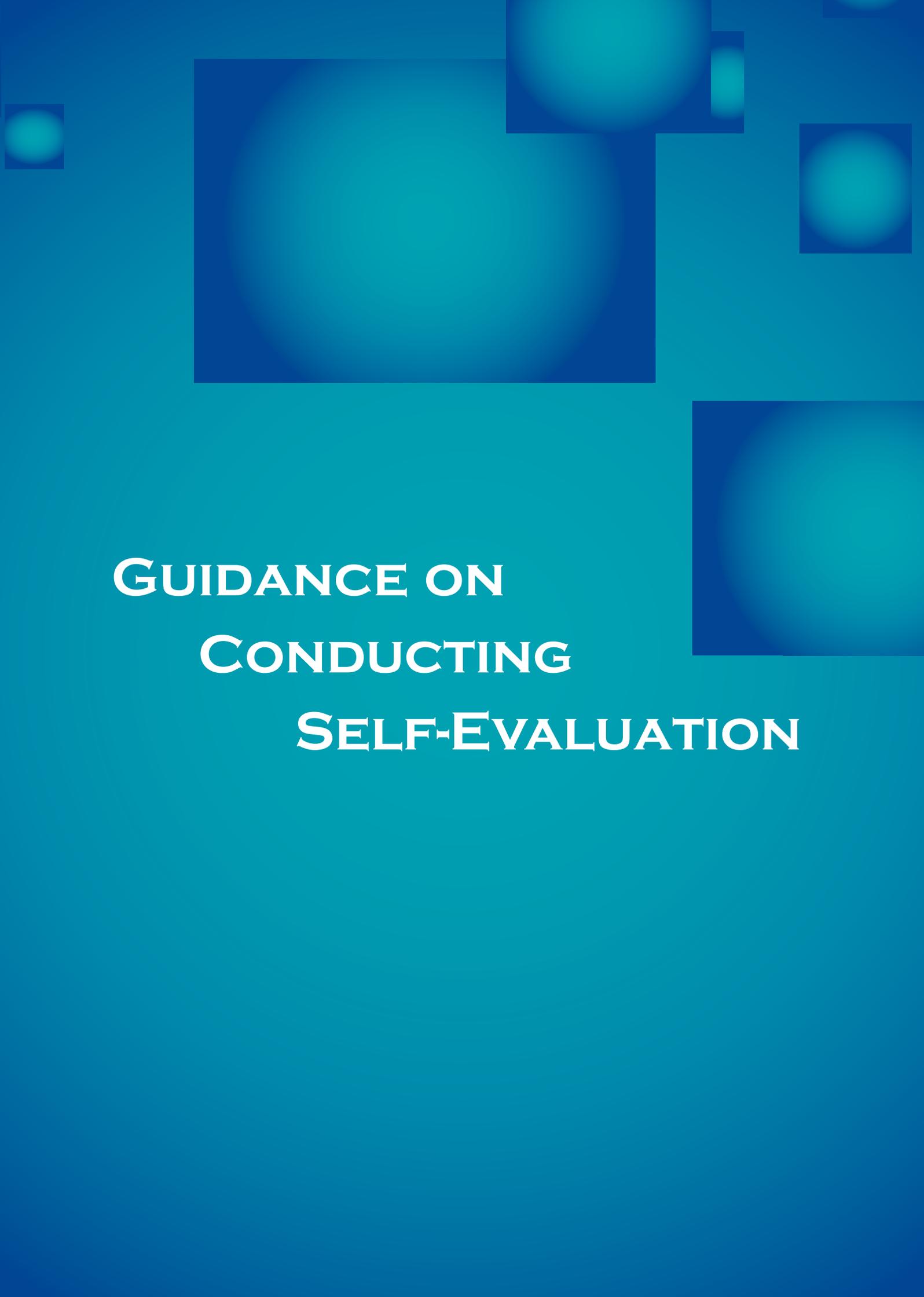
Guidance on Conducting Self-Evaluation

Using The Quality Indicators

This section of the materials provides guidance on how the quality indicators may be used to assist the school to identify its strengths and areas for improvement. The indicators offer an effective way to utilise the collective expertise of the teachers in order to plan for and to implement change for improvement.

Good use of well-selected indicators is the key to rigorous and objective self-evaluation.

The quality indicators in these guidelines can be used:

- ◗ to monitor, to evaluate and to celebrate a school's achievements;

- ◗ to evaluate, in depth, a specific aspect of school provision;

- ◗ for a full review of the whole school;

- ◗ to ensure that strategies are in place to manage change and effect improvement.

By accumulating the evidence over a number of indicators a school can look at the whole-school provision in one of the main sections, Ethos, Learning and Teaching or Management.

For example, in the section on Learning and Teaching you have eight indicators:

1. Planning for the Curriculum

2. Learning

3. Teaching

4. The Teachers' Assessment of the Pupils' Work

5. Implementation of the Curriculum

6. Attainment

7. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

8. Implementation of The Code of Practice for SEN provision

Each one of these indicators can be evaluated separately but, when all are completed, the staff should have a comprehensive and detailed overview of the Quality of Learning and Teaching in the school.

Conducting a Self-Evaluation

When considering a specific aspect of your provision, the staff need to select the quality indicator which outlines the aspect they wish to review. It is important that the staff do not undertake work on too many issues at the same time. In the first instance, until they are familiar with the process of evaluating, analysing and deciding on what action is to be taken, one area may be sufficient.

When selecting the aspect to evaluate, the staff may wish to consider the following criteria:

- previously identified strengths or areas for improvement;

- areas identified from a whole-school review;

- areas for improvement identified during an inspection;

- areas not covered so far within your regular review process;

- areas relating to national or local initiatives; or

- an area of particular interest to parents such as pastoral care.

The operational aspects of the self-evaluation process are outlined in the following diagram.
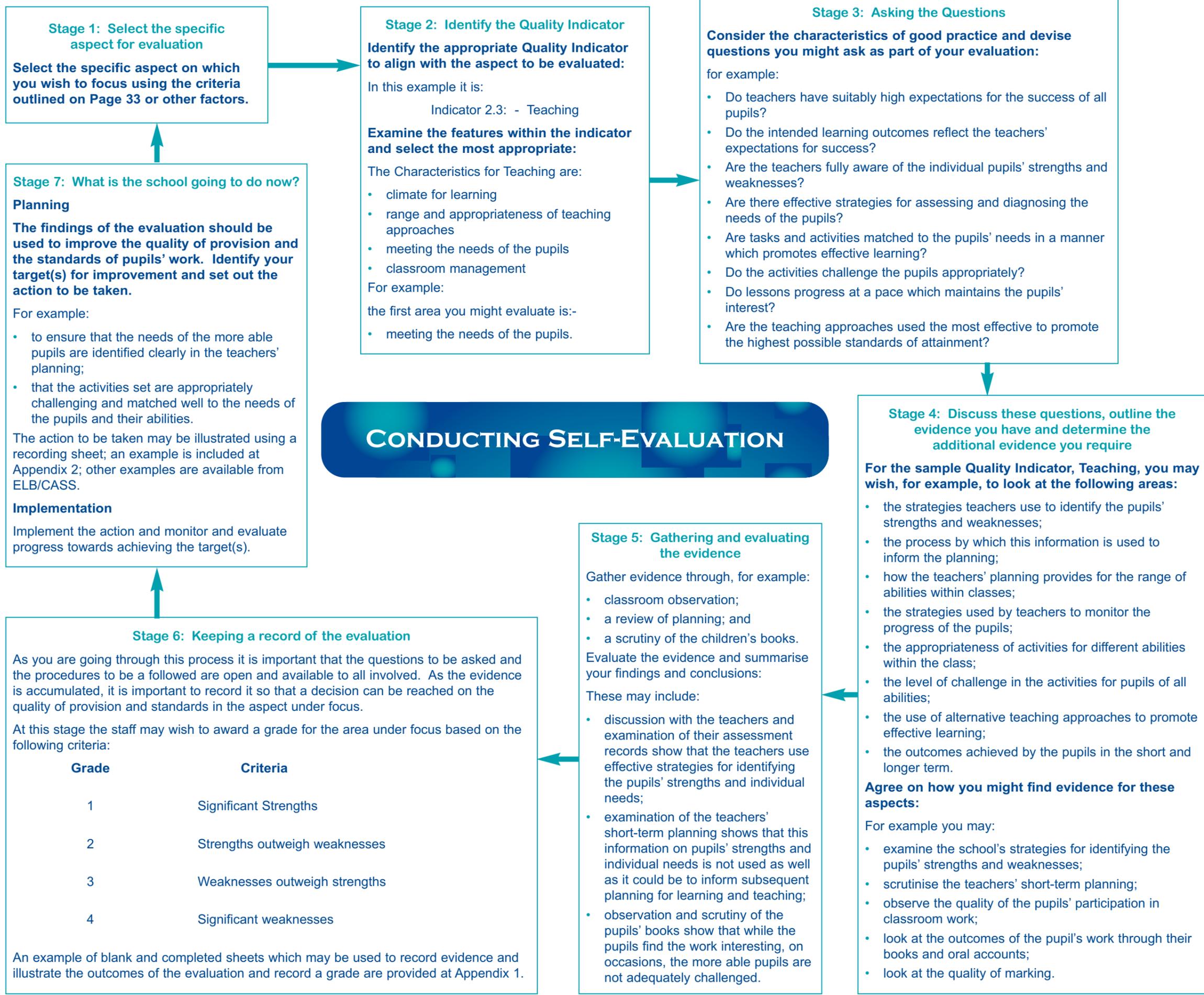
Stage 1: Select the specific aspect for evaluation

Select the specific aspect on which you wish to focus using the criteria outlined on Page 33 or other factors.

Stage 2: Identify the Quality Indicator

Identify the appropriate Quality Indicator to align with the aspect to be evaluated:

In this example it is:

Indicator 2.3: - Teaching

Examine the features within the indicator and select the most appropriate:

The Characteristics for Teaching are:

- climate for learning
- range and appropriateness of teaching approaches
- meeting the needs of the pupils
- classroom management

For example:

the first area you might evaluate is:-

- meeting the needs of the pupils.

Stage 3: Asking the Questions

Consider the characteristics of good practice and devise questions you might ask as part of your evaluation:

for example:

- Do teachers have suitably high expectations for the success of all pupils?
- Do the intended learning outcomes reflect the teachers' expectations for success?
- Are the teachers fully aware of the individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there effective strategies for assessing and diagnosing the needs of the pupils?
- Are tasks and activities matched to the pupils' needs in a manner which promotes effective learning?
- Do the activities challenge the pupils appropriately?
- Do lessons progress at a pace which maintains the pupils' interest?
- Are the teaching approaches used the most effective to promote the highest possible standards of attainment?

Stage 7: What is the school going to do now?

Planning

The findings of the evaluation should be used to improve the quality of provision and the standards of pupils' work. Identify your target(s) for improvement and set out the action to be taken.

For example:

- to ensure that the needs of the more able pupils are identified clearly in the teachers' planning;
- that the activities set are appropriately challenging and matched well to the needs of the pupils and their abilities.

The action to be taken may be illustrated using a recording sheet; an example is included at Appendix 2; other examples are available from ELB/CASS.

Implementation

Implement the action and monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving the target(s).

Conducting Self-Evaluation

Stage 4: Discuss these questions, outline the evidence you have and determine the additional evidence you require

For the sample Quality Indicator, Teaching, you may wish, for example, to look at the following areas:

- the strategies teachers use to identify the pupils' strengths and weaknesses;
- the process by which this information is used to inform the planning;
- how the teachers' planning provides for the range of abilities within classes;
- the strategies used by teachers to monitor the progress of the pupils;
- the appropriateness of activities for different abilities within the class;
- the level of challenge in the activities for pupils of all abilities;
- the use of alternative teaching approaches to promote effective learning;
- the outcomes achieved by the pupils in the short and longer term.

Agree on how you might find evidence for these aspects:

For example you may:

- examine the school's strategies for identifying the pupils' strengths and weaknesses;
- scrutinise the teachers' short-term planning;
- observe the quality of the pupils' participation in classroom work;
- look at the outcomes of the pupil's work through their books and oral accounts;
- look at the quality of marking.

Stage 5: Gathering and evaluating the evidence

Gather evidence through, for example:

- classroom observation;
- a review of planning; and
- a scrutiny of the children's books.

Evaluate the evidence and summarise your findings and conclusions:

These may include:

- discussion with the teachers and examination of their assessment records show that the teachers use effective strategies for identifying the pupils' strengths and individual needs;
- examination of the teachers' short-term planning shows that this information on pupils' strengths and individual needs is not used as well as it could be to inform subsequent planning for learning and teaching;
- observation and scrutiny of the pupils' books show that while the pupils find the work interesting, on occasions, the more able pupils are not adequately challenged.

Stage 6: Keeping a record of the evaluation

As you are going through this process it is important that the questions to be asked and the procedures to be a followed are open and available to all involved. As the evidence is accumulated, it is important to record it so that a decision can be reached on the quality of provision and standards in the aspect under focus.

At this stage the staff may wish to award a grade for the area under focus based on the following criteria:

Grade	Criteria
1	Significant Strengths
2	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
3	Weaknesses outweigh strengths
4	Significant weaknesses

An example of blank and completed sheets which may be used to record evidence and illustrate the outcomes of the evaluation and record a grade are provided at Appendix 1.

Action for Improvement

Action planning is a valuable process in taking forward development work. Both target setting and action planning are addressed more fully in the School Improvement Programme booklets, 'Target-Setting, Guidance for Primary Schools', 'Target Setting – Guidance for Post-Primary Schools' and 'School Development Planning'.

The action the school is going to take needs to be agreed by all involved, and should set out clearly the:

- improvement in learning intended;

- action to be taken to effect the improvement;

- strategies for monitoring and evaluating the implementation;

- success criteria to be used to evaluate improvement;

- staff who will be involved;

- time the process will take;

- resources required, including staff development needs.

Conclusion

Self-evaluation should effect improvements in the experiences of the pupils, the quality of learning and teaching and the standards the pupils attain. To bring about improvements:

◗ the procedures used in the process of self-evaluation should be rigorous, comprehensive and fit for purpose;

◗ all those involved should be aware of the methods to be adopted and of their part in, and contribution to, the process;

◗ the evidence obtained should be both qualitative and quantitative, and be externally verifiable;

◗ the sources of the evidence should include school and departmental documentation;

◗ the views of pupils, teachers, parents and the Board of Governors should be taken into consideration;

◗ observation of classroom practice should be an integral part of the process of self-evaluation;

◗ the outcomes of the evaluation should lead to action to achieve the intended improvements in teaching and learning.

EVALUATION RECORDING SHEET

Indicator 2.3 TEACHING

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
• Climate for learning	• The teachers create a purposeful, supportive and safe environment for learning. They motivate the pupils and engage them actively in their work. They encourage all the pupils to become involved and value their contributions and efforts. They use praise appropriately.
• Range and appropriateness of the teaching approaches	• Teaching approaches include a well-judged balance of whole-class, group and individual activities. The teachers make use of a wide range of teaching methods and are skilled at using questions to promote learning. The teachers encourage the pupils' abilities to think and do for themselves through open-ended tasks, problem-solving, investigation and personal research. The pupils' own ideas and interests are used appropriately as starting points for learning activities.
• Meeting the needs of the pupils	• The teachers' expectations are realistically high and are reflected in appropriate planned learning outcomes. The tasks and activities are matched well to the needs and abilities of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs; the activities are well-paced and challenging. The learning and teaching approaches are such that pupils are likely to achieve suitably high standards.
• Classroom management	• The teachers make the best possible use of the time available to promote learning; the teaching activities and the pupils' tasks are designed accordingly. The teachers organise classroom routines efficiently and prepare adequate and suitable resources which are readily accessible when required. They maximise the use of any classroom assistants or support staff for the benefit of the pupils.
Evidence	• Classroom observation; • a review of planning; and • a scrutiny of the children's books. **Findings and Conclusions** • discussion with the teachers and examination of their assessment records show that the teachers use effective strategies for identifying the pupils' strengths and individual needs; • examination of the teachers' short-term planning shows that this information on pupils' strengths and individual needs is not used as well as it could be to inform subsequent planning for learning and teaching; • observation and scrutiny of the pupils' books show that while the pupils find the work interesting, on occasions, the more able pupils are not adequately challenged.
Strengths	• The teachers use effective strategies for identifying the pupils' strengths and individual needs; • the pupils find the work interesting.
Areas for Improvement	• To ensure that the needs of the more able pupils are identified clearly in the teachers' planning; • that the activities set are appropriately challenging and matched well to the needs of the pupils and their abilities.

Grade 2

EVALUATION RECORDING SHEET

Indicator:-

Features	Characteristics of Good Practice
Evidence	
Strengths	
Areas for Improvement	

Grade

SCHOOL

Focus/Issue:

What is the focus?	Where are we now?	What improvement in learning do we want to achieve?	What do we need to do to effect the improvement?	How shall we monitor and evaluate the implementation?	What success criteria are to be used to evaluate improvement?	Who is involved?	How long will it take?	What resources do we need?

Appendices

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