

PRE-SCHOOLS

INSPECTION GUIDANCE



SEPTEMBER 2017

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners

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1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of inspection is to promote the highest possible standards of learning, teaching and achievement throughout the education, training and youth sectors.

Our vision, our mission, is:

Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners.

Further information of the work of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) including the Charter for Inspection, ETI principles, values and standards and customer service is available on the ETI website. (www.etini.gov.uk)

This handbook relates to inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in pre-school centres (in Nursery schools, Private and Voluntary Pre-school Playgroups, Nursery Classes and Nursery Units in Primary schools) in Northern Ireland. It sets out the processes before, during and after the inspection and lays out clearly the kinds of evidence and activities which help inspectors make their evaluations, on which they report.

This guidance document seeks to improve the transparency of the inspection process, promote consistency and dispel the myths around inspection. While promoting consistency, it is important for centres to be aware that this handbook is not a rigid set of rules; the ETI will carry out inspections with flexibility to respond to the individual context and circumstances of each centre.

2. WHAT TYPES OF INSPECTION ARE USED IN PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES?

In order to take account of the different stages of development of pre-school centres, different types of inspection will be used. The ETI may also make an **Unannounced Inspection** for a specific purpose.

District visit

All new, or recently re-opened, pre-school centres will receive a district visit from the district inspector. During this visit, the centre's work is evaluated and the district inspector spends time with the staff, providing feedback on the current quality of provision, strengths and key areas for improvement in order to provide a baseline for further inspection. Feedback may also be provided to the EYS and a representative of the management group. District visits may also be made at any time with or without advance notice.

Inspection

Scheduled inspections are carried out in a cycle over a number of years. Most pre-school inspections are completed in one day. A published report is produced after every inspection. The report is made available to parents and the wider community through the ETI web-site www.etini.gov.uk

Interim Follow-up Visit

Where a centre has been evaluated as requiring important, urgent or significant improvement, a follow-up inspection will be scheduled. An interim visit is made before the follow-up inspection to assess the extent to which progress is being made in addressing the areas for improvement. An interim visit does not result in a re-evaluation.

Follow-up Inspection

A follow-up inspection is conducted in centres which are evaluated as having important areas for improvement or needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement. For centres evaluated as needing to address important areas for improvement, this will take place within 12 to 18 months; for those centres evaluated as needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement the follow-up will take place within a two year time-frame.

Typically, evidence is gathered over one day, there is an oral report back at the end of the inspection and a written report is published. Evidence is gathered mainly on the areas for improvement identified in the initial inspection and the centre is provided with a re-evaluation

Safeguarding Follow-up

When safeguarding has been evaluated as unsatisfactory a follow-up visit will be carried out within six weeks of the initial inspection to ensure that issues identified have been addressed.

3. WHO WILL CARRY OUT A PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION?

The inspection will normally be carried out by at least one inspector from the Education and Training Inspectorate and at least one other team member (as proportionate to the size of the centre).

The team member will either be another inspector or an associate assessor.

4. HOW DOES A CENTRE PREPARE FOR AN INSPECTION?

Read the guidance information provided. All relevant documents relating to inspection activity are contained in or linked to this handbook and where linked can be accessed online at www.etini.gov.uk

The aim is to assist leaders and staff to plan ahead for inspection, you may wish, to refer to the documents to check what information is held within the centre. **There is no requirement for staff to prepare materials specifically for an inspection other than the safeguarding proforma and the statistical information form (Appendix 2).**

Ensure that the management group, early years specialist (EYS) – if there is one, staff and parents are aware of the date of inspection and share the relevant guidance available.

During an inspection, the leader should make available to the reporting inspector the written materials that are already to hand (see section 8) and may wish to give some information verbally.

The EYS must ensure that all records of their visits, support provided and any subsequent action plans are made available to the inspection team on the day of the inspection.

If you do not have access to the internet, copies of the documents are available from the address below.

Inspection Services Team
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor
County Down
BT19 7PR

Phone: 028 9127 9726

Fax: 028 9127 9691

E-mail: eti@education-ni.gov.uk

5. WHAT WILL THE INSPECTORS DO DURING AN INSPECTION?

The inspection team will need to see a range of the activities provided for pre-school children. It is particularly useful if a timetable, or outline of the activities, is made available. The inspection team will not expect to see any particular methods or types of activities. The educational provision as a whole should be in line with all statutory requirements and with guidance provided by CCEA and DE, as outlined in the document, Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education.

The inspection team will record observations, scrutinise all relevant documentation and have discussions with key staff and management. The information gathered will be used as the basis for the evaluations as reported orally and in the written report after the inspection. The inspection team will want to see the pre-school centre working as normally as possible. It is not necessary to alter the educational programme for the inspection, or to have extra adults present, including any students or trainees.

The inspection team will give most emphasis to the quality of the children's development and learning and how well these are promoted in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum set out in the Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education and in line with the Early Years Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF). The inspectors will gather first hand evidence to make evaluations on the quality of:

- Outcomes for learners
- The quality of provision
- Leadership and
- management
- Safeguarding

When appropriate, the inspection team may talk to the children about what they are doing as they play both indoors and outdoors; a member of the team may be present during story-time, music-making, or any other activities organised by the staff. The inspection team will seek a convenient time at the end of the session to talk to the staff about aspects of their work; they will take care not to interrupt them unduly while they are involved with the children.

Evidence of development planning and any self-evaluation carried out by the staff (and the EYS) will be considered carefully as part of the inspection. The inspection team will give due recognition where the staff have themselves identified accurately aspects of their provision which need to be improved or developed, and have already made a start to addressing the issues. The staff's approach to reflecting on their work and bringing about improvement will form part of the inspection evidence.

Inspection of care and welfare and safeguarding

ETI's role is also to inspect, validate, evaluate and report, based on the first-hand evidence available during inspection on the care, welfare and safeguarding and reports that the school is monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and welfare at least annually. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI proforma.

Centres should note that the signed and dated safeguarding pro forma will be held by ETI as record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection. **Please note that there are two versions of the proforma – one for nursery schools and a different one for private and voluntary pre-schools centres.**

Prior to the inspection, the centre will be asked to complete and sign and date the safeguarding pro forma and give it to the RI at the start of the inspection. Any issues arising with regard to the safeguarding of the pupils will be followed up by the inspection team.

Also prior to the inspection, parents and staff of the school will be given the opportunity to complete an online questionnaire. A summary of the responses to the parental and staff questionnaires, including any written comments, will be reported orally to the principal and representatives from the governors/members of the management group by the RI during the inspection.

6. The following tables show the procedures used during inspection for a nursery school and a private or voluntary pre-school playgroup¹.

Notification for an inspection

- Pre-school centres receive two weeks' notice of the inspection.
- The centre will receive an inspection notification letter providing guidance on how parents / carers and staff can complete an online questionnaire. See section 7 on questionnaires.
- Notification letters are not issued for district visits, interim follow-up inspection and safeguarding follow-up inspections.
- A description of the inspection process for leaders/principals, staff and governors/members of the management group is available online at <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/inspection-pre-school-education-guidance-inspection-process> and is linked within the notification letter.
- Information providing a summary of the inspection process for parents / carers, is sent out with the notification letter and is available online at <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/information-parents-carers-and-guardians-pre-school>
- Centres will also receive an appropriate version of the Safeguarding Proforma (*) and the ETI Complaints Procedure – links are provided in the appendix.

(*) For a nursery unit, or reception class in a primary school, the safeguarding proforma is completed for the Primary school as a whole.

Before the inspection

- The reporting inspector (RI) makes contact with the leader by phone and confirms the inspection arrangements and answers any questions. The leader is asked to confirm if a base room can be made available within the premises for the inspection team to work.
- The leader or principal should inform the relevant officer from the CCMS, the EA or HSCT or the EYS.
- No written information is requested from the leader in advance of the inspection.
- Information required at the start of the inspection is listed in **section 8**.
- The leader should complete IN FULL the statistical data in **Appendix 2** to provide to the RI at the start of the inspection.

¹ Nursery or reception classes and nursery units in primary schools are inspected under the arrangements for primary inspections

- The leader is reminded to refer to the relevant guidance, including the **Pre-school inspection and self-evaluation framework** (ISEF) which is attached at **Appendix 3**.
- The leader, in collaboration with the management group/board of governors, is asked to complete the relevant safeguarding pro-forma (please note that there are two versions – one for nursery schools and one for private and voluntary playgroups) and give it to the reporting inspector on the day of the inspection.
- The centre is requested to provide, at the time of the inspection, details of any self-evaluation carried out, including, action plans and evidence of improvement.
- The parents and staff are requested to complete the online questionnaire prior to the inspection.

The RI should be made aware of any issue or event which you think may affect the centre or any of the staff before, or at any time during, the inspection.

During the inspection

- The inspection team will arrive at the centre at a time arranged, usually 15-20 minutes before the start of the session, in order to meet the staff, make any necessary arrangements, check that documents are available and set up in the base room if available.
- All parents will have had the opportunity to make their views known through the inspection questionnaires; there are generally no meetings with parents however, exceptional circumstances may be considered.
- The management group/board of governors will have the opportunity to contribute to the inspection process through a short meeting with the RI at an agreed time during the inspection (*).
- The inspection team will observe all aspects of the centre's planned programme. The inspection team may talk with the children about what they are doing as they play, but will generally avoid interrupting the staff in their work during the sessions.
- The inspection team will read the documentation provided, including the centre's evidence of self-evaluation, and take note of the responses to the questionnaires.
- At a convenient time after the children have gone home, the inspection team will meet with key members of staff to discuss safeguarding / care and welfare and to gather further information to support and complete the inspection evidence base. The inspection team may discuss emerging findings and will provide feedback on the confidential questionnaires.

- In a voluntary or private pre-school centre, the inspection team will speak to the EYS and in both cases to the chair or representative of the management group/board of governors (*) at an arranged time prior to the report-back.

(*) In a nursery unit / reception group inspected at the same time as the primary school, there are separate arrangements for meeting with the board of governors of the school.

Report back

- Following the inspection the inspection team will meet to review the evidence and agree the inspection findings. When carrying out an inspection, inspectors make reference to the indicators in the pre-school ISEF.
- At an agreed time the inspection team provide an oral report back to the leadership and management/governors. The leader/principal should arrange for a member of the employing authority to be present. In a nursery unit the timings may vary and will be agreed with the principal and reporting inspector for the primary school.
- The RI outlines the inspection findings orally and a member of staff should take notes as there is no written feedback left at this time.
- In a nursery unit, the emerging findings will be reported in agreement with the primary RI and principal.
- The RI will invite comment and answer any questions on the findings to provide further clarification if required.
- The RI will invite comment on the conduct of the inspection by the inspection team.
- The RI will draw attention to the opportunity to complete an independent questionnaire on the inspection process

After the inspection

- The report and its findings are drafted, edited, quality assured within ETI and finalised for issue.
- The leader/principal will receive a pre-publication copy of the report by email, to check for accuracy of the facts contained. The report should then be returned to the Inspection Services Team with the response pro-forma within the set timeframe. The report is then published on the website. Where no response is received from the leader/principal within the time specified by the Inspection Services Team, it will be assumed that there are no factual errors and the report will proceed to publication on ETI website.
- The employing authority (EA/CCMS) or the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) (as appropriate) will receive the report by e-mail.
- After the report is published, a copy is available on the ETI website: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/type/inspectionreports/organisational/pre-school-15>
- Additional copies of reports are available through the ETI website.
- The leader / principal receives a password in order for the leader and the staff to complete an Evaluation of Inspection pro-forma from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The nature of the report

- The report includes:
 - the context of the centre;
 - views of parents and staff;
 - statistical information;
 - evaluation of the outcomes for the children;
 - evaluation of the quality of the provision, including care and welfare;
 - evaluation of the quality of leadership and management; including evaluation of the centre's self-evaluation and the development plan;
 - evaluation of the arrangements for safeguarding children;
 - if identified, any areas for improvement; and
 - a conclusion that indicates the appropriate follow-up action to be taken.
- Where the nursery unit is inspected, the report is integrated within the primary school report and the pre-publication arrangements for the primary school report apply.

Response to reports after all types of inspection

Within 10 days of receiving the final report the management group/board of governors is asked to:

- acknowledge receipt of the report; and
- confirm that parents and carers have been notified that the report is available on the ET website.

Within 30 days of receiving the final report, as outlined at the oral report back, the management group/board of governors is asked to:

- if required, prepare an action plan addressing any identified areas for improvement. This action plan will be sent to the district inspector and used as the basis for discussions during the monitoring visit; and
- the reporting inspector will confirm whether or not the planned actions are appropriate to the improvements needed.

Follow-up action after the inspection

- There are 4 overall conclusions that have individual follow up processes:
 - OEC1: The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
 - OEC2: The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
 - OEC3: The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
 - OEC4: The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
- The district inspector (DI) will visit to monitor the progress being made by the centre (including a nursery unit if necessary) in implementing any post-inspection action plan.
- If necessary, a follow-up inspection takes place within the period of time outlined at the report-back and in the letter from the Department of Education if the centre is less than good. A short report is issued to the centre and to those who received the original report. A copy is made available through the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

- Where insufficient progress is made in addressing the areas for improvement, and after further time is allowed for action, a second follow-up inspection is carried out and the report is published.
- In the case reception provision is evaluated as less than good, it will be followed-up and reported on during the primary school follow-up inspection, if there is one.
- Alternatively, the ETI will make separate arrangements to evaluate the quality of the improvements made within the reception provision

Post Inspection Action Plans

When the overall conclusion is that the centre has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners, the ETI will monitor how the centre sustains improvement through district visits. There is no requirement to draw up internal action plans.

When the overall conclusion is that the school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners, following an inspection, the Department of Education (DE) will ask the centre to draw up an internal action plan which will be monitored through district visits.

When the overall conclusion is that the centre needs to address an important area or areas urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners, following an inspection, DE writes to the centre requesting an action plan.

DE forwards the action plan to the ETI for comment. There may be some contact with the centre at this point. For example, an optional district visit may be conducted if clarification of the action plan is required. The action plan forms the basis for the follow-up inspection process.

7. Questionnaires used as part of the inspection

The ETI provides an opportunity for parents/carers and staff to complete a confidential online questionnaire prior to the inspection. You will receive a copy of the letters for distribution to parents and staff which contain the relevant detail to enable them to register and complete the online questionnaire specific to your school.

The RI will report the outcomes of the questionnaire returns to the leader/principal and to a representative of the governors/management group; the RI will discuss any matters that arise in the returns. Sample parent and staff questionnaires can be accessed on the ETI website.

If you have any queries about the distribution of parental or questionnaires please contact IST.

8. Information required during the inspection

The information that should be made available at the start of an inspection includes:

- The signed and dated relevant safeguarding proforma (Appendix 1 for online links)
- The completed statistical information listed in Appendix 2

GENERAL INFORMATION

- A timetable of daily and/or weekly activities.
- Information on staff, children and the organisation of sessions as requested by Inspection Services Branch at the beginning of the school year.
- Names of any trainees and/or students and brief details of their placements.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- The policy and provision made for children with special educational needs.
- Details of any children with special educational needs, including records, individual plans and/or statements.
- Details of any specific support arrangements for children with special educational needs (eg from a therapist or support staff).
- Numbers of children, if any, on a child protection register (but not their names or other details).

PLANNING, ASSESSMENT AND POLICIES

- Written planning for the educational programme, including long- and short-term plans and evaluations carried out.
- Details of the procedures for assessing the children's progress.
- The records maintained for each child.
- The policies and procedures for child protection, including vetting arrangements, the complaints and reporting procedures, and the information given to parents.
- The policy on behaviour management.
- Other relevant written policies (e.g. on staff training and development, settling-in, health and safety).
- Details of recent educational visits including the planning and risk assessments carried out.

LINKS WITH OTHERS

- Information provided for parents and the methods used to involve parents in their children's pre-school education.
- Details of links with the primary schools to which the children transfer and arrangements for exchanging information.
- Details of any links and shared education with other pre-school centres, relevant agencies (e.g. health or social services) and the wider community.

STAFF AND CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

- Details of relevant training/development attended by each staff member within the past 3 years.
- Details of any significant deficiencies in accommodation and/or resources.
- The development plans for the pre-school centre: a nursery school/class should make available the School Development Plan.
- Details of any self-evaluation carried out, including, if available, action plans and evidence of improvement.
- Brief details of any accreditation gained.

OTHER INFORMATION

- All general and attendance registers should be available.
- Health and Social Care Registration Certificate (voluntary sector)
- Nursery schools/classes/reception groups should provide a copy of the school prospectus.
- Extended service or additional funding provision.
- Voluntary/private pre-school centres should have available details of the support provided by the qualified teacher or early years specialist, including action plans.
- Voluntary/private pre-school centres should have available a copy of the latest report from the relevant Health and Social Care Trust and details of any action taken by the staff.

The following useful documents are available on the ETI website:

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/type/supportmaterial/organisational/pre-school-15>

- Safeguarding Proforma –please note that there are **two different editions**, one for use in Schools – including Nursery Schools - and one for use in Private and Voluntary Pre-school Playgroups. Nursery Units are included in the return for the primary schools.

Private and Voluntary Pre-school Playgroups

<https://tinyurl.com/Safeguarding-Playgroups>

Nursery Schools

<http://tinyurl.com/Safeguarding-Proforma>

- The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Pre-School
<http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Pre-School>
- The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation - Questions for Nursery School Governors
<https://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Governance>
- The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation - Questions for Members of Pre-school Playgroup Management Groups
<https://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Pre-Sch-Management>
- Sample of the letter notifying centres of an inspection
<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/sample-notification-letter-pre-schoolnursery-school-inspection>
- Complaints procedure
<https://www.etini.gov.uk/content/complaints-procedure>
- Information for parents, carers and guardians - pre-school
<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/information-parents-carers-and-guardians-pre-school>
- Online link to this Inspection Guidance handbook
<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/inspection-pre-school-education-guidance-inspection-process>

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON _____ DATE _____

1. Details of children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time			
Attending part-time			
Under 3 years of age*			
Funded by Department of Education			
With statement of special educational needs			
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs			
At CoP stages 3 or 4**			
At CoP stages 1 or 2**			
With English as an additional language			
Who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school			
Number of children who transferred from a Sure Start 2 year old programme			
Number of children who participated in other Sure Start services			

* On 1 July past

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	
Number of days open in previous school year	

1. Duration of sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm

2. Details of staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders		
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification		
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification		
New appointments within the previous 12 months		
Number of staff holding Level 5 (Private and voluntary playgroups only)		
Leader has, or is completing, Level 5 (Private and voluntary playgroups only)	YES	NO

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

*** Total placements since September of current year

Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework

Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Pre-School

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 and sectors 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 across all sectors and 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.

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.

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			Level 2. C&W does not impact positively on one or more of learning, teaching and outcomes	
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:

- learning outcomes for the children are of a high standard,
- the children acquire, develop and transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding across all of the areas of learning,
- the children’s social skills are well developed and they engage appropriately with their peers;
- the children’s engagement is concentrated, purposeful and productive, in an increasingly sustained way;
- shared education experiences contribute to improved educational outcomes for the children;
- all children respond well to the adults, take a pride in their work, listen to and consider the ideas and wishes of others;
- the children make choices and express and develop their own ideas, with increasing independence; and
- the children are inquisitive and confident in exploring new experiences and situations.

Self-evaluation questions

- Are the children actively and confidently engaged in their learning? How do we know they are well-motivated?
- Are we improving and/or maintaining consistently high quality outcomes for children;
- How do we ensure that the children have opportunities to take increasing responsibility as they continue to progress in their achievements, skills and learning?
- Do the children play in a settled, productive and respectful manner?
- How do the children benefit from shared education?
- How well do we raise standards across all six areas of the curriculum?
- How do we share with each other and with the children our high expectations for their learning?
- How does the evidence we have help us to ensure that our children are developing intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically?

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS

Progression

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the children make consistent **progress** in all areas of the curriculum commensurate with their abilities, stage of development and time of year;
- the children's' progress takes account of and builds effectively upon their prior experiences and learning
- the children acquire skills and concepts systematically; and as a result
- the children are ready to progress to their next stage of learning.

Self-evaluation questions

- Is our induction process for children and staff effective? How do we know? Have we consulted those involved?
- Do the children learn at an appropriate pace? How do we know?
- How are the children given opportunities to consolidate and apply their skills and knowledge across the curriculum?
- How do we know that the children making progress in line with expectations?
- Do we discuss and agree why particular interventions are successful or not?
- Do we provide adequate and accurate information at all key transition stages so that the children's learning pathway is unimpeded?

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS

Wider skills and dispositions/capabilities

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the children have positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning;
- the children are happy, motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy their learning;

- the children, increasingly, take personal responsibility for their learning, are curious, confident and persevere with determination and resourcefulness;

- the children manage their own emotions, personal behaviour and respectful interactions with others, initially with appropriate adult support;

- the children are confident to make decisions and independent choices to develop their own play; and

- the children are aware that they are valued and have a sense of personal worth.

Self-evaluation questions

- How well do we promote the children’s skills, dispositions and capabilities?

- How well do we recognise and value the personal achievements of all of the children?

- How do we know that children are supported in a fair and equitable manner by all staff?

- Based on what we know what actions are being taken to support these children and their families?

- How well does our self-evaluation process identify vulnerable individuals or groups and how do we provide for these groups e.g. newcomers or poor attendees?

- 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:

- the provision based on the Northern Ireland Curricular Guidance for Pre-School² meets all the children's individual development and learning needs through high quality experiences and play-based learning;
- high quality resources, including relevant uses of technology where appropriate, contribute to the rich, stimulating and appropriately challenging learning experiences provided;
- the planned layout of the learning environment, makes good use of space and is well-presented to cater for learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum;
- there is an inclusive ethos which respects and values difference;
- the curriculum is planned in response to the range of needs identified in the setting;
- shared education experiences develop and enrich the children's learning;
- parents, carers, including significant males, contribute to the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum; and
- the planned activities/experiences are varied, challenging, progressive and make best use of the time available to promote all aspects of the children's learning.

Self-evaluation questions

- How do we plan the pre-school curriculum to ensure broad and balanced learning for each child and to promote continuity and steady progress in their development and learning?
- What understanding do we have of learning across the curriculum and how well does their understanding guide how they interact appropriately as adults to facilitate the children's learning?
- How well are we reducing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all?
- How do the planned activities, use natural, authentic and age-appropriate resources, promote the children's learning, both indoors and outdoors to the maximum potential?
- How does our provision for shared education contribute to the children's learning experiences?
- How well do we involve parents, carers to contribute effectively to the children's learning through the curriculum?
- How do we apply our professional learning to improve the curriculum and its planning?

² http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/pre_school/preschool_guidance.pdf

QUALITY OF PROVISION

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

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- assessment information is used to identify the **needs of individual children** accurately to plan for and provide high quality interactions which address those needs;
- the assessment information is drawn from the whole range of relevant sources, including parents/carers, other agencies and so on;
- the staff have the capacity to understand and make use of their assessment policy;
- the skills and understanding of staff are developed to keep abreast of changing needs of children;
- the staff take account of the children’s own ideas, interests and opinions to inform the future planning; and
- there are clear and realistic individual education plans compiled through appropriate consultation which are focused on addressing the areas for improvement and which used effectively are reviewed regularly.

Self-evaluation questions

- How well do we gather and make use of information about the children from a wide range of sources to inform the planning and provision.
- How do we know that our policies, procedures, and interventions ensure that the learning needs of every child in our pre-school setting are identified as early as possible and barriers to progress are reduced?
- Have we identified effectively those children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning/development?
- Do we provide an appropriate programme to meet their specific needs?
- How do we develop a 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/carers 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 staff have a shared understanding, through a collaborative approach, of the Northern Ireland pre-school curriculum;
- the planning, observation and assessment is clear, coherent, broad and balanced and reflects all six areas of learning;
- assessment is integral to planning and teaching, identifies the intended learning, is regularly evaluated and assessment observations are used to enable staff to meet individual learning needs and to report to parents;
- the learning inherent in the activities is represents appropriate expectations of the children and their abilities;
- the staff skilfully exploit the learning potential for the benefit of each child across all areas;
- the adult’s interaction and engagement with the children promotes purposeful play, generates a sense of enjoyment, builds well on their ideas, extends their language and thinking, and develops their independence and decision-making; and
- assessment information is gathered and presented in an appropriate manner to inform all relevant stakeholders.

Self-evaluation questions

- How does our planning meet all the needs of the children? How do we know it is effective?
- How effective is our evaluation of planning in providing evidence of progress?
- How are the children’s ideas and interests included in the planning process?
- Do we have a shared understanding and can they recognise effective interactions?
- How does our questioning and verbal interactions enhance the children’s language and learning and encourage their thinking?
- How well do we use assessment information to identify the learning needs of individual children?
- How meaningfully do we engage with parents/carers about their children’s progress?
- How do our transition arrangement ensure that the children’s prior learning is built upon?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership *(in nursery unit, refers to primary school leadership)(in nursery school, refers to the nursery leadership)(in*

Voluntary/Private settings, refers to leader in charge)

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- leaders promote a shared and coherent, regularly reviewed vision which is based on the values and aims of the setting (which should include equality and diversity), is child-centred and enables children to achieve high standards;
- there are effective partnerships with parents and carers, external agencies and communities to reduce barriers to learning;
- the senior leaders are developing a whole-school approach to shared education, with an emphasis on high quality experiences and improved educational outcomes for the pupils;
- through effective teamwork and a good understanding of roles and responsibilities the leader ensures that the staff are able to meet the needs of the children effectively;
- the leader's expectations are underpinned by professional knowledge and understanding of the pre-school curriculum and (Voluntary/Private sector only) complies with the relevant DHHSPS Minimum Standards and address any recommendations from inspection reports (if applicable);
- the leader uses staff appraisal and provide appropriate opportunities to identify and meet the professional learning needs of individual staff;
- the leader manage effectively the setting's resources and accommodation and evaluate their use to improve the outcomes for the children; and
- the leader reports and is accountable to governors/management committee members.

Self-evaluation questions

- To what extent is the pre-school setting's community involved in the ongoing review of the vision, values and aims?
- What strategies translate vision, values and aims into daily practice within the pre-school setting?
- How do we actively involve children and parents in the life and work of the setting?
- (Voluntary/Private sector only) How do we ensure that we meet the Minimum Standards? What evidence do we have to support this?
- What range of effective links and partnerships with external agencies and organisations provide enriching experiences for all the children and their families?
- How well are we developing our strategic approach to shared education within our school and with others?
- How does our qualifications and development relate to development planning and how do we know it is improving outcomes for the children?
- How does the leader and the management/governance acquire and use resources cost-effectively to improve outcomes for all the children?

² Learning Leaders: strategy for teacher professional learning. Department of Education 2016.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership *(in voluntary/private setting, refers to the Early Years Specialist and in nursery unit, refers to the coordinator/teacher-in-charge)*

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- a middle leader (nursery schools and units) or early years specialist (playgroups) leads learning by providing guidance and support promoting the sharing of professional knowledge and expertise;
- there are open lines of communication with the EYS and others to discuss the advice and guidance and ensure it leads to improvement in the children’s outcomes;
- the middle leader provides regular information and evidence of the impact of ongoing development work; and
- middle leaders have and contribute evidence about the impact of professional learning on the outcomes for children.

Self-evaluation questions

- How effective is the leadership and management of curriculum development at all levels? (includes EYS support)
- How do we know that adult interaction with the children is making the most of the learning inherent in planned activities?
- How does our staff training and development link effectively to the development plan and how do we know it is improving outcomes for the children?
- Is the advice, guidance and support provided by the EYS specific to the needs of the organisation; is it targeted, measurable and value for money?
- How do we monitor and evaluate the impact of the effectiveness of training and staff development on the outcomes for the children?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process Include a link to the School Development Planning 2010 and Implementation Guidance (statutory for schools best practice for all)

Effective practice	Self-evaluation questions
<p>Effective practice in promoting improvement is demonstrated when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a culture of self-evaluation is well-established and the effective use of evidence underpins the focus on continuous improvement; • the development plan is devised and informed by appropriate consultation with parents/carers, staff and governors/management group; • the identified priorities in the development plan and associated action plans focus sharply on effecting improvement in the children’s learning experiences and their progress and development; • the action plans indicate SMART targets which are evaluated and used to inform the next steps in development plans; and • the staff can demonstrate clear evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we know what works and why? What evidence do we have of improvement in outcomes for children? • How does self-evaluation involve key members of the school community including parents/carers, children and relevant outside agencies? • How effective is our observation and assessment in ensuring children’s knowledge and skills progress appropriately throughout the year? • What evidence do we have of improvement in outcomes for learners? • How do we audit provision and review progress regularly in the identified areas using relevant and accurate information and evidence? • How do we know the impact of any additional resources, activities and staff development on the outcomes for the children?

GOVERNANCE(for Nursery Schools and Nursery Units) MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (for Voluntary Playgroups and Day Care Settings)

Governance REFER TO THE ISEF FOR GOVERNORS AND THE ISEF FOR MANAGEMENT GROUPS as appropriate

Effective practice	Self-evaluation questions
<p>Effective practice is demonstrated when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the governors/management committee communicate widely the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the pre-school setting and ensure strong links with the parents/carers and local community; • the governors/management committee are well informed about the effectiveness of the provision and the outcomes for the children; • the governors/management committee support and challenge appropriately the pre-school setting’s priorities for improvement; • the governors/management committee access available external support and facilitate clustering with other pre-school settings; and • the governors/management committee ensure the setting’s financial and human resources are deployed effectively and in the interest of all the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we contribute to a shared strategic vision for continuous improvement? • How do we agree and challenge the priorities in the development plan? • How do we agree and monitor effectively the progress in addressing the priorities for improvement in the development plan? • How do we ensure that we meet our statutory obligations and compliance matters? • How do we monitor the curriculum and pastoral provision to ensure it meets well the needs of all the children? • (Voluntary and Private) How do we ensure that the support and guidance of the EYS is effective in leading to improvement?

³ Education Authority Northern Ireland Governor Training Programme

CARE AND WELFARE	
Care and welfare	
Effective practice	Self-evaluation questions
<p>Effective practice is demonstrated when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a safe, secure and well-organised learning environment for all members of the pre-school community; • the pre-school setting has a caring ethos and all staff have a strong commitment to the care and welfare of the children; • the staff provide a safe, hygienic, secure learning environment; • relationships are characterised by mutual respect, openness and trust; • all children are supported to overcome barriers to enable them to access learning and to realise their full potential; • positive behaviour is promoted consistently; • the effectiveness of the personal development is regularly reviewed to ensure it is flexible and responsive to the needs of the children; • the children and their families/carers are active contributors to the life and work of the pre-school setting and the local community; and • the pre-school setting works effectively with appropriate outside agencies and other professionals to support the care and welfare of the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know that we provide a safe and secure environment for all members of the pre-school community? • In what ways is pastoral care integral to learning and development in our pre-school setting? How do we demonstrate our responsibility to the quality care and welfare of the children and how does this contribute to the learning outcomes for them? • 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 positive behaviour is positively and consistently promoted? • How do we ensure that the children and their families/carers are active contributors to the life and work of the pre-school setting and the local community? • How do we effectively address concerns raised by members of the pre-school setting and the wider community?

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding

Effective practice

Effective practice is demonstrated when:

- the children are safe, respected and nurtured and their behaviour indicates that they feel free from harm or abuse in the four areas: neglect, sexual, physical and emotional;
- the pre-school setting has and implements fully an appropriate safeguarding policy which is in line with the requirements of the relevant Department(s³);
- the parents/carers are informed of policies and procedures relating to the protection of children;
- the pre-school setting regularly carries out self-evaluation of its own child protection/safeguarding policy and practice, at least annually, using the phase-appropriate ETI safeguarding proforma;
- the pre-school setting regularly reviews policies, procedures and reporting arrangements: child protection/safeguarding; anti-bullying; behaviour management;
- the pre-school setting works effectively/appropriately with a range of external agencies to support safeguarding and child protection practices; and
- staff and governors/management committee regularly receive training including safeguarding and child protection.

Self-evaluation questions

- Do we rigorously implement, on an annual basis, the ETI safeguarding proforma?
- How do we ensure that all requirements regarding child protection and safeguarding are in place and are effectively communicated to the pre-school community?
- How do we know that the appropriate actions resulting from risk assessments are being implemented?
- Are appropriate records being kept, in line with guidance from the relevant departments, of the vetting and training of staff and volunteers?
- How does the leader, including the management committee/governors, evaluate the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding?
- How is the leader or the person with overall responsibility for safeguarding accountable to the management committee/board of governors?
- How do we engage effectively with parents/carers when they raise a concern?
- How effectively do we engage with outside agencies?

³ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/early-years-standards-full-version.pdf>

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Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework
**Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation
Questions for Pre-School**

January 2017

