



# An Introduction to School Self-Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools

Inspectorate Guidelines for Schools



PROMOTING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING



AN BAINNÍ DEPARTEAMHANT  
OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANA | DEPARTMENT OF  
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## Contents

1. What is school self-evaluation?	2
2. What does the SSE process look like?	4
3. How should we start the SSE process?	11
4. Who should be involved in school self-evaluation?	13
5. What structures and supports do schools need for school self-evaluation?	17
6. What should be the result of school self-evaluation?	18
7. Frequently asked questions	21

# 1. What is school self-evaluation?

## Introduction

School self-evaluation (SSE) is a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review. During school self-evaluation the principal, deputy principal and teachers, under the direction of the board of management and patron, and in consultation with parents and students, engage in reflective enquiry on the work of the school.

School self-evaluation is vital for school improvement and development. School self-evaluation enables schools:

- To take the initiative in improving the quality of education that they provide to their students
- To affirm and build on what is working well
- To identify areas in need of development and to decide on actions that should be taken to bring about improvements in those areas
- To report to the school community about the strengths in the work of the school and its priorities for improvement and development.

## School self-evaluation builds on good school development planning

Teachers reflect on their work and the learning that their students achieve, as part of their daily professional work. For many years, teachers and school boards of management have used the school development planning process to identify what is working well and what might need to be improved. SSE is a way in which this process of reflection, improvement and development can take place in a more systematic way.

SSE places a greater emphasis on collecting, examining and sharing evidence about the work of the school when making decisions about what is working well and what areas of the school's work need to be improved and developed.

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School self-evaluation focuses on:

- Teaching and learning in the school
- Supports for students in the school
- Management and leadership in the school.

**In the first phases of SSE, schools are asked to focus only on the self-evaluation of teaching and learning.**

### **School self-evaluation brings real benefits**

*School self-evaluation improves students' learning.* Teachers in Ireland and many other countries have shown us that by reflecting on their own practice regularly, they can improve the learning achieved by their students. This occurs when the main focus of SSE is on what happens in classrooms and not on paperwork.

*School self-evaluation supports ongoing development and improvement.* Teachers can use the evidence they gather in SSE to affirm and celebrate the aspects of their practice that are working well. The evidence will also help teachers to identify the aspects of practice that they would like to improve. Identifying these strengths and priorities for development together as a team will ensure that all teachers in the school are working towards the same improvement targets.

*School self-evaluation involves all of the school community.* As teachers collect and consider a range of information about the school, they naturally include the views of students and parents, as well as the views of teachers. They also draw on information from students' attainment and their engagement in, and contribution to, the life of their school.

*School self-evaluation empowers schools to tell their own story to their own community.* Each school's circumstances, students and work are unique. SSE enables schools to affirm and celebrate what they are doing well and to decide on changes they would like to make based on evidence they have gathered. SSE provides schools with an opportunity to tell their own community about their strengths and the priorities they have set for improvement.

*School self-evaluation enriches the professional lives of teachers.*

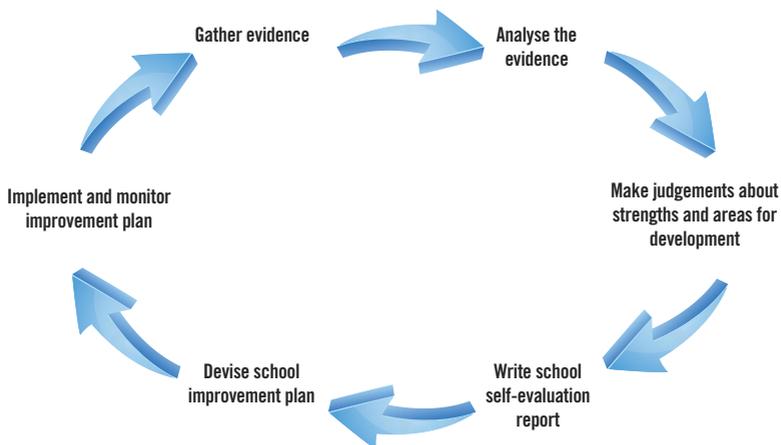
Teachers who engage in SSE frequently talk about the way in which the process encourages them to reflect on how they teach and to share ideas and questions with their colleagues in a professionally rewarding and supportive way.

*School self-evaluation supports the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.* Schools have already begun to examine and improve the teaching, learning and assessment of literacy and numeracy in response to the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*. SSE provides schools with a supportive and systematic way to affirm good practice and improve literacy and numeracy.

## 2. What does the SSE process look like?

SSE builds on the school development planning process. The school self-evaluation process is best described as a series of six steps (Figure 1). Schools and teachers will already be very familiar with many of these steps from their experience of school development planning (SDP).

**Figure 1: THE SIX-STEP SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS**



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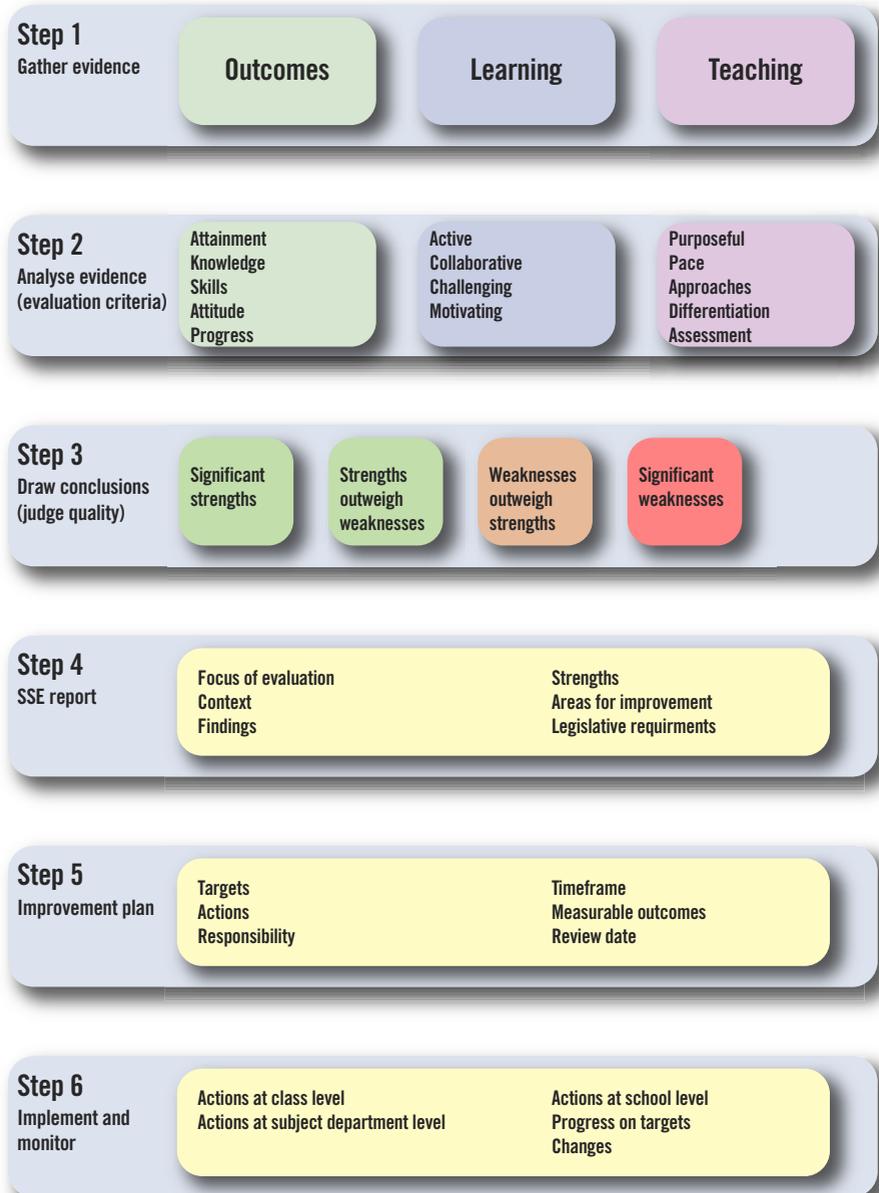
Experience in Ireland and other countries has shown that it takes a number of years to build good self-evaluation processes in schools. In the initial stages, SSE works best when it focuses on small, discrete aspects of the school's work. This gives teachers and the school community an opportunity to really examine the chosen aspect of the school's work and plan how it can be improved.

That is why it is best to focus on one or two aspects of teaching and learning in the early stages. During the introduction of SSE, schools are expected to evaluate three themes in four years: literacy, numeracy and one other theme. The evaluation of each theme will produce a short report and an improvement plan. The plans will be implemented and monitored for up to three years.

As the school gains experience and confidence in using SSE, it will be able to use the process to examine and improve further aspects of its work each year.

Figure 2 provides more detail about the six steps in the SSE process. These six steps can be used to examine, report on and improve any aspect of the work of the school in a systematic way.

Figure 2: A SIX-STEP SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS



## Step 1: Gathering evidence

Step 1 is the gathering evidence phase. Schools already gather data for a variety of purposes and much of this will be very useful in the SSE process.

When evaluating an aspect of teaching and learning in the school, the teachers' views and their records of students' work are obvious starting points. This will include information about the progress students are making in subjects, their commitment to learning in general and the extent to which they are achieving the broad objectives of syllabuses and programmes.

Teachers will also be able to provide more general information about uptake at foundation, ordinary and higher level in specific subjects in state examinations and information from assessment and attainment in state examinations and school tests.

It is also important to ensure that the views of other members of the school community, including the views of students and parents, are gathered.

*Possible sources of information for evaluating teaching and learning:*

- Assessment records and data – formative and summative
- Learner and parent surveys (student/parent voice)
- Focus-group discussions
- Interviews
- Individual teacher reflection
- Subject-department reflection
- Whole-school reflection
- Peer dialogue/sharing experience among teachers
- Professional collaborative review among teachers.

Professional reflection and dialogue between teachers, focusing on specific aspects of teaching and learning, will be very important when gathering evidence. As collaborative practices are developed among the teaching staff, team teaching and professional collaborative review will become further effective ways in which to gather evidence.

**It is important to guard against gathering too much information.**

Schools should carefully select the sources of evidence most suited to the information they require.

## Step 2: Analyse your evidence

Step 2 involves analysing the information gathered and benchmarking this against standards for the evaluation theme. These standards are provided in the **evaluation criteria** in the *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools*.

### Example

When a school evaluates the quality of its provision in the area of literacy, students' outcomes are an obvious place to start. Teachers might:

- Check the knowledge and skills of students in
  - Oral work (listening and speaking)
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Application of knowledge and skills
- Check attainment levels
  - What standards have the students attained?
  - How do these standards compare with their attainment last year/when they enrolled in the school?
  - How does the attainment of our students compare with national norms (standardised tests, examination results)?
  - Are there any trends in student attainment?
- Check student disposition
  - How motivated are our students?
  - How well are they developing positive attitudes to using language/reading/writing?
  - How well are they engaged in learning?
- Use evaluation criteria and literacy checklist to help identify strengths and areas for development.

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### Step 3: Draw conclusions

Step 3 is about drawing conclusions based on the analysed data. Schools should determine, affirm and celebrate the strengths they identify in the aspects of practice being evaluated. They should also acknowledge the areas that should be prioritised for improvement.

In order to be as objective as possible, they should judge the quality using the **quality statements** in the *Guidelines* as a set of standards. The quality statements illustrate the highest level of practice. Schools may have considerable strengths without reaching this level.

### Step 4: Complete the self-evaluation report

Step 4 ensures that schools keep a record of their self-evaluation and particularly of the findings. This will result in the completion of a concise self-evaluation report. Reports should be no more than 2-3 pages in length.

The self-evaluation report should record:

- Aspects of practice chosen for self-evaluation
- A brief account of school context
- The findings
- A summary of strengths
- A summary of areas requiring improvement.

It is also useful to review the legislative and regulatory requirements that schools have to fulfil. This should be done once a year and the *Guidelines* provide an easy-to-use checklist that can be completed by the board of management and appended to the school self-evaluation report.

Each school should draw up a brief summary of the report under the direction of the board of management and issue this summary to the whole school community.

### Step 5: Develop a school improvement plan

In Step 5, schools will devise a school improvement plan. The plan will contain:

- A summary of the areas for improvement identified in the evaluation
- Targets for improvement with a focus on learner outcomes
- Actions required to achieve the targets
- Reference to those who are responsible for undertaking actions, for example teachers or particular groups
- A statement of how the school will check if the targets have been achieved
- A timeframe for achievement of the targets.

The school improvement plan should be no more than one or two pages long. A short summary should be provided to the whole school community.

### Step 6: Implement and monitor

Step 6, the final step, is vital if the school self-evaluation process is to bring about improvement. It is only when the actions in the improvement plan are implemented, that the work of the school can improve. All teachers should be aware of the actions to be implemented at individual teacher, class, subject department or whole-school level. These actions should become part of the normal teaching and learning process.

Actions must be monitored. Schools will need to decide:

- How monitoring will occur
- Who will be responsible for monitoring
- How progress will be determined and reported
- When and to whom progress will be reported (for example: staff meetings, planning meetings, board meetings)
- If targets and actions are realistic or need to be changed.

### 3. How should we start the SSE process?

#### Decide on the focus of the self-evaluation

It is important to be clear about the focus of the self-evaluation from the outset. School self-evaluation activities should focus on **teaching and learning**.

There are many aspects of teaching and learning in a school that could become the focus of self-evaluation. Focusing on a tightly defined aspect is important, especially in the early stages of implementing self-evaluation.

Schools will start the process of self-evaluation in 2012-13. In the four years from 2012-13 to 2015-16, schools are asked to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in **literacy, numeracy** and at least **one aspect of teaching and learning** across all programmes and subjects. Schools are free to decide the order in which these are covered.

#### Ask key questions

Schools should start the self-evaluation process by asking a few key questions about teaching and learning. These might include the following:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know? What evidence do we have?
- How can we find out more?
- What are our strengths?
- What are our areas for improvement?
- How can we improve?

#### Examine outcomes, learning and teaching

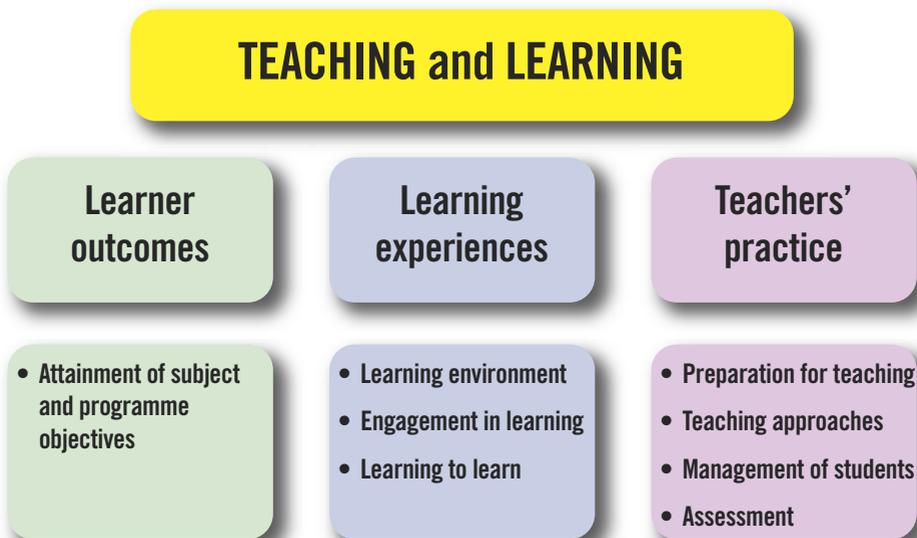
Answering the question “how well are we doing?” is a good starting point for SSE. Teachers could begin to reflect on this by focusing on learner outcomes. This will lead them to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and of the learning experiences they provide for students. These teaching and learning themes: learner outcomes, students’ learning experiences and teachers’ practice; and a set of sub-themes related to them, are illustrated in the teaching and learning framework (Figure 3).

### Use the evaluation criteria and quality statements

The evaluation criteria and quality statements in Chapter 4 of the *Guidelines* will help teachers when they review learner outcomes, learning experiences and teachers' practice. They describe what very good practice looks like. The criteria are designed to serve as benchmarks and should assist schools to judge the effectiveness of their practice.

It is not necessary for schools to review in detail all evaluation themes. Rather, schools should select the themes for SSE according to their own needs. Learner outcomes is a good place to begin. Schools could then examine the learning experiences (for example engagement in learning) and teachers' practices (for example teaching approaches) that led to the learner outcomes. Schools can benchmark their practice in each case against the evaluation criteria and the quality statements.

Figure 3: TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK



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## **Celebrate strengths, identify areas for development**

Schools will identify strengths and areas for development during their review of each aspect of their work. These will help them to develop a school improvement plan for the aspect of practice they have evaluated. This plan will then be implemented over a three-year period.

By evaluating literacy and numeracy across the school in the early stages of the implementation of SSE, schools will fulfil key requirements of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*.

Each year, schools will be reviewing further aspects of their teaching and learning and monitoring the implementation of improvement plans developed in previous years.

## **4. Who should be involved in school self-evaluation?**

School self-evaluation should be led by the school principal. Under the direction of the board of management and patron, school leaders should ensure that responsibility for school self-evaluation is shared and becomes part of the everyday practice of all teachers in the school.

Staff meetings or other school structures, such as the additional time provided under the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (Croke Park Agreement), should enable all teaching staff to work together to determine the focus of evaluation, to draw conclusions based on the analysis of evidence, to make judgements about overall strengths and weaknesses and to set targets and decide on actions for improvement.

Other members of the school community, such as parents and students, should play an active role in the aspects of self-evaluation that are appropriate to them. The board of management should provide overall direction to the process and ensure that the evaluation takes account of the

school's particular ethos and characteristic spirit. The board should also check the school's practice regarding legislative and regulatory requirements on a regular basis. A checklist provided in the *Guidelines* should assist boards in undertaking this. The board should also draw on the school's self-evaluation report and school improvement plan when preparing its report to parents as required under Section 20 of the Education Act, 1998.

Parents and students should be consulted when it is appropriate to do so, for example in gathering evidence about attitudes to literacy and numeracy or their experience of learning. Summaries of the school's self-evaluation report and its improvement plans should be made available to the whole school community.

### **As principal, what is my role in the SSE process?**

Principals should lead the school self-evaluation process. They should view SSE as an effective tool for implementing change and should cultivate positive attitudes towards the process. They may delegate responsibility for leading aspects of the SSE process to an individual or a small team.

Once the aspects of practice for self-evaluation have been identified, school leaders could delegate responsibility to others for gathering information, collating and analysing data and providing feedback.

As a principal I should ensure that:

- SSE becomes part of the day-to-day work of the school
- The main focus of SSE is on improving outcomes for learners
- Structures are in place to enable all teachers to engage in the school self-evaluation process. Such structures might include ensuring that time is made available for SSE, for example, at staff meetings or during Croke Park hours
- All teachers are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to SSE
- A whole-school approach is taken to identifying strengths and areas for improvement
- The voices of students and parents are heard
- Teachers are encouraged to take steps beyond their current practice when gathering evidence and taking action for improvement.

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## As a teacher, what is my role in the SSE process?

All teachers should be involved in and should benefit from the school self-evaluation process. They should play a central role in determining the areas of focus for SSE. Having determined the areas of focus, SSE will become part of the day-to-day work in the classroom. Many of the evidence-gathering processes will already be part of teachers' work. For example, teachers will have assessment data, including state examination results. They will already be engaged in reflection on their practice in the classroom. They may be already eliciting the views of students about aspects of their practice.

Teachers will benefit from the professional dialogue which takes place as part of the SSE process. It will enable them to share experiences and enrich their practice.

As a teacher I should ensure that I:

- Am aware of the area of focus for SSE
- Am open to sharing experiences with colleagues
- Gather the necessary evidence to make judgements about strengths and areas for development
- Include the voice of students
- Am familiar with the criteria for the themes and sub-themes being evaluated
- Am open to making changes in my practice to improve learning experiences and outcomes for students.

## As a board of management member, what is my role in the SSE process?

The board of management has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate education is provided for the students, within its own context and reflecting its own ethos and characteristic spirit. It is also responsible for arranging for the development of a school plan, in consultation with parents, staff and students and for the circulation of the school plan.

As a board member I should ensure that:

- The school has the skills and capacity to engage in SSE. This may require professional development for all or some teachers

- Suitable arrangements are in place to enable the teaching staff to engage in the SSE process
- An atmosphere is cultivated over time so that management, principals, teachers, parents and students can make honest and helpful contributions to the SSE process
- SSE is on the agenda of each board meeting to enable board members to ask questions about progress and to affirm achievements
- A summary SSE report and summary school improvement plan are provided to the school community each year. These will be short (one page) documents outlining the areas of focus of SSE in the school, the strengths identified and the areas that the school will be focusing on for improvement
- The legislative and regulatory requirement checklist is used annually to evaluate the extent to which the school is adhering to its obligations. Action should be taken where requirements are not met.

### **As a parent what is my role in the SSE process?**

Parents are important partners in education and they can provide schools with valuable insights into what is working well and what can be improved. Parents take an interest in their children's learning and check regularly on the progress their children are making.

As a parent I should ensure that I:

- Take part in the SSE process and in SSE activities where relevant
- Take part in surveys when requested
- Take part in parents' interviews or focus groups when invited by the school
- Am aware of the areas the school has prioritised for improvement
- Offer my help, if possible, when the school requests assistance in taking action for improvement
- Assist the parents' association to fulfil its role in the SSE process appropriately.

### **As a student what is my role in the SSE process?**

Students are very aware of what is effective in relation to their learning. Students' views on the learning environment, on learning experiences and on how they learn best can be insightful.

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As a student I should ensure that I:

- Take part in discussions about how I learn when requested
- Complete surveys when requested
- Cooperate with the student council, where relevant, to assist in the SSE process
- Contribute to the overall development of the school.

### **As a patron what is my role in the SSE process?**

The patron appoints a board of management to manage the school on its behalf. The board is responsible for upholding the characteristic spirit of the school and consults with and keeps the patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board.

As a patron I should:

- Require that the board of management adheres to and is mindful of the characteristic spirit of the school when engaging in school self-evaluation
- Receive a summary of the school self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan from the board of management.

## **5. What structures and supports do schools need for school self-evaluation?**

Schools need to ensure that SSE becomes part of everyday practice. Schools will need time to decide on the focus of SSE and the process and actions required. They will need to have structures in place to enable collaborative decision making, to analyse evidence and to develop improvement plans.

### **Support for schools**

A number of supports are available to assist schools in the SSE process. In addition to this *Introduction to School Self-Evaluation*, an **information leaflet** providing schools with an update was sent to all schools in September 2012.

A more detailed publication, ***School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools***, has also been prepared to assist schools in the school self-

evaluation process. It has been developed in consultation with the education partners. An early draft of this was used in a trial phase by a small number of schools. These guidelines detail the school self-evaluation process and provide evaluation criteria and quality statements for teaching and learning, along with sample tools to assist in gathering evidence. *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools* is available at [www.schoolself-evaluation.ie](http://www.schoolself-evaluation.ie). Printed copies will also be provided for schools.

**Guidance and support for school self-evaluation** will also be offered to schools by the PDST and the Inspectorate. In order to facilitate all teaching staff to attend support sessions, it is suggested that schools assign a portion of the additional time allocated under the Croke Park Agreement to SSE. This will enable presentations to be made and questions and queries to be answered within specific school contexts.

**A dedicated website** has been set up to provide further support for schools at [www.schoolself-evaluation.ie](http://www.schoolself-evaluation.ie). The website will contain presentations, guidelines, tools and messages from school principals who have already undertaken SSE activities. As additional resources are developed, these will be placed on the website. Over time, schools may wish to share their school self-evaluation resources or experiences. The website will facilitate such sharing. If you would like to contribute to the website you may send your suggestions to [info@schoolself-evaluation.ie](mailto:info@schoolself-evaluation.ie).

## 6. What should be the result of school self-evaluation?

### **SSE is about better learning**

School self-evaluation should result in better learning outcomes for students. This will happen when teachers reflect on their practice, engage in dialogue and share experience. SSE should help teachers to focus on the type of learning experiences they give to their students. It should also lead to changes in practice where necessary. Overall, teaching and learning should

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be more student focused and suited to the needs of all students, taking account of their age and ability.

### **What paper work is needed for school self-evaluation?**

Good SSE is not about paperwork – it is focused on improving the way all teachers teach and the learning achieved by students. Some documents and records will be developed as the school engages in the process, but these should be kept to a minimum. The effect that SSE has on teaching and learning is far more important.

Schools should focus in the first instance on enabling all teachers to gather and use available assessment data and other evidence effectively to determine the quality of their current practice. The range of evidence will vary, depending on the school's circumstances and the aspects of teaching and learning that are reviewed. Reflection on, and thorough discussion of this evidence, will be needed among the teaching staff and at board of management level, as appropriate.

It is necessary to record the findings of self-evaluation. While the primary focus should not be on the written report, **a concise school self-evaluation report** (no more than two to three pages) should give details of the school context, the themes and sub-themes selected for evaluation and the sources of evidence used. It should indicate the conclusions drawn from the evidence in terms of where the school places itself on the quality continuum and should outline a small number of significant strengths and areas for development. The areas for development identified in the SSE report should be the areas for which the school sets targets for improvement in its school improvement plan. The self-evaluation report should also contain a checklist confirming that the school is complying with legislative and regulatory requirements (for example, that the school has the required policies covering issues such as child protection procedures, a behaviour policy, an enrolment policy, etc.).

The **self-evaluation report** will enable all teachers and the board of management to have a clear record of what the evaluation has revealed and the priorities that the school has set for development. Every teacher and

member of the board of management should have a copy of the self-evaluation report. Department inspectors will also have access to the self-evaluation report in the course of their work.

A **summary of the self-evaluation report**, listing the strengths of the school and the priorities that the school has set for development will be needed for communication to the wider school community. It will enable the school leadership and management to report to parents on the operation of the school as required under Section 20 of the Education Act, 1998.

Schools are required to have a **school improvement plan** from the school year 2012-13 onwards. The school improvement plan should be concise and should indicate the areas targeted for improvement. Targets focused on improving learner outcomes that are specific and measurable should be set out in the improvement plan. The plan will illustrate the actions to be taken, those responsible for the actions and those responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the actions. The timescale for the actions and the criteria by which success will be measured should be outlined. The school improvement plan should be no more than two pages long and should become a very clear guide to implementing actions for improvement in classrooms and in other learning settings. A good school improvement plan will be the basis for managing change within classrooms.

It will also provide the board of management with a way to monitor development and improvement. It will be equally useful for school management as they prepare their annual report for parents on the operation of the school. Inspectors will have access to the school improvement plan in the course of their work.

A **summary of the school improvement plan** should be provided to the whole school community.

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## 7. Frequently asked questions

### How does school self-evaluation fit with school development planning?

The school development planning process entails a cycle consisting of review, planning, implementation and evaluation. School self-evaluation reframes the school development planning cycle to give greater focus to gathering evidence, analysing evidence and judging quality. The school self-evaluation process therefore has six steps (Figure 2).

### How does school self-evaluation fit with the literacy and numeracy strategy?

School self-evaluation is not an additional initiative – it is an integral part of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*. The *Programme for Government 2011* sets out specific targets in relation to school self-evaluation and school improvement. These targets are reflected in the literacy and numeracy strategy, which requires all schools to engage in robust self-evaluation and to put in place a school improvement plan with specific targets for the promotion and improvement of literacy and numeracy. SSE is being supported now to assist schools to fulfil these requirements. Schools will be expected to engage in self-evaluation of literacy and numeracy within the first four-year cycle.

SSE is a useful tool to assist schools in affirming good practice in their literacy and numeracy provision and in deciding the aspects of literacy and numeracy that need to be improved.

### Where do we find the time for school self-evaluation?

SSE is part of the school development planning process. Many schools have structures in place to enable ongoing collaborative planning to take place. Staff meetings, year-group meetings, subject-department meetings and other group meetings and structures are some of the means by which schools provide time for planning activities. SSE should be an important aspect of such planning.

Circular 25/2011 (post primary) provides an outline of how school management may designate the additional time provision required of teachers as part of the Croke Park agreement. School planning is one of the activities included in the list of items for which the additional time may be used. School management should consider including SSE among the activities for which the additional time is used.

Much of the work related to SSE will become part of the ongoing practice in classrooms and other learning settings. Embedding SSE within normal classroom practice is an effective means of engaging in school improvement.

### **Do DEIS<sup>1</sup> schools need to engage in self-evaluation and set targets again to improve literacy and numeracy?**

Since 2006-07, schools that are part of the DEIS School Support Programme have received support to evaluate current levels of attainment in literacy, numeracy and examination attainment (post-primary) and to set targets for improvement. Some schools have been successful in improving attainment levels in literacy and numeracy. These schools should review their current cycle of planning for improvement and should continue to implement those plans if they are based on robust self-evaluation (clear evidence to support their judgements and the aspects prioritised for development) and if targets for improvement are specific and measurable. Rather than starting the school self-evaluation process again, they should continue the DEIS planning cycle and engage in the self-evaluation process as outlined in the *Guidelines* when the current three-year plan has been implemented.

Some DEIS schools are still at an early stage in the development of improvement plans. These schools should review their current practice and ensure that their DEIS action plans are based on robust self-evaluation and that targets to improve literacy, numeracy and examination attainment are specific and measurable.

<sup>1</sup> Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools, An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, Department of Education and Science (2005)

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## **Do special schools need to engage in self-evaluation and set targets to improve literacy and numeracy and other aspects of teaching and learning?**

Yes. Special schools should engage in the process of self-evaluation as outlined for primary schools or for post-primary schools depending on the age range of the students. They should adapt the process to meet the needs of students in their particular context. They should ensure that targets for the improvement of literacy and numeracy are consistent with the specific needs of their students.

## **How should Irish medium schools engage in self-evaluation and set targets to improve literacy in Irish and in English as well as numeracy?**

Irish medium schools should engage in self-evaluation of literacy in Irish, literacy in English, and numeracy over the first school self-evaluation cycle. For example, they may select literacy in Irish as a priority in the first year. This will enable them to complete a self-evaluation report and put a three-year improvement plan for the area they have prioritised in place. They may then select literacy in English as a priority so that they will have a self-evaluation report and a three-year improvement plan for literacy in English in place. Finally, they will select numeracy and have a self-evaluation report and three-year improvement plan in place. Thus, by the end of the first cycle, they will have self-evaluation reports written and improvement plans in place for literacy in Irish, literacy in English and numeracy. They will then be in a position to evaluate other aspects of practice.

## **Should the school's summary self-evaluation report include information on the performance of students in assessment tests?**

The content of the summary self-evaluation report will be determined by the board of management of the school. The key aim of the summary report is to convey judgments about the strengths of the school and its priority for development. These will have been drawn up based on a wide range of evidence about teaching and learning. The summary report may include general statements about the performance of students in key areas, but detailed analysis of the outcomes of assessment tests and statistical data on examination results should not be included in the summary self-evaluation report.

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