

Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework

Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary

January 2017

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



INSPECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK 2017

The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework

The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF) is effective from January 2017 and is common to all phases inspected by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Each phase is supported by characteristics of effective practice and self-evaluation questions that are phase specific.

Purpose and rationale of the Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework

In 2003 the ETI published Together Towards Improvement (TTI) as a resource to support schools in the process of self-evaluation and to provide transparency in the inspection process by the publication of key indicators. A similar resource was developed, Improving Quality: Raising Standards (IQ:RS), to support the self-evaluation process in colleges of further education and work-based learning. Following several reviews of both publications, from January 2017, TTI and IQ:RS are being replaced by the ISEF. This update is in response to the changing educational landscape, new government strategies, technological advances, worldwide research and development in how children and young people learn, and has been made in consultation with key stakeholders.

Inspection and reflection

The ETI has developed the ISEF to provide a more holistic overview of the key aspects of education and training at all stages from early years through to further education and work-based learning. In creating a common framework for inspection and self-evaluation the ETI is extending the principle of openness and transparency so that all stakeholders are working together to promote improvement for all learners. The key areas that influence most the quality of education provided to learners are the quality of leadership and management at all levels and the provision for learning and teaching which in turn impact on the outcomes for learners. The framework is designed to provide a balance of inspection and reflection on academic achievement but also the wider skills and dispositions that learners require to live and work in the world today. It is also designed to promote an inclusive learning environment where all learners have access to high quality provision. The safety of children and young people is paramount, therefore safeguarding/child protection is a core element of the framework as is the care and welfare of learners; these are intrinsic to the holistic view of learning and should be visible in every aspect of the work of an education or training organisation.

Application of the Framework

During inspection, the ETI team will use the inspection framework to evaluate the quality of the work of the organisation. All phases in education and training which are inspected by the ETI will use the same key elements during inspection. The principal or leader of the organisation will be aware of the application of the framework during inspection through his or her role as a representative¹.

For the purposes of self-evaluation, the framework is designed to enable organisations, teams or individuals to initiate or continue the process of self-reflection leading to improvement; it should be used to provide a holistic approach to self-evaluation and not as an inflexible check-list. The underpinning phase specific characteristics of effective practice, and the self-evaluation questions, should enable the staff within an organisation to have in-depth professional discussions about specific aspects within the framework and stimulate challenge and debate about: the outcomes for learners; quality of provision; and leadership and management. The framework may also be used to support teams or individuals to reflect on their skills, knowledge and expertise to identify areas for further career-long professional development in pursuit of high quality learning and teaching. Importantly the framework may be used to ensure consistent high quality provision within organisations at important key transition points and ensure effective transitions for the learner from organisation to organisation within cluster or shared education arrangements.

As a result of the debate and challenge stimulated by the characteristics and the questions, the organisation, team or individual should be able to provide a summary of the strengths of the particular aspect under focus, identify areas that require further development and consider the actions that are necessary to continue the improvement process. It is not enough to confirm that actions have taken place but rather to assess the impact of the actions on the outcomes for learners. Therefore an important part of the evaluation process will be gathering qualitative or quantitative data as evidence of improvement that can be presented to the wider community and other stakeholders. This may include taking a wider, more inclusive and objective perspective to evaluation and necessitate consultation with learners, staff, parents, governors/management committees and other stakeholders.

Not all organisations are at the same stage of self-evaluation but the framework, characteristics of effective practice and self-evaluation questions will provide a generic model of reflection for those who are at the beginning of their evaluation journey as well as those organisations that are using well embedded procedures.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/articles/role-representative>

INSPECTION AND SELF- EVALUATION FRAMEWORK					
Overall effectiveness					
Outcomes for Learners	PL	Quality of Provision	PL	Leadership and Management	PL
Standards attained	S/AFI	Quality of curriculum including (breadth, balance and appropriateness)	S/AFI	Effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership	S/AFI
Progression		Effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences		Effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership	
Wider skills and dispositions/capabilities		Effectiveness and impact of planning, engagement/ teaching/training and assessment in promoting successful learning		Effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process.	
Governance (for schools)	High degree of confidence		Confidence		Limited confidence
Care and Welfare	Level 1. C&W impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.			Level 2. C&W does not impact positively on one or more of learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.	
Safeguarding	Level 1: Reflects the guidance		Level 2: Reflects broadly the guidance		Level 3: Unsatisfactory

Overall Effectiveness:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area (s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

Performance Levels:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important areas for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Additional Terms Used:

S Strengths
AFI Area for improvement

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS

Standards attained

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the school has raised attainment and/or maintained consistently high standards of attainment for the children;
- the children set high expectations for themselves with regard to personal and academic standards, including the quality of the presentation of their work;
- children attain the highest possible standards in language and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, including the use of effective communication, using mathematics and using ICT skills across the curriculum;
- children acquire, develop and transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum and apply their learning in a range of contexts; and
- children are able to: work independently and with others; demonstrate effective personal and social skills; think critically and creatively; and, show perseverance in their learning.

Self-evaluation questions

- Are the children actively engaged in their learning? What evidence is there that they are well-motivated, engaged and want to do well?
- What evidence is there that we have significantly improved standards of attainment or maintained them at a consistently high level?
- Are the children's core skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT as high as possible or is there room for improvement?
- What evidence is there that the children apply their skills and knowledge across the curriculum?
- How good are the children's standards compared locally and regionally?
- What evidence is there that all staff share high expectations for the children?
- What evidence is there that the children are developing intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically and morally/spiritually?

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS

Progression

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- children acquire skills and concepts progressively;
- staff ensure that children make consistent progress commensurate with their abilities and stage of development, in particular at key transitions stages;
- the children plan and evaluate their work;
- the children act on high quality feedback to improve their work;
- the school uses qualitative and quantitative data and information effectively to provide evidence that the children are making progress;
- there is robust tracking of attainment in all curriculum areas and at all stages;
- the school monitors and plans for the needs of individual children when there are patterns or extended periods of absence; and
- the children progress successfully to post-primary.

Self-evaluation questions

- Do the children learn at an appropriate pace? How do we know?
- How well developed are the children's skills in carrying out self- and peer-assessment?
- What is the evidence that children make continuous progress, year-on-year and across key stages?
- How do we identify under- and low- achievers? What interventions are provided? Do we agree and discuss what interventions are successful or not? How are the outcomes for children tracked?
- Do we know the underlying reasons why children do not attend school and/or why their behaviour is not appropriate? What actions are being taken to support the children and their families?

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS

Wider skills and dispositions/capabilities

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- children develop self-confidence and self-esteem through participating in and contributing to a range of activities both in and out of school;
- children take personal responsibility for their learning, set goals and know how to achieve them;
- children have a sense of personal and social responsibility and contribute confidently to the life and work of the school and the local community;
- children are confident to plan, review and evaluate, and know how to improve the quality of their own work;
- children are motivated, resilient and positively engaged in their learning;
- staff enable children to develop insights into society and other cultures;
- children work independently and with others, demonstrating and developing skills such as problem solving, decision making, managing information and thinking critically and creatively;
- children develop dispositions to learning appropriate to their stage of development, for example, commitment, determination, openness to new ideas, respect, curiosity, flexibility and integrity;
- children manage their own emotions, personal conduct and interactions with others; and
- children apply their learning and develop team-working and leadership roles in a range of local and global contexts and have an understanding of these roles in future life and employment contexts.

Self-evaluation questions

- How actively and meaningfully are the children involved in setting their own personal goals? What evidence is there that the children know their own strengths, know what aspects of their work need to be improved and know how to make improvements?
- How do we know that the children are determined to succeed and achieve high standards?
- How do we, as a school community, encourage and acknowledge children's achievements gained both in and out of school?
- Are children supported in a fair and equitable manner by all staff?
- How do we ensure consistency in the opportunities available to all the children?
- Do we know who our children at risk are? Does our self-evaluation process identify a particular group or individuals that may require pastoral or academic support?
- Is our induction process for children and staff effective? How do we know? Have we consulted with those involved?
- How do our working relationships with outside agencies impact on the children's outcomes and well-being?

QUALITY OF PROVISION

Quality of the curriculum

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- all of the relevant statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) are planned for and delivered in full;
- the curriculum is sufficiently broad, balanced and flexible, tailored to meet the needs of individual children, and inspires the children to learn, progress and achieve;
- the curriculum promotes social inclusivity which ensures participation in education for all children;
- the school identifies, appropriately and accurately, the special educational needs of individual children and maintains effective links with parents, other professionals and support agencies;
- children engage in learning activities that are varied, differentiated and provide effective support and challenge;
- the curriculum reflects appropriately recent and relevant research in pedagogical practice; and
- there is progressive development of employability skills, including the use of technology, creativity and innovation.

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we evaluate the quality of the curriculum? What evidence do we gather to demonstrate that it provides breadth, balance and progression?
- How relevant and creative is the curriculum in our school, for example, with regard to the use of the local environment?
- How do we ensure continuity in learning and teaching across the year groups and at key transition stages?
- How do we ensure that children apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum?
- How do we monitor the impact of change and innovation in pedagogy on the children's learning and outcomes?

QUALITY OF PROVISION

Effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the pastoral support is responsive to the needs of the individual children, addressing learning needs and local and contemporary issues which affect their lives;
- the school identifies appropriately and accurately the special educational needs of individual children and maintains effective links with parents, other professionals and support agencies;
- there are clear and realistic targets within individual education plans which are compiled through appropriate consultation, reviewed regularly and amended accordingly;
- the school has an agreed whole-school programme that addresses issues, such as, bullying, sectarianism, racism, and good relations, and is an integral part of learning and teaching and the school development plan;
- the school implements comprehensive safeguarding and child protection practices that are in line with statutory regulations and reflect DE guidance; and
- the children know how to keep themselves safe and where to seek help (preventative curriculum).

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we evaluate the practices and procedures for safeguarding and child protection on a regular basis?
- How integral is care and welfare to learning and teaching in our school? How does the quality of care and welfare contribute to the learning outcomes for children?
- How do we know that safeguarding and child protection, including online safety, messages are understood by the children?
- How effective are our policies, procedures, and interventions in ensuring that the learning needs of every child in our school are identified and met as early as possible?
- How do we take collective responsibility for the well-being and progress of children with additional learning needs?
- How do we know our children's individual education plans are effective and how do we involve them and their parents in setting and evaluating targets?

QUALITY OF PROVISION

Effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting successful learning

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the planning reflects the statutory requirements of the NIC;
- the long-term planning ensures that the learning experiences are broad and balanced and promote continuity for each child across all areas of learning;
- the medium-term planning identifies: the intended learning outcomes; is differentiated to meet the children’s individual learning needs; is informed by both children’s and teachers’ evaluation of learning; and, is connected across areas of learning;
- the learning is challenging, encourages commitment, builds confidence, creates high expectations and develops deep conceptual learning;
- teachers build upon the children’s interests, needs and prior learning;
- teachers use an appropriate range of learning and teaching strategies which motivates children, engages them in their work (both collaboratively and independently) uses errors as learning opportunities and encourages creativity and risk taking;
- teachers use a range of learning strategies that: provide open-ended activities and challenges; focus on explicit thinking; use effective teacher questioning techniques; encourage children’s questioning; enable collaborative learning; promote independent learning; and, provide deliberate and explicit connections across learning experiences;
- teachers continually monitor the children’s understanding and provide high quality feedback to ensure the children have an accurate understanding of their progress and what they need to do to improve; and
- the school’s assessment policy reflects statutory requirements.

Self-evaluation questions

- How does our planning meet the needs of all the children?
- How effective is our monitoring and evaluation of planning at all levels?
- How are the children involved in the planning process?
- How do we modify our teaching strategies in response to our evaluation of the children’s learning?
- Do we have a shared understanding of highly effective learning and teaching?
- How effective are we in enabling children to engage in peer- and self-assessment to improve their learning? How do we know it makes a difference?
- How do we know our strategies for providing feedback are having an impact on the children’s learning?
- How do we analyse and use assessment data to identify the learning needs of individual children?
- How do we inform parents in a meaningful way about their children’s progress?
- How do we inform children about their own progress?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- senior leaders have a shared and coherent, regularly reviewed vision which is based on the school's values and aims, is child-centred and enables children to achieve high standards;
- senior leaders consult regularly with the school community on key policies and procedures that affect the life and work of the school;
- leadership development is informed by action research, pedagogical innovation and a focus on continuous improvement;
- qualitative and quantitative data is used to monitor the children's progress in learning and ensure monitoring, evaluation and systematic accountability are well-embedded processes;
- arrangements for safeguarding are effective, reviewed regularly and reflect statutory requirements and DE guidance;
- senior leaders focus on building staff expertise and capacity through career-long professional learning which is aligned to whole-school priorities for improvement;
- senior leaders ensure that the resources, including accommodation, are well-organised, sufficient, accessible, up-to-date and managed in a sustainable way;
- the use of resources is monitored to evaluate the impact on the outcomes for the children;
- senior leaders promote the key values of equality of opportunity and diversity; and
- there is effective financial stewardship to ensure the finances are well-managed and used appropriately for long-, medium- and short-term priorities.

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we know that the entire school community is committed to the school vision, values and aims?
- In what ways do we make our school vision a reality?
- How do we manage change in our school?
- How do we know improvement in learning and teaching is at the core of our leadership priorities?
- What evidence is there that our practices are based on current research and sound pedagogical innovation?
- How do we ensure that safeguarding and child protection is paramount in our school? What evidence do we have to support this?
- What approaches do we use to teacher professional learning to ensure that every child is taught by highly effective teachers every day? (DE Learning Leaders)
- How do we collaborate effectively to support and embed career-long professional learning for our staff that is relevant and future focused?
- Do our systems and procedures ensure effective use of resources and do we seek innovative solutions to funding constraints?
- How do we, as senior leaders, know that the quality of learning and teaching throughout the school is of a consistently high standard?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- middle leaders are role models of learning and teaching in their area of responsibility;
- middle leaders work collegially and pastorally with other co-ordinators to provide whole-school and cross-curricular approaches to the improvement process;
- action plans for improvement are informed by rigorous and regular self-evaluation and align well with the priorities of the school development plan and targets are: specific; measurable; attainable; relevant; time-bound; evaluated and reviewed;
- qualitative and quantitative data is analysed systematically and used to identify whole-school improvement priorities and track progress at whole-school, class and individual children's level, intervening when necessary;
- there are rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of staff within the area of responsibility;
- middle leaders have knowledge of other areas of curriculum development and outcomes that may be relevant to their area of responsibility;
- middle leaders identify and share effective practice throughout the school;
- middle leaders ensure their knowledge and skills of pedagogical development in their area of responsibility are current, accurate and research-based; and
- middle leaders inform the governors and senior leadership of the quality of learning and teaching and children's standards in their specific area/s.

Self-evaluation questions

- How helpful is the constructive feedback I receive from senior leadership, governors and peers about my role as a co-ordinator, and how do I use this feedback to improve my practice?
- How do I know that I have high enough expectations for the children's achievements?
- What have I done to improve my knowledge and skills in my area of responsibility and in leadership?
- How do I know teachers and learning assistants use a wide range of active learning and teaching strategies to motivate and enthuse the children and improve standards?
- How do I recognise highly effective practice in learning and teaching? How is it shared and disseminated throughout the school?
- How do I consult with and involve the staff, children and parents in developing learning and teaching within my area of responsibility?
- What procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the progress made by each child in my area of responsibility and how does this inform future actions?
- How do I hold myself and colleagues accountable for children's outcomes? If outcomes are not acceptable what do I do about it?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process

Effective practice

Effective practice in promoting improvement is demonstrated when:

- the school development plan meets DE’s statutory requirements;
- a culture of self-evaluation is well-established and is underpinned by a focus on continuous improvement;
- the development planning process is informed by a rigorous analysis of a range of qualitative and quantitative data, and an evaluative summary of progress on previous priorities against agreed targets;
- the school development plan is devised in consultation with, and shared with, children, parents, staff and governors; and
- the identified priorities and associated action plans effect improvement in the children’s learning experiences and their attainment in a clear and measureable way and the school can demonstrate relevant evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we focus self-evaluation on the effectiveness of teaching and the outcomes for children?
- How do we know that the actions we are taking forward are achieving improved outcomes for children? What evidence do we have of improvement?
- How does self-evaluation involve key members of the school community including governors, parents, children and relevant outside agencies? How do we encourage commitment to the improvement process from the school community?
- How do we review regularly progress in the identified areas for improvement, using an appropriate balance of qualitative and quantitative data to provide relevant and accurate information and evidence?
- How do we know the impact of additional resources and staff development on the outcomes for the children?

GOVERNANCE

Governance

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- governors communicate widely the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and ensure strong links between the school and its wider community;
- governors are well informed, through communication with senior and middle leaders and their own analysis of first-hand evidence, about the standards attained by the children and the effectiveness of the provision;
- governors support and challenge appropriately the school's priorities for improvement;
- governors access and implement training to assist governors in fulfilling their roles and statutory duties e.g. recruitment and child protection /safeguarding²;
- the varied skills and expertise of the governors are harnessed to good effect to ensure resources are managed efficiently and that improvement work is monitored systematically;
- governors carry out self-evaluation of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures³;
- governors access available external support and facilitate clustering with other schools for children, staff and governors; and
- the school's financial and human resources are deployed equitably and in the interest of all the children.

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we contribute to a shared strategic vision for school improvement?
- How do we agree and challenge the priorities in the school development plan?
- How do we monitor effectively the school's progress in addressing the priorities for improvement in the school development plan?
- How do we know the standards attained by all our children, including those with additional learning needs, are good enough and compare well with children in similar schools?
- How do we ensure that we meet our statutory obligations and compliance matters?
- How do we monitor the curriculum provision to ensure it meets well the needs of all the children?
- How do we, as governors, ensure our statutory obligations with regard to safeguarding and child protection are being fulfilled?
- How do we ensure that we use efficiently all available personnel, financial and physical resources in the best interests of all the children?

² Education Authority Northern Ireland Governor Training Programme.

³ Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) School Governors' Handbook Safeguarding and Child Protection.

CARE AND WELFARE

Care and welfare

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- there is a safe, secure and well-organised learning environment for all members of the school community;
- relationships for learning are characterised by mutual respect, openness and trust;
- all children are supported effectively to overcome barriers to learning and to realise their potential;
- there are high levels of attendance, punctuality and engagement throughout the school, which are monitored so that issues can be identified and addressed promptly;
- good behaviour is promoted positively and consistently;
- the effectiveness of the personal development and preventative education curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is flexible and responsive to the needs of the children;
- the children are active contributors to the life and work of the school and to the local and global community;
- the school works effectively with appropriate outside agencies to support the care and welfare of the children; and
- relationships with other schools, and the wider community, support the holistic development of the children.

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we know that we provide a safe and secure environment for all members of the school community?
- How do we ensure that relationships are mutually respectful, open and trusting?
- How do we ensure that all children are receiving the support needed to overcome potential barriers to learning?
- How do we ensure that the personal development and preventative education curriculum is effective, flexible and responsive to the needs of the children?
- How do we ensure that behaviour for learning is positively and consistently promoted?
- How do we ensure that the children are active contributors to the life and work of the school and the local and global community?
- How do we ensure that relationships with other schools and the wider community support the holistic development of the children?
- How do we effectively address concerns raised by members of the school and wider community?

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the children feel safe, secure and free from emotional and physical harm and they understand that their concerns will be listened to sympathetically and appropriate action taken;
- the school has and implements fully an appropriate safeguarding policy which reflects the guidance of DE;
- the children, parents/carers and all relevant parties are informed of policies and procedures relating to the protection of children at risk;
- the staff monitor and assess the extent to which children know how to keep themselves safe (including online) and how to seek help;
- the school carries out self-evaluation of its own child protection/safeguarding policy and practice, at least annually, using the ETI safeguarding proforma for primary;
- the school reviews regularly the policies, procedures and reporting arrangements, including those relating to child protection/safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour management;
- the school works effectively with a range of external agencies to support safeguarding and child protection practices; and
- staff and governors receive regularly training including safeguarding and child protection.

Self-evaluation questions

- Do we review rigorously, on an annual basis, the policies and practices for child protection and safeguarding using the ETI safeguarding proforma?
- How do we ensure that all requirements regarding child protection and safeguarding are in place and are communicated effectively to the school community?
- How do we know that appropriate actions resulting from risk assessments are being implemented?
- Are appropriate records being kept which reflect the guidance from appropriate Departments, of the vetting and training of staff and volunteers?
- How do we evaluate the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding?
- How do we ensure that there is an active and effective safeguarding team which is accountable to governors?
- How do we engage effectively with parents/carers when they raise a concern?
- How well do we co-operate with outside agencies?

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