



## **Educational Services**

# **Quality Improvement Framework for Schools**

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS

## Introduction

School improvement is directed by vision and effective self-evaluation. This is a reflective professional process through which schools get to know themselves well and identify the best way forward for their pupils. It must not be a bureaucratic or mechanistic process. Self-evaluation is about change and improvement. It is based on evaluative professional reflection, challenge and support. It involves taking considered decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for young people.

## Self-Evaluation

At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:

How are we doing?      How do we know?      What are we going to do now?

Schools must build monitoring and evaluation into a calendar of activities. This activity must be integral to the work of the school and have a clear focus on children's learning and success. All the key processes of education, and management and leadership activities need to be evaluated with regard to their impact on and outcomes for, pupils.

Schools are required to have in place a rolling programme of audit which ensures that over a six year cycle all the quality indicators from *'How Good Is Our School'* are the subject of detailed evaluation. Annual school audits must ensure that reliable evidence is generated to provide answers to the following questions:

- What outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our school community?
- How good is the education we provide?
- How good is our management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

Evidence must be drawn from direct observation, data analysis and by obtaining stakeholders' views.

It is important for schools to have a clear rationale for evaluating the aspects chosen in any year, and a clear idea of exactly how evaluation will be carried out, when and with whom. Schools need to be systematic. Time spent on diagnosis needs to be balanced against the time spent on improvement. Schools also need to keep focusing on the key work of the school, specifically learning and teaching.

## **School Standards & Quality Reports**

Each school is required to publish, by 30 June each year, a standards & quality report for parents. Educational Services will consider the report prior to publication. The report should contain an evaluative commentary on the school provision, and be presented in the following sections:

- Successes and achievements
- Work and life of the school
- Vision and leadership
- Continuous improvement

## **School Strategic Improvement Plans**

Each school is required to publish, by 30 June each year, a strategic improvement plan. Educational Services will consider the plan prior to publication. Schools will inform all stakeholders of the improvement objectives contained in the plan

The school strategic improvement plan should be informed by local and national priorities and contain:

- clearly stated vision and values for the school
- a small number of challenging but realistic improvement priorities
- observable and measurable outcomes which focus on learning and achievement
- clearly identified responsibilities and timescales for implementation
- measures of success including data, quality indicators and stakeholders' views

Each element of the school strategic improvement plan should be supported by action or project plans which should indicate specific tasks, milestones, responsibilities, resource implications and measures of success. Such plans are for internal school use, to assist in managing the improvement agenda.

In developing, implementing and evaluating plans, schools should ensure appropriate approaches to risk assessment are adopted. The impact of plans will be rigorously evaluated by schools with support from Quality Improvement Officers.

## **Annual School Reviews**

Quality Improvement Officers will undertake annual reviews of all schools. These reviews are designed to support and challenge schools and contribute to each school's commitment to delivering a high quality educational experience for all learners.

The aims of the reviews are to:

- confirm improvements in performance with particular regard given to attainment and achievement;
- evaluate the effectiveness and validate the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation and quality improvement processes;
- evaluate the effectiveness of school audit and improvement planning, and sample evidence of impact, including impact on pupils' learning;
- identify strengths and areas for development in the overall work of the school; further support and resources which may be required;
- identify good practice which can be shared.

Reviews will be undertaken by a Quality Improvement Officer (ASG Officer) and other Officers as appropriate. The Officer(s) will visit the school, normally for half a day, during the summer term.

Officers will identify documentary evidence to be made available in advance of the school review meeting. In addition to sampling evidence Officers may also interview key stakeholders and visit classes to observe learning and teaching.

Following the review, the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation, and the improvement objectives for the coming session, will be agreed. Quality Improvement Officers may undertake follow-up reviews during the session in order to monitor progress with action plan implementation, and to assess the impact and benefits for pupils of these developments. Such follow-up activities will be proportionate and based on identified needs.

## **Quality Audit**

Every session Educational Services will undertake Quality Audits of at least one sixth of the Moray schools. This will ensure that all schools are audited within a six year cycle. Quality Audits will be undertaken outwith the HMIE cycle.

A Quality Audit team, proportionate to the size of the school and nature of the audit, will consist of Educational Services Officers, a peer head teacher and other promoted and other professional staff as appropriate.

The Quality Audit procedures will normally last for 2-3 days in the school. In the case of secondary school departmental audits these may not necessarily all take place within the same timeframe.

The Quality Audit will evaluate school performance against key quality indicators including those concerned with: improvements in performance, impact on learners, learning and teaching, leadership and the school's capacity for improvement. Other indicators on the work and life of the school may also be audited.

Audit activities will comprise data analysis, stakeholder interviews and observations of learning and teaching.

Following a Quality Audit schools will receive an evaluative report on the quality indicators audited. The report will also identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Service Review**

Educational Services will periodically evaluate the impact of developments, initiatives or policies across the authority. A sample of schools will be selected in order to audit provision. An audit team, proportionate to the size of the school, and task, will undertake the evaluation. The procedures will normally last for a maximum of 1 day in any school.

An overall authority evaluation report will be published following the review. There will be no publication of the findings from any one school or comparisons of one school with another. Head teachers of the schools involved in the review will receive brief feedback indicating particular strengths or aspects of provision which could be improved.

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