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

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The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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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 enough 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

Additional Terms Used:
S   Strengths
AFI Area for improvement

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS

Standards attained

Effective practice	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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	Self-evaluation questions
Effective practice is demonstrated when: • the provision based on the Northern Ireland Curricular Guidance for Pre-School[1] 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.	• 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 to 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?

[1] 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	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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? • How does the management/governance monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the leader?

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[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	Self-evaluation questions
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.	• 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
Effective practice in promoting improvement is demonstrated when: • 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.	• 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
Effective practice is demonstrated when: • 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.	• 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?

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[3] Education Authority Northern Ireland Governor Training Programme

CARE AND WELFARE

Care and welfare

Effective practice	Self-evaluation questions
Effective practice is demonstrated when: • 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.	• 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	Self-evaluation questions
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(s[2]); • 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.	• 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?

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[2] https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/early-years-standards-full-version.pdf

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