



## SELF-EVALUATION

### What do we mean by self-evaluation?

When considering the place of self-evaluation in your school, first ensure that colleagues are agreed on definitions.

### SELF-EVALUATION

In this document, the term self-evaluation is used to refer to an evaluation process generated within the school either at a whole-school level or by individuals. It may be undertaken by the headteacher, often in collaboration with senior leaders, or by teachers and classroom assistants. The outcomes of self-evaluation provide:

- a picture of teaching and learning within the classroom and school
- opportunities to celebrate and promote what is successful or beneficial to teaching and learning
- clarity about what needs to be refined or improved.

The process is increasingly viewed as a professional development opportunity for discussion and agreement about provision for effective teaching and learning.

This activity, generated by a school or class teacher, may inform or be informed by external evaluation systems, for example inspection.

### INTRODUCTION

Changes in the inspection of schools by Ofsted underline the importance of schools establishing self-evaluation processes. Self-evaluation is now seen to be a central element in successful school improvement. It develops collective ownership of the school development process by locating the analysis of 'where we are and what we need to improve' at its closest point to teaching and learning.

### **WHY IS SELF-EVALUATION REGARDED AS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING?**

There is a national focus on creating the conditions in which pupils achieve to their highest ability. Within this, there is a growing awareness of the need to identify and provide effectively for gifted and talented pupils, and a clearly held belief that improving learning for the most able moves all pupils forward.

Effective teaching and learning is informed by careful analysis of provision and by informed decisions on actions needed to effect improvement. The regular and detailed collection of information on the quality of teaching and learning in a school provides precise pointers to what is already done well and what needs to be introduced or improved.

### **WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?**

The purpose of effective self-evaluation is to strengthen and improve the planned learning experiences of all pupils in the classroom. The self-evaluation process should therefore be as comprehensive as practicable. While a headteacher and senior management team may be able to gain a sense of the quality of provision, the value of even this type of snapshot depends on acquiring sufficiently detailed and accurate information. A more considered approach, however, should aim to involve everyone concerned in the life of the school.

To improve teaching and learning in the classroom, and to assure evenness of provision throughout the school, it is essential that there is clarity about the quality of provision in every classroom. At the very least this means that the people who are the subject of evaluation should understand its focus and purpose. At best these people should fully contribute. Participation by teachers, classroom assistants, pupils and parents in relevant areas of self-evaluation enables discussion and consensus about what matters in the quality of provision, and the sharing of good practice at a detailed level and of ideas about how to improve further.

Experience in the trialling of the Institutional Quality Standard for gifted and talented provision (IQS) showed that there is a wide disparity of knowledge of whole-school matters and whole-school provision for the gifted and talented between 'key movers' on the one hand, and class teachers on the other. The trialling of the Standard also demonstrated that the understanding of whole-school matters was improved, and self-evaluation considerably enhanced, when all stakeholders could be involved.

### **WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP EVALUATE PROVISION?**

The Institutional Quality Standard for the gifted and talented reflects a national consensus about what schools and colleges should be aiming to achieve in the education of these pupils and in best practice in schools and colleges. It has been trialled with institutions from all sectors. The Quality Standard is designed as a self-evaluation tool for schools and colleges to use to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in their provision for gifted and talented learners. It provides the framework for audit and an action plan matched to the school's overall improvement plan. It supports the introduction of personalised education across the whole school or college.

The Quality Standard has three levels – Entry, Developing, and Exemplary – to encourage progression. The Entry level is pitched so that all schools and colleges can realistically aim to achieve it. The Developing level provides additional challenge for schools that have achieved and sustained Entry level. The Exemplary level is intended to demonstrate excellence. All schools and colleges achieving the Entry level will be successfully personalising the education of their gifted and talented learners.

A parallel auditing instrument, the Challenge Award self-evaluation framework, has been produced by NACE, the National Association for Able Children in Education. This framework offers an alternative method to audit, evaluate, and plan for continuous whole-school improvement of provision. It enables a very detailed exploration of provision for the gifted and talented, and in contrast to the Institutional Quality Standards is an externally moderated rather than self-moderated audit system. The NACE website appears in the list of Additional Resources at the end of this document.

## WHAT MIGHT WE DO IN SCHOOL?

### USING THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

Schools and individual practitioners with a responsibility for providing for gifted and talented pupils might wish to use the Standard if and when they have identified the improvement of education for these pupils as a priority in their OFSTED self-evaluation form (SEF). During trials, schools have found the Quality Standard helpful in establishing and developing whole-school and classroom self-evaluation processes, in preparation for the SEF.

When using the IQS, first decide the depth and focus of self-evaluation. Make sure that the choice of focus reflects agreed priorities and that there are sufficient resources and commitment to undertake the process. Involve all potential stakeholders where possible.

The IQS may be used:

- as a tick sheet to achieve a general overview of provision
- in a more detailed way to get a detailed view of provision in one or more chosen elements
- in a comprehensive way to get a detailed view of provision in all elements.

The usefulness of self-evaluation information depends on the accuracy and completeness of evidence gathered.

Be systematic:

- decide the focus
- plan the collection of evidence to ensure accuracy
- gather evidence to determine the level of practice in each Quality Standard element
- involve stakeholders in planning and collection and consideration of findings
- draw up targets for improvement for the School Improvement Plan
- summarise principal findings for the self-evaluation form and the 'annual conversation' with the School Improvement Partner.

## USING FOCUSED OBSERVATION TO EXPLORE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In contrast to the IQS, classroom observation of teaching and learning offers an even more focused qualitative approach to self-evaluation.

Observation is carried out using a schedule researched and agreed by teachers. Findings are discussed by both the observers and the observed as part of an objective exercise to discover more about teaching and learning. In common with the use of IQS, positive experiences derive from simply discussing practice from a fresh perspective, celebrating successes, and locating areas for joint development. The purpose of the process is to find out more about an essentially insulated activity: teaching and learning in the classroom.

## HOW DO THESE APPROACHES FIT TOGETHER?

New Ofsted inspections focus on the quality of evaluation undertaken by the school, as well as other aspects of performance. There is an emphasis on Ofsted working in partnership with schools. Ofsted evaluation continues to relate to a national framework and is now further sharpened through the school's own self-evaluation. The self-evaluation form completed by the school is designed to give a clear picture of its strengths, weaknesses, and capacity for improvement. This now forms the basis of inspection planning and discussion.

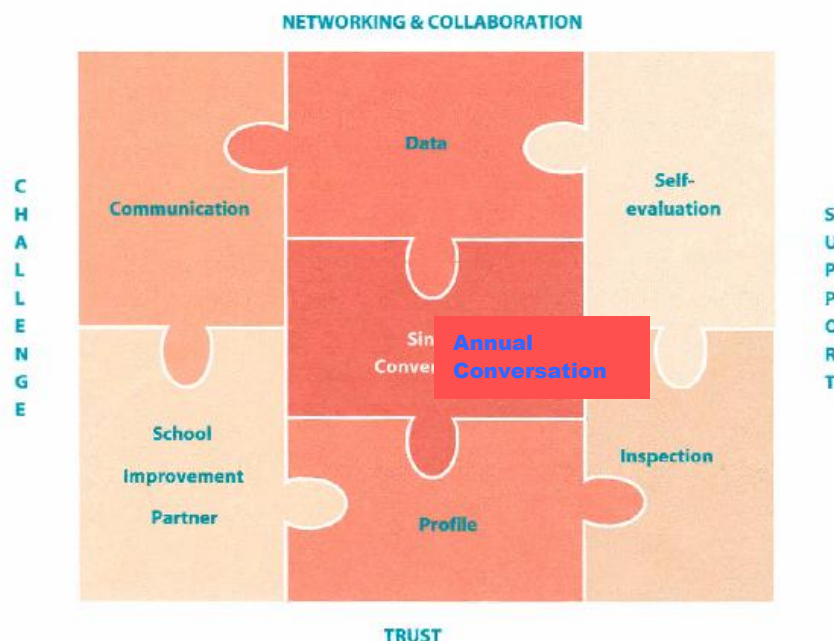
Self-evaluation also informs the newly introduced 'annual conversation' between the headteacher and the external Advisor to the school, known as the School Improvement Partner. The headteacher is expected to discuss his or her analysis of progress with the SIP, and agree on areas for celebration and improvement. The school's ability to analyse performance in a range of areas, including the quality of teaching and learning, is again tested.

External moderation of the self-evaluation process is assured by Ofsted and the SIP but also on a more regular basis through the use of performance data provided by Ofsted through the annual PANDA. This quantitative analysis of the school's performance against other schools is supplemented in many schools through the learning and self-review enabled by networking with other schools. School improvement is thus informed by evaluation and enhanced at all levels by the sharing of perspectives.

Self-evaluation is a central part of school improvement. It fits into a continuum of ongoing evaluation that also includes the external processes of inspection and annual review. The accuracy of self-evaluation, and the capacity of the school to improve, are directly determined by:

- the quality of management and leadership at all levels
- the quality of information gathered
- how information is used to effect improvement
- the extent to which stakeholders (notably teachers) are involved in the process
- mutual trust
- an adequate balance between challenge and support.

The contribution of self-evaluation is illustrated in the diagram on the following page.



### WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER AT SCHOOL LEVEL?

Trials of the IQS self-evaluation approach suggest that the conditions for using it most effectively include:

- space (time and resources) in a school's development programme
- active support of gifted and talented pupils by key players, notably the headteacher
- involvement of all stakeholders
- good leadership systems for gifted and talented provision, and open channels of influence
- effective approaches to whole-school monitoring
- enthusiasm and commitment.

Schools that have already established a whole-school focus on gifted and talented provision will tend to have the edge on schools that are using the instrument for the first time. This can create opportunities, however, for sharing good practice among schools, especially if more experienced schools collaborate with less experienced ones.

Approaches for successfully using the Quality Standard at whole-school level include:

- discussion: sharing interpretations and forging a consensus understanding of the various elements of the Standard; moderation of judgements and evidence
- sharing of practice: pairing schools, for example a less experienced school teamed with a more experienced one; developing action groups within schools; formal or informal support networks
- systematic and intensive exploration of the Quality Standard with matched groups of schools, for example those likely to be at pre-entry level.

**WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER AT CLASSROOM LEVEL?**

Any whole-school self-evaluation process has implications for teaching and learning in the classroom. The Institutional Quality Standard is designed to facilitate the auditing of every aspect of provision for gifted and talented pupils. The element 'Effective provision in the classroom' (shown below) is a key area for specific consideration by class teachers, and allows the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator and the Senior Management Team to build up an accurate understanding of levels of provision throughout the school.

1. Effective provision in the classroom	i. The school/college addresses the different needs of the gifted and talented population by providing a stimulating learning environment and by extending the teaching repertoire	i. Teaching and learning strategies are diverse and flexible, meeting the needs of distinct pupil groups within the gifted and talented population (e.g. able underachievers, exceptionally able)	i. The school/college has established a range of methods to find out what works best in the classroom, and shares this within the school/college and with other schools and colleges
	ii. Teaching and learning is differentiated and delivered through both individual and group activities	ii. A range of challenging learning and teaching strategies is evident in lesson planning and delivery. <b>Independent learning</b> skills are developed.	ii. Teaching and learning are suitably challenging and varied, incorporating the <b>breadth, depth</b> and <b>pace</b> required to progress high achievement. Pupils routinely work independently and self-reliantly
	iii. Opportunities exist to extend learning through <b>new technologies</b>	iii. The use of <b>new technologies</b> across the curriculum is focused on <b>personalised learning</b> needs	iii. The innovative use of <b>new technologies</b> raises the achievement and motivation of gifted and talented pupils
<b>Evidence</b>			
<b>Next steps</b>			

<http://www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat/website/staticpages/QualityStandards>.

The issues of classroom provision outlined in the Institutional Quality Standard may be further explored using the draft Classroom Quality Standard (CQS), which is intended to give more detailed guidance to classroom teachers. An extract from the draft Classroom Quality Standard is shown on the next page.

Effective provision in the classroom	<p>i. The teacher has well-founded and secure subject knowledge and understanding to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils.</p> <p>The teacher accesses specialist support where appropriate</p>	<p>i. The teacher has an understanding of progressions and connections within subjects and areas of expertise using these flexibly in response to individual learning needs and to sustain motivation.</p>	<p>i. The teacher extends and deepens knowledge through involvement in wider professional networks associated with the subject/area of expertise in support of progression for gifted and talented pupils.</p> <p>The teacher supports and coaches other colleagues to develop expertise with and talented pupils.</p>
	<p>ii. The teacher addresses the different needs of the gifted and talented population by providing a broad range of stimulating experiences to enrich and extend learning. For example, by providing challenge through questioning.</p>	<p>ii. Teaching and learning strategies are diverse and flexible, meeting the needs of distinct pupil groups within the gifted and talented population (e.g. able underachievers, exceptionally able)</p>	<p>ii. The teacher routinely evaluates and develops practice in collaboration with colleagues within and beyond the school, integrating recent developments, including those relating to pedagogy and research</p>
	<p>iii. Teaching and learning assist individual pupils in developing a) independent learning, b) study skills</p>	<p>iii. A range of challenging learning and teaching methodologies is evident in lesson planning and delivery.</p> <p>Metacognitive skills are developed through a range of strategies that reflect individual learning needs</p>	<p>iii. The teacher is critical and reflective in creating challenging and varied experiences to progress high achievement.</p> <p>Pupils routinely work independently and self-reliantly using a range of strategies</p>

	iv. The teacher promotes and utilises opportunities that exist within school to enrich and extend learning through new technologies	iv. The teacher personalises learning by directing use of new technologies to individual learning needs	iv. The teacher is innovative in the use of new technologies to effectively raise the achievement and motivation of gifted and talented pupils
<b>Evidence</b>			
<b>Next steps</b>			

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The Classroom Quality Standard, currently in draft form, is being refined, developed and trialled with a range of partners. It is designed to amplify the Institutional Quality Standard and will enable class teachers to consider the detailed implementation of effective classroom teaching for gifted and talented pupils in their own phase and context.

A [draft version](#) of the CQS has been placed on the 'Quality Standards' page of the G&TWISE website. As with the Institutional Quality Standard, the Classroom Quality Standard should be seen as a general tool for whole-school improvement, and not just a way of targeting provision for the gifted and talented.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The G&TWISE website allows the user to work through the Institutional Quality Standard online. The IQS and user guidance may be downloaded from here. A free online tutorial explains the IQS and offers guidance on how to use it.  
<http://www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat/QSTool>

The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) are also producing a 20-minute interactive programme in their 'Nutshell series', with extension modules for teachers to explore the IQS and its uses.  
<http://www.nace.co.uk/home.htm>

### RECOMMENDED READING

- *A New Relationship with Schools: Improving Performance through School Self-Evaluation* (DfES)
- *Evaluating School Self-Evaluation* by Peter Rudd and Deborah Davies (National Association for Educational Research)
- *Inspection, Self-Evaluation and Improvement in Primary and Post Primary schools* (Report by the Education and Training inspectorate of Northern Ireland)