

Department of Education

# Together Towards Improvement

## A Process for Self-Evaluation

### Special

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## FOREWORD BY CHIEF INSPECTOR, MR STANLEY GOUDIE

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) developed Together Towards Improvement (TTI) in 2003 as a resource to support schools in the process of self-evaluation. It was influenced by a similar resource, Improving Quality: Raising Standards (IQ:RS) which had been developed to support the self-evaluation process in Colleges of Further and Higher Education and Training Schools. The Inspectorate has worked with the Youth Service and schools funded by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to develop versions of IQ:RS tailored to suit the evaluation needs of each group.

A large number of schools have used TTI and IQ:RS to help their management to evaluate the quality of their provision, the strengths of the school and where improvements need to be made. This requires rigorous and honest self-evaluation and a commitment to follow through, putting in place processes to ensure that the strengths continue to flourish, and taking the necessary action to address the areas for improvement that have been identified.

Schools and other schools which have used TTI in the past will find that the arrangement of the materials has changed. In the previous version, the initial focus was on creating a suitable climate for self-evaluation, with an emphasis on the ethos in the classroom and the school in general. However, in this version a much greater focus is given to the outcomes achieved by the learner and the quality of the leadership and management of the school. This changing emphasis reflects the extent to which the education service in Northern Ireland has developed its approach towards self-evaluation. Those involved in the leadership and management of schools and other educational, youth and work-based learning settings are now expected to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken by the leaders and staff, and the extent to which this is reflected in the standards and outcomes achieved by the learners. Such self-evaluation within schools should inform future planning and also reflect the direction taken by the Department of Education in its increased emphasis on achievements and outcomes and its drive to raise standards overall, as set out in the policy '[Every School a Good School](#)', and the associated policies aimed at [raising the standards in literacy and numeracy](#).

In addition, previous users of TTI will see that, in this revised version, there is more detail in the section identifying the various quality indicators and that these indicators are based around questions to assist the user. These indicators are not meant to be exhaustive, nor indeed to be used as a checklist. The schools involved in piloting the resource reported that they found these to be most helpful when they were devising their own self-evaluation procedures. The quality indicators in this revised TTI have been developed by inspectors and are based on observed practice in schools and other organisations. They relate to five key questions, namely:

1. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?
2. How effective are teaching, training, learning and assessment?
3. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?
5. How well do learners develop and achieve?

A key element in any self-evaluative process is the quality of evidence on which the evaluations are based. A range of sources can be used in this process including first-hand observation of learning and teaching and a thorough examination of the assessment data that the school or organisation collates. The interrogation of such data can provide valuable areas for further exploration when conducting an evaluation. Of course, data on its own does not provide all of the answers, but it can direct those involved in the self-evaluation process to questions that need to be asked. The more rigorous and honest such evaluations are, the more useful will be the outcomes, and these should be used as the basis for securing more effective teaching and learning, and in raising the standards achieved by learners.

Increasingly, when the Inspectorate conducts an inspection of a school or organisation, the inspectors ask the leader to share with them the findings of their self-evaluation. The quality of the self-evaluation reports has improved in recent years; however, there is still room for improvement. The most significant areas for improvement are: the extent to which the evaluations are based on good quality, first-hand evidence and the evaluation of the quality of outcomes for learners. Judicious use of TTI, along with the other resources that are generally available, will help address this important issue.

Finally, I wish to re-emphasise an important point made in the earlier version of TTI. Self-evaluation is not an end in itself. It is the self-evaluation process and the actions which follow that are most important in raising the standards attained by the learners and in enhancing their life chances and their learning experiences. The Inspectorate will continue to work with all involved to promote a culture of self-evaluation within our schools and other organisations, and will do so with the interests of the learners at heart.

**STANLEY GOUDIE**  
**CHIEF INSPECTOR**

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

The materials give guidance on:

- ★ the points to be considered by a school when planning to undertake the process of self-evaluation with the aim of improving the quality of its learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement;
- ★ the key features of the self-evaluation process;
- ★ identifying the focus for self-evaluation;
- ★ the use of a set of quality indicators.

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

It is recognised that many schools:

- ★ engage in the process of review and evaluation;
- ★ are becoming more self-critical of their work;
- ★ recognise where improvements are needed;
- ★ are implementing programmes and processes which aim to improve their practice and raise the standards of achievement.

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

## WHAT IS SELF-EVALUATION?

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

- ★ reflect on their current practice;
- ★ identify and celebrate the strengths of the school;
- ★ identify and address areas for improvement in their work;
- ★ engage in personal and shared professional development; and
- ★ focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement in the school.

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

The process of self-evaluation:

- ★ is ongoing and sharply-focused, and involves monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of existing provision and the pupils' achievements;
- ★ recognises the need for the staff and governors to have a clear and agreed view of the school's current stage of development and, through school development planning, to identify priorities which will have a positive effect on learning and teaching;
- ★ informs and influences classroom practice and the quality of learning and teaching, and promotes development and improvement; and
- ★ requires the staff to evaluate their work critically, reflect on the extent to which expectations are being realised in the work of the school, and establish a clear vision and future direction for the school.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SELF-EVALUATION?

**The purpose of self-evaluation is to:**

- ★ promote school effectiveness;
- ★ improve the quality of learning and teaching;
- ★ improve the experiences of the pupils; and
- ★ raise the standards which the pupils attain.

**These materials provide a framework which may be useful to:**

- ★ support individual schools with the development of their self-evaluation processes;
- ★ help schools to identify their strengths and areas for improvement;
- ★ assist the Principal, staff, and governors to incorporate action for improvement into the school development plan.

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

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

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

Whatever the circumstances:

- ★ the procedures used in the process of self-evaluation should be rigorous, comprehensive and fit for purpose;
- ★ all those involved should be aware of the methods to be adopted and of their part in, and contribution to, the process;
- ★ the evidence obtained should be both qualitative and quantitative and be externally verifiable;
- ★ the sources of the evidence should include school and departmental documentation;
- ★ the views of pupils, teachers, parents and the Board of Governors should be taken into consideration;
- ★ observation of classroom practice should be an integral part of the process of self-evaluation; and
- ★ the outcomes of the evaluation should lead to action to achieve the intended improvements in teaching and learning.



## POINTS FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION BY THOSE WHO PLAN TO ENGAGE IN THE PROCESS OF SELF-EVALUATION

- ★ Have the senior managers of the school planned thoughtfully for the self-evaluation process to ensure that it can be managed within the constraints of the school's work, staff deployment and the time available?
- ★ Is there sufficient openness and commitment to improvement among the staff to support and sustain the process of self-evaluation within the school?
- ★ What existing procedures are already in place to identify and share good practice throughout the school?
- ★ What processes are in place to help the school achieve continuous improvement through the evaluation of the quality of its own provision and the outcomes for the pupils?
- ★ What steps has the school taken, or intends to take, to ensure that the process of self-evaluation becomes an intrinsic part of the school's way of working?
- ★ Do the governors and the staff have a shared understanding of and commitment to, the process of internal evaluation of an aspect or aspects of the work of the school, in order to promote further improvement in learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement?
- ★ What external support does the school anticipate it will need to help it develop the process of self-evaluation?

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

Within the school there is:

- ★ a positive ethos of promoting achievement for the good of the pupils;
- ★ an agreed approach to self-evaluation which is reflected consistently in the school policy documents;
- ★ a self-evaluative way of working which is open, transparent and promotes a reflective culture;
- ★ a shared team approach where all members of the school community believe they are valued;
- ★ effective leadership and management which provides an appropriate allocation of time and resources to support developmental work;
- ★ a recognition of past achievements and the affirmation of good practice as foundations on which to build and move forward;
- ★ thoughtful and informed examination of the processes of learning and teaching;
- ★ shared evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching;
- ★ analysis of available, relevant information and assessment data on the school, and on the attainments of the pupils which is used effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement;
- ★ planned staff development/in-service training to raise confidence, and to facilitate the development of a shared understanding of the process of self-evaluation;
- ★ regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the pupils' work and progress;
- ★ identification of priorities and the setting of measurable, achievable targets which reflect the context of the school; and
- ★ an understanding that self-evaluation is an ongoing process and not a one-off event in the life of the school.

## IDENTIFYING THE FOCUS FOR SELF-EVALUATION

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

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

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

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

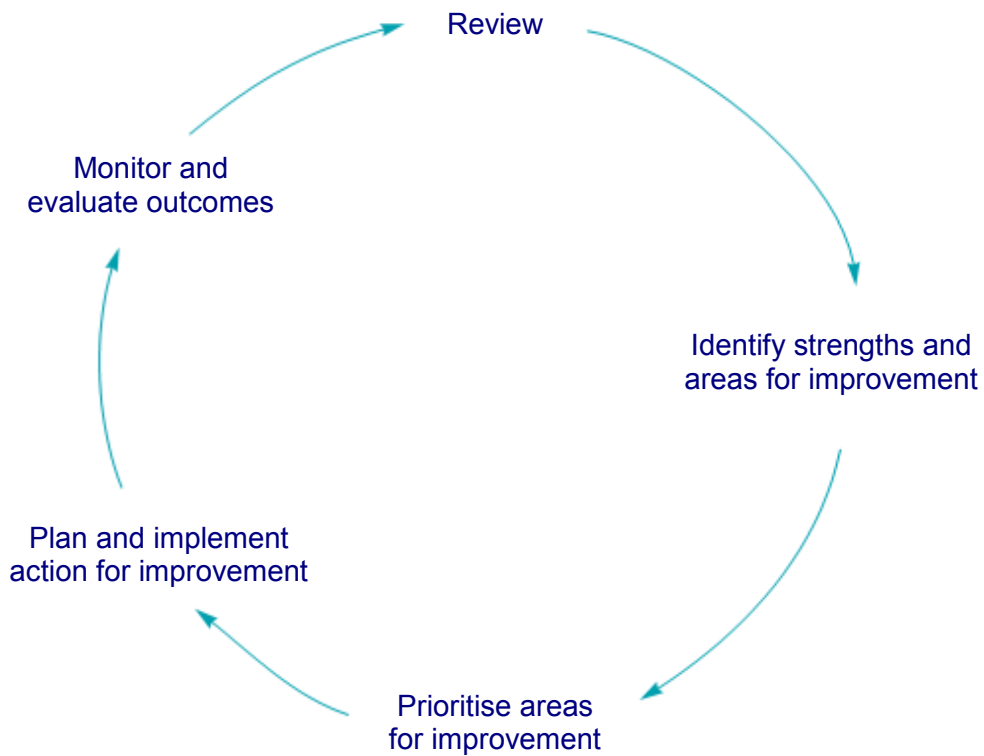
Other factors may influence the choice of focus for self-evaluation. For example:

- ★ the areas for improvement identified during an inspection;
- ★ the standards achieved by the pupils in internal and external assessments; or
- ★ the outcomes of consultation with pupils, parents and staff.

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

## THE PROCESS OF SELF-EVALUATION

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



The operational aspects of conducting a self-evaluation are set out in the sections below.

# The Quality Indicators

## THE QUALITY INDICATORS

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide schools with an understanding of the criteria used by the Inspectorate when making judgments about the quality of provision. The quality indicators, guidance and questions should help the management of schools implement a rigorous and effective self-evaluation process as part of their quality assurance arrangements.

**The key question which inspection sets out to answer is:**

**'How effective and efficient is the provision of education and training in responding to local and regional circumstances in meeting the needs of all learners?'**

## OVERVIEW: KEY QUESTIONS AND QUALITY INDICATORS

Inspection will assess the quality of provision under three broad headings, five key questions and a range of quality indicators:

### Section A: Leadership and Management

**Key Question 1:** How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?

#### Quality Indicators:

- Strategic Leadership.
- Action to Promote Improvement.
- Staffing.
- Accommodation and Physical Resources.
- Links and Partnerships.
- Equality of Opportunity, Diversity and Good Relations.
- Public Value.

### Section B: Quality of Provision for Learning

**Key Question 2:** How effective are teaching, training and learning, and assessment?

#### Quality Indicators:

- Planning.
- Teaching, Training and Learning.
- Assessment.

**Key Question 3:** How well do the learning experiences, programmes, and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?

**Quality Indicators:**

- Curriculum Provision.
- Learning Experiences.

**Key Question 4:** How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

**Quality Indicators:**

- Pastoral Care.
- Safeguarding (Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults).
- Additional Learning Support.
- Careers, education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG).

### **Section C: Quality of Achievements and Standards**

**Key Question 5:** How well do learners develop and achieve?

**Quality Indicators:**

- Achievement.
- Standards.
- Progression.
- Fulfilling Potential.



## Section A: Leadership and Management

### Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?

- **Strategic Leadership:** How effective are the senior management team/leadership including the governing body/management committee in providing strategic leadership and clear direction in achieving high quality education and/or training?

#### Indicators:

*Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:*

- provides clear and realistic direction based on a sound knowledge of, and vision for, the school;
- inspires confidence and respect among the staff and pupils and promote in them a sense of their own worth and a respect for others;
- provides a good role model for the staff, promote high standards and set a positive tone for the work of the school;
- sets high standards and expectations and demonstrates a commitment to excellence and quality improvement at all levels of provision;
- sets, shares and reviews realistic objectives and targets through an effective school development planning process;
- defines clear roles, responsibilities and functions, to support the achievement of key strategic objectives agreed in the school development plan;
- manages change effectively in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of the whole school community;
- establishes clear and open channels of communication between all staff, pupils, parents and governors; and
- works together appropriately to ensure effective governance and management of the school.

*Other Indicators:*

#### Evidence

**Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?**

- **Action to Promote Improvement:**  
How effective are the leaders and managers, at all levels in the use of self-evaluation leading to improvement in the quality of provision?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:*

- ensures that the arrangements for self-evaluation are comprehensive, rigorous, effective and lead to improvement;
- ensures that self-evaluation is underpinned by effective analysis and interpretation of relevant qualitative and quantitative data;
- reviews progress and set targets for improvement; and
- promotes effective and innovative strategies to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?**

- **Staffing:** How effective are the leaders and managers in recruiting, deploying, supporting and developing staff, at all levels, to provide high quality education/training?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:*

- ensures staff are appropriately qualified and experienced, and have the necessary expertise to meet curricular needs and management responsibilities;
- deploys all staff in ways which meet the needs of the pupils, utilises their expertise, interests and specialist knowledge;
- ensures appropriate arrangements for those teachers needing support to carry out their established or newly acquired duties;
- provides all staff with appropriate opportunities to undertake continuing professional development, evaluate its influence on learning and teaching and share best practice;
- uses effectively the Performance Review: Staff Development (PRSD) cycle to identify and meet individual staff development needs;
- provides a range of opportunities for staff to develop leadership and management skills and capabilities, in order to build capacity within the organisation to meet present and future needs;
- deploys effectively classroom assistants/support staff; and
- monitors and evaluates the impact of staff development on learning and teaching.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?**

- **Accommodation and Physical Resources:** How effective are leaders and managers in the deployment of all resources to provide high quality education/training?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which:*

- resources are provided to support learning and teaching;
- the impact of resources to support learning and teaching is monitored;
- the school has policies, strategies and plans to provide, update and make best use of ICT equipment, software and electronic resources across the curriculum;
- the accommodation and facilities provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment well-suited to supporting the curricular activities of pupils, the work of staff and social and leisure activities where applicable;
- the accommodation is clean and is in a good state of decoration and repair;
- the premises are secure and safe;
- there is a clearly understood policy on safety and security, including evacuation procedures;
- fixtures, fittings and furniture match educational needs and are of high quality and in good condition;
- access is suitable to the needs of all users; and
- the available accommodation is used effectively and efficiently to meet the curricular, pastoral and social needs of the pupils.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?**

- **Links and Partnerships:** How effective are the links and partnerships with parents other providers (including schools), other agencies and employers and the wider community, to identify and to meet the current and future needs of learners?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which:*

- the school involves parents in promoting their child's learning- their views are sought and acted upon e.g. at annual reviews or in setting targets in the individual education plans;
- the school has well-developed curricular and pastoral links with other schools and relevant educational establishments;
- the systematic exchange of relevant information about pupils' learning needs helps to ensure that they transfer smoothly to other schools;
- the pupils are involved with the local and wider community, for example, in cultural, charitable, musical, recreational or environmental activities;
- regular contacts with local people and institutions help foster positive attitudes and values among the pupils;
- the school maintains effective links with statutory organisations, including educational psychologists, medical services, social work and other agencies. The advice and help of other professionals are valued highly; and
- the school exploits links and partnerships with employers, voluntary groups and external bodies to inform, plan and meet economic development needs at both local and regional levels.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?**

- **Equality of opportunity, diversity and good relations:** How effectively do leaders and managers plan strategically to ensure equality of access, to foster good relations and to meet the diverse needs of learners and staff in the pursuit of good provision for learning?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which leadership at all levels:*

**Equality**

- has in place appropriate policies and procedures that meet legislative requirements and promote equality of the organisation's learners and staff;
- ensures that the provision is open and accessible to all learners, regardless of circumstances and in a manner that takes account of their abilities; and
- provides appropriate staff development opportunities for all teaching and non teaching staff, including part-time staff and volunteers, and that reflects strategic development priorities.

**Inclusion**

- promotes tolerance, mutual understanding and integration opportunities with mainstream schools;
- links with minority and ethnic groups to promote good relationships;
- provides all learners with access to the full range of learning and support services within a diverse society;
- ensures that all learners regardless of social, educational, ethnic or linguistic background meet their full potential; and
- the school ensures inclusive values and practices (SENDO).

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?**

- **Public Value:** To what extent is the school one which is operationally feasible, provides value for money, meets the expectations of all its stakeholders, fulfils government's expectations and is effective?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which the leaders at all levels:*

- make effective and efficient use of resources, both locally and regionally, to support the delivery of the curriculum;
- manage finances effectively to ensure that the provision is both high quality and cost effective, and avoids unnecessary duplication; and
- monitor, evaluate and review the provision regularly to ensure it benefits the community and local and regional economies.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

## Section B: Quality of Provision for Learning

### Q. How effective are teaching, training and learning, and assessment?

- **Planning:** How effective is planning to support and promote successful learning?

#### Indicators:

*Evaluate the extent to which:*

- the curriculum is planned to ensure that the programme of learning for each pupil is broad and balanced, and promotes continuity and progression in the pupils' learning;
- the school has clear, coherent planning for all areas of the curriculum which guides effectively the work of individual teachers, classroom assistants and the staff as a whole and reflects the priorities set out in the school development plan;
- each area of the curriculum is planned to take account of the pupils' differing stages of development, abilities, and attainments and to ensure that their individual needs are met;
- teachers' planning identifies clearly the intended learning in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding which the pupils are expected to acquire; and
- there is careful evaluation of the pupils' responses to the taught curriculum which is used to inform future planning; and
- there are appropriate opportunities for the pupils to contribute to the planning process, especially in setting learning targets.

*Other Indicators:*

#### Evidence



**Q. How effective are teaching, training and learning, and assessment?**

- **Teaching, Training and Learning:**  
How effective are teaching and/or training in promoting successful learning?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which teachers:*

- create a purposeful, stimulating and supportive environment for learning;
- understand the needs of individual pupils, through early and appropriate diagnosis and educational assessment;
- motivate the pupils and engage them purposefully in their work using a balance of whole-class, group and individual activities;
- are skilled at using questions or other appropriate communication means to promote learning;
- develop the pupils' independence through structured, supported and open-ended tasks, including investigation and personal research;
- use the pupils' ideas and interests appropriately as starting points for learning activities;
- set realistically high expectations for all of the pupils and value their contributions and efforts;
- use an appropriate range of well-paced learning experiences, which challenge and inspire pupils;
- maximise the use of classroom assistants or support staff for the benefit of the pupils;
- ensure that the learning supports the development of the pupils' cross-curricular skills and thinking skills and personal capacities (TSCP); and
- use ICT and other resources in a relevant and interesting way, to support learning.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How effective are teaching, training and learning, and assessment?**

- **Assessment:** How effective is assessment in promoting learning?

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which:*

- the school's assessment policy is agreed and understood by all the staff and emphasises the needs of individual pupils;
- the assessment policy provides clear guidance about the purposes of assessment, the methods to be used, the range and types of evidence to be retained, and the uses to be made of assessment information;
- the teachers use varied forms of assessment, including multi professional information, to monitor the progress of individual pupils and plan for future learning and teaching;
- the teachers use feedback to inform individual pupils about how they are performing and how they can improve;
- the pupils' work is regularly, frequently and consistently marked in ways which highlight the strengths and shortcomings, and are well understood by the pupils and their parents;
- the pupils are involved in an element of self-assessment and in discussing their progress with their teachers;
- the pupils' progress and attainment are monitored and recorded carefully and consistently in all classes, and the arrangements are in line with statutory requirements;
- the records provide an accurate overview of each pupil's progress within the formal curriculum and celebrate their other achievements; and
- the school communicates to parents, both orally and in written form, a clear picture of their children's progress and achievement, including the sharing and discussion of IEPs. The parents are invited to respond to the reports during regular consultations with the teachers.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?**

- **Curriculum Provision:** Does the curriculum offer coherent broadly balanced programmes of learning which provide learners with clear progression opportunities?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, consider the extent to which the school:*

- the teachers with specific responsibility( specialist co-ordinator), have a good understanding of the requirements of those children with specific conditions which require differentiated teaching approaches to ensure progress;
- the specialist co-ordinator maintains effective links with parents, other professionals and support agencies, and has received appropriate training;
- where needed, clear and realistic additional integrated co-ordinated health-education plans are compiled through appropriate consultation with, a range of other professionals/ therapists;
- suitably detailed records are maintained for individual pupils, identifying the gains being made in therapy and educational targets;
- there are regular reviews to ensure that the pupils are benefiting from the programme of support and are making discernible progress, and to identify further provision needed;
- parents are consulted appropriately, encouraged to support the work of the school and informed frequently and regularly of progress;
- the pupils are confident, suitably challenged, motivated and are making progress; over time they are more inter-active and communicative than passive;
- the pupils experience a broad programme in which there is a balance between the acquisition of basic skills and the use of these skills to access the areas of learning and for purposes which the pupils see as interesting and relevant;
- the teachers' expectations of the pupils are realistic and based on a recognition of their strengths as well as their weaknesses;
- the learning support staff are used well to promote and support learning;
- the school makes appropriate use of the finances allocated for specific special needs; and
- the range of resources used support and enhance the pupils' learning.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?**

- **Learning Experiences:** How well do the learning programmes and activities match the needs and aspirations of all the learners and enable them to fulfil their potential?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, consider the extent to which:*

- the learning experiences are of high quality and are matched to the individual needs, interests and aspirations of the learners;
- the pupils work well with their teachers in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They are at ease, well behaved and demonstrate self-discipline;
- the pupils display interest in, and persevere with, their tasks; they show enjoyment in their learning and achievements;
- the pupils respond well in class, take a pride in their work and show by their interest and attention that they value the contribution made by others;
- they can talk/communicate with knowledge and understanding about what they are doing, and they can apply what they have learned in a variety of contexts;
- the pupils take increasing personal responsibility for their learning, think independently and become involved actively in the learning process. They show initiative and confidence in using resources effectively and are increasingly independent in their use of equipment, materials and information and communications technology;
- the pupils collaborate effectively in a variety of situations involving groups of different composition and size;
- they listen attentively to one another and take account of the opinions and views expressed; they can plan and complete tasks co-operatively.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

- **Pastoral Care:** How effectively do the care, advice and guidance and other support processes provided for learners safeguard their welfare, promote personal development and ensure achievement?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, consider the extent to which:*

- the school has a caring ethos and all the staff show a strong commitment to the care and welfare of the pupils;
- the pupils feel secure and free from emotional and physical harm; they understand that their concerns will be listened to sympathetically and appropriate action taken;
- the school has comprehensive policies on appropriate welfare issues including bullying, drug awareness, health education and discipline which are in line with relevant DE guidance; the staff adopt practices which ensure that these policies are implemented fully;
- the pupils develop relevant personal and social skills and understanding which help them to respond appropriately to situations affecting their welfare;
- the pupils are provided with opportunities to develop relationships which promote mutual respect, tolerance and understanding, including access to their peers in mainstream settings;
- an appropriate induction process that enables them to understand the structure and demands of their learning, and to know what support services are available;
- appropriate evaluation of individual needs to promote effective pastoral support;
- regular and planned opportunities to review progress towards their learning goals and their personal development targets/goals; and
- access to an appropriate range of personal and social services.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

- **Safeguarding (protection of children and vulnerable adults):**  
How effective is the school in making arrangements to safeguard and promote health, well-being welfare and protection of learners?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, consider the extent to which:*

- the school implements fully a child protection policy which is in line with the requirements of the relevant DE Circulars;
- has established a code of conduct to guide staff in their contact with all pupils;
- has provided staff with appropriate child protection training;
- has clear and effective policies and procedures in place for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including provision for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- informs pupils and all relevant parties of policies and procedures relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults(inc UNOCINI);
- monitors the children’s awareness of the school’s procedures for child protection; and
- has identified designated members of staff responsible for child protection issues and the pupils have been told what to do, or whom to contact, if they have a concern relating to Child Protection.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

- **Additional Learning Support:**  
How effective is the school in providing additional learning support for those who have cognitive, physical, emotional or linguistic barriers to learning.

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, consider the extent to which:*

- the school implements the current DE guidance (SENDO);
- members of staff with specialist areas of expertise (eg autism/challenging behaviour/literacy) have a clear role and are enabled to carry this out effectively;
- allied health support is secured and integrated into the curriculum/provision;
- resources and facilities (accommodation) are sufficient and effective; and
- annual assessment/review evaluates the impact of the additional resources and adjust the costing appropriately.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

- **Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG):**  
How effective is the programme of CEIAG in meeting the needs, potential and interests of the learners?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, consider the extent to which:*

- a well-planned and coherent leavers/careers education programme, including the opportunity to engage in personal career/post-school planning;
- impartial careers advice and guidance, including access to the transition service, to help them make appropriate and informed choices;
- regular access to a broad range of relevant and up-to-date careers information to inform them of the range of educational and employment opportunities available to them;
- access, where appropriate, to appropriate opportunities for work-related learning and skills development; and
- suitable opportunities to develop their employability/work/independent living skills.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**



## Section C: Quality of Achievement and Standards

### Q. How well do learners develop and achieve?

- **Achievement:** How far do learners achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?

#### Indicators:

*Evaluate the extent to which the pupils:*

- make good progress commensurate with their abilities and, where appropriate, their medical conditions and achieve their best potential;
- achieve and progress in line with performance descriptors, benchmarking data and best practice as set out in the MARS for special schools;
- are well motivated and enthusiastic, are able to engage with learning activities and are developing the skills and capabilities necessary to make an effective contribution to their family and community and the wider environment; and
- develop appropriate social/inclusion skills to enable them to contribute to the world around them and achieve transition to the next stage of their education or other placement.

*Other Indicators:*

#### Evidence

**Q. How well do learners develop and achieve?**

- **Standards:** How far do learners acquire and develop the dispositions, skills and capabilities for life-long learning, and contribute to (or lay the foundations for their eventual contribution to) the community and the economy?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, evaluate the extent to which the pupils:*

- can contribute to/ plan, review and evaluate their work targets (IEPs), and identify appropriate actions to progress their learning;
- develop the relevant enterprise and employability skills required by employers and industry for the local, regional and global markets; and
- are able to achieve their full potential irrespective of circumstances, disability or background.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well do learners develop and achieve?**

- **Progression:** How far do learners demonstrate progression within the school, building on their prior achievements, and preparing appropriately for the next phase of their learning?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, evaluate the extent to which the pupils:*

- achieve consistently high standards of work across all elements of their learning, including good communication, team-working, interpersonal skills, flexibility, initiative, and self-reliance;
- have appropriate levels of knowledge, functional skills and understanding, and achieve the occupational and vocational standards to meet the needs of employment to support economic development; and
- the pupils can apply their learning in a range of social contexts.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

**Q. How well do learners develop and achieve?**

- **Fulfilling Potential:** How well do individual learners, at all levels of ability, surmount the barriers they may have to learning and achieve their full potential?

**Indicators:**

*To evaluate this, evaluate the extent to which the pupils:*

- develop a sense of well-being and emotional stability to enable them to interact with their peers and others;
- demonstrate a confidence and ability to seek help when required from a range of services; and
- continue to access appropriate support to ensure they live fulfilling lives.

*Other Indicators:*

**Evidence**

# Guidance on Conducting Self-evaluation

## Using the Quality Indicators

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

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

The quality indicators in these guidelines can be used:

- ★ to monitor, to evaluate and to celebrate a school's achievements;
- ★ to evaluate, in depth, a specific aspect of school provision;
- ★ for a full review of the whole school;
- ★ to ensure that strategies are in place to manage change and effect improvement.

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

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

1. Planning
2. Teaching, Training and Learning
3. Assessment
4. Curriculum Provision
5. Learning Experiences
6. Pastoral Care
7. Safeguarding (protection of children and vulnerable adults)
8. Additional Learning Support
9. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

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

## Conducting a Self-Evaluation

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

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

- ★ previously identified strengths or areas for improvement;
- ★ areas identified from a whole-school review;
- ★ areas for improvement identified during an inspection;
- ★ areas not covered so far within your regular review process;
- ★ areas relating to national or local initiatives; or
- ★ an area of particular interest to parents such as pastoral care.

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