

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Part 1: Linking analysis to planning

Schools have always understood the importance of regular, good quality self-evaluation. The Ofsted Inspection Framework has also consistently placed the highest importance on rigorous self-analysis of the school's performance.

Inspectors should focus on how effectively leaders and managers at all levels enable pupils to overcome specific barriers to learning and promote improvements for all pupils and groups of pupils in the context of the individual school. These are likely to include...

... accurate monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance with a secure understanding of the individual skills and attributes of pupils and staff, and taking account of the views of parents, carers and other stakeholders.¹

Schools are encouraged to make judgements about their own effectiveness, using the Ofsted *Evaluation Schedule* as a guide to standards. Although the Ofsted self-evaluation form (SEF) is no longer a formal requirement, schools are still expected to be able to demonstrate that they have a structured approach to self-evaluation and a clear strategy for identifying and addressing its outcomes as priorities for improvement.

Most schools organise the results of their evaluations as a single document, sometimes called the SEF, but in this CD it is referred to as the self-evaluation summary, as it is by Ofsted. Its structure is the school's own choice, but many choose to follow the Ofsted evaluation headings:

- Achievement of pupils at the school
- The quality of teaching
- Behaviour and safety of pupils
- The quality of leadership and management of the school
- Overall effectiveness.

¹ The draft evaluation schedule for the inspection of maintained schools and academies September 2011, No.110127

Rosemary Lane Primary School: Self-evaluation and planning

Extract from self-evaluation summary – Achievement of pupils:

RAISEonline² and the school's own data indicate that insufficient pupils who were assessed at Level 2C at the end of Year 2 attained a Level 4B in English at the end of Year 6. School-based analysis links this to past levels of low teacher expectation in Years 3 and 4.

Extract from a school strategic plan – Achievement of pupils:

- (1) To raise the percentage of pupils converting from Level 2C to Level 4B in English from 50% to 70%.
- (2) To track and boost the performance where necessary of pupils in the current Years 3 and 4 whose current attainment does not indicate a conversion from Level 2C to Level 4B in English by the end of Year 6.

Illustration 1: How a weakness identified through self-evaluation becomes a target for improvement

The principal areas identified for improvement through self-evaluation must be transferred automatically into the school's strategic improvement plan. They cannot be tackled haphazardly but must form part of a single strategy for improvement. This CD is designed to assist in that process.

Historically, schools have had a range of developmental and improvement plans. Many were very comprehensive but few linked together to form a coherent whole. The introduction of the SEF made schools rethink the ways in which development plans were written and updated, as well as their timescales and overall purpose. Many plans were written to cover a set period such as a year or three years; some were revised annually when the governing body finalised the budget; others were tied more closely to the academic year or to an annual revision of the SEF.

These cycles are no longer appropriate because effective self-evaluation is a continuous process of analysis, reflection and identification of what has been improved, and can be taken out of the plan, and what still remains to be done and must stay in.

The answer is a strategic plan: a slim, manageable document that incorporates all the school's plans for improvement, organised in a concise format so that governors and senior staff can concentrate on the main developmental issues arising from their use of analysis and self-evaluation.

² Reporting Assessment Information for Self-Evaluation online

The strategic plan has to be dynamic and flexible so that schools can respond to new initiatives, needs and successes. It should not be tied to any artificial planning cycle and should be the reference point for any major discussion by the governing body or senior staff about school improvement. Its progress should form the main part of the headteacher's termly report to governors. Detailed action plans should not be included; it should be precise and focused on the 'big picture'.

The self-evaluation process encourages evidence-based judgements on each aspect of the school's provision. Any aspect judged 'inadequate' must be singled out for extremely urgent attention. The evaluation process will also identify other aspects of the school's provision as targets for improvement, especially if they have been judged as 'satisfactory' rather than 'good'. The strategic plan will show how the improvement will be achieved and evaluated.

Chapter 4 explains how the maintenance of current good or better provision, not particularly identified through self-evaluation as requiring urgent improvement, is developed through subject or phase action plans.