



Care and Learning Service

Highland Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers

**LNCT Agreement No. 16
(revised June 2019)**

Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Self-evaluation for self-improvement: improving outcomes for all learners

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Improvement Framework, first published in 2016, sets the agenda for improvement in the Scottish education system and stresses the need for a reflective and collegiate approach, based on partnership working, to delivering improvement.

Effective school improvement revolves around systematic self-evaluation, action planning, career-long professional learning and quality assurance. This can only be achieved within an ethos of trust and co-operation demonstrated through supportive professional relationships.

The practice of learning and teaching, the central purpose of schools, is a collective responsibility involving a range of professionals and partners. The Highland Council is committed to delivering improvement through effective self-evaluation and seeks to promote a systematic collegiate approach to securing improvement in each school under the overall management, leadership and direction of the Head Teacher through appropriate consultation and involvement with staff, pupils, parents and other partners. It seeks to do so through collaborative working and an approach to staff professional learning designed to meet the needs of teaching staff, support staff, managers and the wider school community.

How good is our school? (4th Edition) and *How good is our early learning and childcare?* identify self-evaluation for self-improvement as being of central importance in the process of bringing about improvements in the education system and in both documents self-evaluation for self-improvement is the first Quality Indicator. The key themes in this Quality Indicator are collaborative approaches, analysis and evaluation of evidence, and ensuring impact for children and young people. This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. *How good is our school? (4th Edition)* comments that “self-evaluation should not be seen as an ‘add-on’ or involve lots of additional time and bureaucracy. It should focus on the key work of [the] school - learning and teaching. Evidence gathered should arise from [...] ongoing work. The most important thing is being able to demonstrate impact in relation to improved outcomes for [...] learners.”

This prioritisation of self-evaluation activity is reflected in the General Teaching Council for Scotland’s Professional Standards. The *Standard for Leadership and Management* states that Head Teachers, working with others, should “establish, sustain and enhance the culture of self-evaluation for school improvement”, and that middle leaders should “develop a range of strategies for individual and collective self-evaluation which contribute to school improvement”. The *Standard for Registration* states that registered teachers should “reflect and engage in self-evaluation” and should “evaluate, and adapt their classroom practice rigorously

and systematically, taking account of feedback from others, to enhance teaching and learning". The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning" states that professional actions include "Develop[ing] skills of rigorous and critical self-evaluation, reflection and enquiry including how to investigate and evidence impact on learners and professional practice".

How good is our school? (4th Edition) and *How good is our early learning and childcare?* identify three main ways in which schools should evaluate the quality of educational provision. These are: firstly, direct observation, secondly, gathering people's views and thirdly, interrogation of data. This LNCT agreement and supporting documentation will explore each of these. These key documents also stress the importance of looking inwards ("knowing ourselves inside out through effective self-evaluation"), outwards ("learning from what happens elsewhere to challenge our own thinking") and forwards ("exploring what the future might hold for today's learners and planning how to get there").

Time should be set aside in each school's Working Time Agreement for self-evaluation activity and collegiate discussion about this activity.

2. DIRECT OBSERVATION

2.1 Rationale

Classroom observation and evaluation of learning and teaching must constitute part of the professional dialogue which takes place within schools and it must take place within the appropriate ethos. "*Collegiality is at the heart of the National Tripartite Agreement "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century (2001)"*"¹. "*Classroom observation aimed at improving teaching and learning can only be achieved in an environment which is supportive and where good professional relationships exist.*"² It is based within the context of improving teaching and learning across the school and must be based on a collegiate approach to school management and form part of self, school and departmental evaluation.

An important element of reviewing learning, teaching and assessment should consist of structured classroom observation in relation to agreed and easily understood criteria based on *How Good is Our School?(4th Edition)* and *How good is our early learning and childcare?* If self-evaluation is to be the cornerstone of the process then it is essential that the teacher who is evaluating his or her work is enabled and encouraged to take the initiative in requesting and commissioning observation by a manager or colleague. The process of evaluation should acknowledge good practice and reinforce the Highland Council position on self-evaluation as the cornerstone, based on mutual respect and trust, of any improvement process in the service.

¹ Joint SNCT initial statement on Collegiality – June 2005

² EIS advice to members on Classroom Observation and Monitoring

In particular:

- Senior Management has a responsibility to visit and support teachers and pupils at work in the classroom.
- The main purpose of any visits by Head Teachers and others should be related to support for teaching and learning. Classroom visits should assist the teacher in terms of their own professional development.
- Such visits work best when they are part of an agreed whole-school approach to reviewing learning and teaching in the context of the School Improvement Plan and should help to inform the school's evaluation of how effectively agreed improvement projects relating to educational provision are being implemented..
- The common framework of reference should be the Quality Indicator 2.3 (Learning, teaching and assessment) in *How Good is Our School?* (4th edition) and *How good is our early learning and childcare?*
- An approach which is based on a "clipboard checklist" is inappropriate and must be avoided.
- Staff should be involved in setting any agenda for such visits through individual and/or group discussion.
- There should be feedback relayed to staff in a professional manner by Head Teachers or other observers.

Schools are encouraged to enable a systematic programme of classroom visits by Senior Management Team, Principal Teachers and other staff as appropriate to sample learning and teaching against the appropriate performance indicators and related to the school development plan.

2.2 Forms of observation

Observation will focus on the quality of the learning experience of pupils.

Observation and support can be undertaken in a number of ways:

- working alongside the class teacher in a team-teaching situation
- releasing the class teacher for consultation or development work
- undertaking focussed class visits [based on identified and agreed quality indicators] to work with pupils and to observe teaching and learning
- sampling pupils' work both in and out of class
- observation of wall displays etc
- observation of the conduct of children and young people within school e.g. in classes, in corridors, in lunch hall and in playground.

The observer should work with the teacher in some of the ways detailed above. It is essential, in this context, that the observer is actively involved in the conduct of the lesson.

The observer should not spend any time making detailed written notes during observation sessions. Any brief notes may be kept to inform feedback sessions and should be shared with the teacher observed.

2.3 Focus of observation

The focus of the observation and timing should be agreed beforehand, be extracted from *How good is our school? (4th edition)* and be subject to self-evaluation by the teacher before the lesson is observed. Subsequent feedback and professional dialogue should use Quality Indicator 2.3 (Learning, teaching and assessment) as the agenda.

2.4 Peer Observation as part of a Collegiate Approach

All peer observation should stem from the initiative of the teachers wishing to develop a collegiate approach to self-evaluation and should be encouraged as part of a whole school agreed approach to self-evaluation. Such an approach is actively encouraged by the authority. The sharing of good practice and professional dialogue should be the key driver for such initiatives.

The development of peer review and collegiality through the *How good is our school? (4th edition)* framework should encourage staff to:

- shadow individual pupils
- follow a class
- observe lessons
- video record their own teaching
- exchange classes where practicable
- observe each other in pairs
- work alongside other teachers

2.5 Feedback

The observation should result in verbal feedback to, and discussion with, the teacher in relation to the quality indicators and illustrations previously agreed and self-evaluated. The observer should write up comments after the lesson and provide written feedback to the teacher. A possible template for this written record is provided in the accompanying paper.

The primary audience for the feedback is the teacher with the results of the observation being included in the teacher's own self-evaluation record. A summary of the observation may, with the agreement of the teacher, be passed to the line manager and be available to the Head Teacher, detailing any agreed professional development actions.

2.6 Quality Improvement Engagement

Self-evaluation activity (including observations) that form any part of Quality Improvement engagement is intended to validate the self-evaluation conclusions of the school. This, therefore, should not form the basis of, or replace, the school's own self-evaluation processes.

3. GATHERING PEOPLE'S VIEWS

3.1 Rationale

How good is our school? (4th edition) states that “Staff, pupils, parents/carers, partners and other stakeholders such as the local authority or governing body should all have regular opportunities to share their views about the school. Examples of how people’s views can be gathered include through surveys, focus groups, ongoing professional dialogue, learning visits and minutes of team meetings.”

Such views should be sought for two main purposes:

- To establish possible areas for prioritisation in School and Departmental/Faculty Improvement Plans
- To establish progress with agreed improvement projects.

3.2 Use of surveys and/or questionnaires

Surveys used with staff, learners, Parents/Carers may be generic (for example the survey used by Her Majesty’s Inspectors prior to school inspections) or may be tailored to explore specific areas of provision within the school. Surveys and questionnaires should not be used to confirm preconceptions about provision and questions, therefore, should be designed in such a way that respondents are not led into providing comments designed to reinforce existing beliefs about provision. To ensure that this is not the case, and in the interests of promoting and sustaining collegiality, it would be beneficial to ensure that there is professional dialogue within the school about the purpose and content of surveys and questionnaires prior to their use.

Surveys and questionnaires should be used to explore areas of educational provision outlined in *How good is our school? (4th edition)*. The results of the use of such surveys and questionnaires should be shared across the school and any actions taken as a result should be agreed through collegiate discussion.

3.3 Use of focus groups

Care should be taken when constituting focus groups to ensure that they are representative and that members of groups feel empowered to give honest responses to questions asked. The purpose of establishing focus groups and the areas to be covered should be agreed through collegiate discussion. The outcomes of focus group discussions should be shared with participants and colleagues and any actions taken as a result should be agreed through collegiate discussion.

3.4 Confidentiality

Care should be taken when conducting surveys and focus groups that ethical considerations should be established, such as the rights of individuals not to be identified if their contributions are shared. Further advice on this is included in the supporting document.

4. INTERROGATION OF DATA

4.1 Rationale

How good is our school? (4th edition) states that Schools collect a wide range of quantitative data for example about attainment, attendance, bullying and prejudice-based discrimination and option choices. Effective self-evaluation includes rigorous interrogation of this data by staff who are data-literate and use the data to recognise emerging issues and when specific interventions are necessary. As with gathering views, analysing data can serve two main purposes:

- To establish possible areas for prioritisation in School and Departmental/Faculty Improvement Plans
- To establish progress with agreed improvement projects.

4.2 Internal and external sources of data

Schools should analyse data collected internally wherever possible to support the improvement planning and delivery processes. Collegiate discussion about sources and gathering of data will help to ensure transparency about the use of data. Staff should be well informed about what data is being collected and used to support the improvement planning process.

External data sources, such as the online Insight tool and the BGE Benchmarking Tool, along with, for example, the Scottish National Standardised Testing diagnostic information can be used to support decisions about improvement priorities. Use of this information should take into account trends in attainment over time as well as looking at outcomes for individuals and cohorts. Teaching staff should be supported to become familiar and proficient with these tools in order to support their own self-evaluation processes.

Further advice about the interrogation of data is given in the supporting document.

5. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SELF-EVALUATION

In order to ensure effective support within the context of collegiate working, appropriate training will be available to meet the needs of staff. Training in the theory and practice of self-evaluation will be offered to Head Teachers, middle leaders and classroom practitioners. This training will emphasise the key messages in the documents mentioned in the introduction to this agreement, and will stress the importance of collegiate and collaborative approaches to all aspects of self-evaluation. Additional training will offer support in the interrogation of data and in the core principles of leading learning, and in the principles of effective learning, teaching and assessment.

6. SELF-EVALUATION GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

More detailed guidance documents accompany this agreement. These provide additional information in each of the three areas of self-evaluation and suggest practical approaches within each.

Signed on behalf of the Council

Signed on behalf of the Teachers' side

Name James Vance
Designation Joint Secretary LNCT
Date 19 June 2019

Name Alistair Bell
Designation Joint Secretary LNCT
Date 19 June 2019

Direct observations

Head Teachers have overall responsibility for ensuring the school has a clearly communicated strategic plan for self-evaluation which is ongoing and evidence-based. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring active self-evaluation in partnership with all stakeholders is at the heart of school improvement. Self-evaluation should not be seen as an “add-on” or involve lots of additional time and bureaucracy. It should focus on the key work of your school - learning and teaching.

What do we mean by direct observations?

Direct observations are learning visits where practitioners “directly observe” learning in action. Learning visits should involve all staff working together to improve the classroom experiences for learners. They should lead to:

- opportunities for staff to reflect on their own practice
- staff learning new skills and techniques from others
- the development of practice to incorporate new concepts and ideas
- evaluations of the impact of changes in practice
- a shared understanding of standards and expectations across the school
- improvements in learning and teaching



Effective school improvement revolves around systematic self-evaluation, action planning, career-long professional learning (CLPL) and quality assurance. This can only be achieved within an ethos of trust and co-operation demonstrated through supportive professional relationships.

(LNCT Agreement no. 16 – Self-evaluation for self-improvement)

Steps to Success



Ensure a shared understanding of quality learning within the school and ELC setting

Plan a cycle of learning visits and agree who will be involved

Communicate and agree with staff the scope of the observations and the format they may take

Allow time for professional dialogue to take place after the observation and agreed actions to be identified, agreed and recorded

Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of observations to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Always revisit agreed priorities for development



Ensure a shared understanding of quality learning within the school and ELC setting

Work with staff to agree what high quality learning ‘looks like’ in the school and ELC setting, and capture this within the school’s own LTA policy or guidelines e.g. ‘what makes a great lesson’ set of success criteria. Along with *HGIOS?4* and *HGIOELC* QI 2.3 these will be the focus of observations and will form the core content of any observation feedback records. In reality this will take time and there will undoubtedly be a lot of discussion around this. Agree what is important for the school and ELC setting. Staff should be clear about, and involved in agreeing what makes a good lesson. Remember that in ELC setting *How good is our early learning and childcare* is the core tool for self-evaluation.

“This process is on-going and I found it best to pick something that we could all work towards e.g. sharing learning intentions and then agree with everyone in the school what this looks like and follow up with lesson observations to make sure it was being implemented, then move on to, for example, questioning and do the same thing with that. This made the process seem more manageable rather than saying you just wanted high quality teaching.” *Highland Head Teacher*



Plan a cycle of learning visits and agree who will be involved

The cycle of visits should be planned as part of the annual calendar of activities agreed by staff. Each teacher should have two classroom visits per academic year. With the agreement of staff, schools may wish to consider identifying periods of time when the visits could take place, rather than specifying exact dates and times. This allows for a system based on day to day practice and removes any expectation of a one off “crit” lesson. The use and sharing of the pro-formas (see pages 6 and 7) helps to identify agreed actions and focus for follow-up visits. These arrangements do not preclude teachers and practitioners choosing to undertake further peer observations relevant to their CLPL needs.

**Communicate and agree with staff the scope of the observations and the format they may take**

Learning visits will probably focus on Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment. However, schools and pre-schools may agree a particular focus within these or within another QI. For the process to succeed and impact upon future developments, the emphasis must be on the quality of the learners' classroom or ELC setting experience and not a mechanistic monitoring of teacher performance. Observations can take a variety of formats and this should be agreed beforehand. There is no magic formula or set time for this and the observation should suit the focus and activity.


**Allow time for professional dialogue to take place after the observation and agreed actions to be identified, agreed and recorded**

Making time for feedback is the most important step to the success of learning visits and is an essential element of the process. In collaboration, the key strengths of the lesson and the areas for further development should be agreed. There is a suggested pro-forma for this in Appendix 1. The use of any pro-forma should be agreed at whole school level. It is important to balance both **challenge** and **support** during the feedback sessions. By the end of the discussion, there should be agreed strengths and agreed areas for development which should link into the teacher's or practitioner's development agenda.

“The structured feedback and agreed targets were a very positive move.”
group of teachers from a Highland School

**Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of observations to inform teachers' CLPL plans**

Learning visits should be recorded and the outcomes used to inform teacher, ELC setting and whole school improvement agendas. Staff should be given opportunities to share and discuss the outcomes of classroom visits and SMT should begin to seek out links and evidence for whole school improvement planning. The end product should certainly not be bureaucratic files of paperwork to show that class visits have happened. The end product should be an improvement in learners' experiences.



“HMI asked me to show them where learning visits have resulted in improvements in learning and teaching. I scabbled around to find records of visits and quickly realised that whilst they had been happening, we had no system for collating them and in reality no idea of the impact of them.” *Highland Head Teacher*

Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Senior managers should establish a CLPL programme that links into the school/ELC setting or ASG improvement plan and takes forward practice in learning and teaching. The class teacher/practitioner also has a responsibility to reflect on their own CLPL, and in discussion with their line manager, should identify activities to help achieve their agreed areas for development. This may well link into peer visits e.g. a teacher who has identified the sharing of success criteria as a development may well wish to visit a teacher who shows strong practice in this area either across the school/ELC setting or wider. The time spent on diagnosis and self-evaluation needs to be balanced by the time spent on development.



Always revisit agreed priorities for development

The starting point for the follow up visit should be the areas the teacher or practitioner was working to develop. Observers should consider these when they are undertaking the follow up visit. The developments/changes made since the last lesson and the professional development activities that led to these should form the basis of the follow up discussion, with the focus again being on the learners' experiences. Where appropriate, there should then be further agreed next steps which should form the basis of the process the following session.

In this way the process then becomes cyclical. Schools and ELC settings may arrange the cycle of learning visits in different ways. They will have to balance the need for continuity of personnel with the benefits of feedback on practice from a range of perspectives. The important thing is that a system is in place to ensure that developments have “impacted” and can be seen in the classroom or ELC setting in terms of learners' experiences.

Initial visit

Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Learning visits – to be completed collaboratively by the staff involved

Date	Staff involved	Lesson observed
Agreed focus (This may include areas from the SIP and/or areas identified by the teacher). It is likely that reference will be made here to QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.		
Strengths:		
Areas for Development:		
Agreed Actions to achieve Developments:		

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Follow-up visit

Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Learning visits – to be completed collaboratively by the staff involved

Date	Staff involved	Lesson observed
Agreed focus (This may include areas from the SIP and/or areas identified by the teacher). It is likely that reference will be made here to QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.		

Agreed Areas for Development:

Improvements in agreed areas since first visit:

Areas for development for next cycle of visits

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Direct observations

Head Teachers have overall responsibility for ensuring the school has a clearly communicated strategic plan for self-evaluation which is ongoing and evidence-based. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring active self-evaluation in partnership with all stakeholders is at the heart of school improvement. Self-evaluation should not be seen as an “add-on” or involve lots of additional time and bureaucracy. It should focus on the key work of your school - learning and teaching.

What do we mean by direct observations?

Direct observations are learning visits where practitioners “directly observe” learning in action. Learning visits should involve all staff working together to improve the classroom experiences for learners. They should lead to:

- opportunities for staff to reflect on their own practice
- staff learning new skills and techniques from others
- the development of practice to incorporate new concepts and ideas
- evaluations of the impact of changes in practice
- a shared understanding of standards and expectations across the school
- **improvements in learning and teaching**



Effective school improvement revolves around systematic self-evaluation, action planning, career-long professional learning (CLPL) and quality assurance. This can only be achieved within an ethos of trust and co-operation demonstrated through supportive professional relationships.

Steps to Success



Ensure a shared understanding of quality learning within the school setting

Plan a cycle of learning visits and agree who will be involved

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Allow time for professional dialogue to take place after the observation and agreed actions to be identified, agreed and recorded

Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of observations to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Always revisit agreed priorities for development

**Ensure a shared understanding of quality learning within the school**

Work with staff to agree what high quality learning ‘looks like’ in the school, and capture this within the school’s own LTA policy or guidelines e.g. ‘what makes a great lesson’ set of success criteria. Along with *HGIOS?4* QI 2.3 and 3.2 these will be the focus of observations and will form the core content of any observation feedback records. In reality this will take time and there will undoubtedly be a lot of discussion around this. Agree what is important for the school. This could be discussed at a CPD session. Staff should be clear about, and involved in agreeing what makes a good lesson.

“This process is on-going and I found it best to pick something that we could all work towards e.g. sharing learning intentions and then agree with everyone in the school what this looks like and follow up with lesson observations to make sure it was being implemented, then move on to, for example, questioning and do the same thing with that. This made the process seem more manageable rather than saying you just wanted high quality teaching.” *Highland Head Teacher*

**Plan a cycle of learning visits and agree who will be involved**

The cycle of visits should be planned as part of the annual calendar of activities agreed by staff. Each teacher should have two classroom visits per academic year. With the agreement of staff, schools may wish to consider identifying periods of time when the visits could take place, rather than specifying exact dates and times. This allows for a system based on day to day practice and removes any expectation of a one off “crit” lesson. The use and sharing of the pro-formas (see pages 6 and 7) helps to identify agreed actions and focus for follow-up visits. These arrangements do not preclude teachers choosing to undertake further peer observations relevant to their CLPL needs.



Communicate and agree with staff the scope of the observations and the format they may take

Learning visits will probably focus on Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment. However, schools and pre-schools may agree a particular focus within these or within another QI. For the process to succeed and impact upon future developments, the emphasis must be on the quality of the learners' classroom experience and not a mechanistic monitoring of teacher performance. Observations can take a variety of formats and this should be agreed beforehand. There is no magic formula or set time for this and the observation should suit the focus and activity.



Allow time for professional dialogue to take place after the observation and agreed actions to be identified, agreed and recorded

Making time for feedback is the most important step to the success of learning visits and is an essential element of the process. In collaboration, the key strengths of the lesson and the areas for further development should be agreed. There is a suggested pro-forma for this in Appendix 1. The use of any pro-forma should be agreed at whole school level. It is important to balance both **challenge** and **support** during the feedback sessions. By the end of the discussion, there should be agreed strengths and agreed areas for development which should link into the teacher's development agenda.

“The structured feedback and agreed targets were a very positive move.”
group of teachers from a Highland School



Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of observations to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Learning visits should be recorded and the outcomes used to inform teacher, departmental and whole school improvement agendas. Staff should be given opportunities to share and discuss the outcomes of classroom visits and promoted staff should begin to seek out links and evidence for whole school and departmental improvement planning. The end product should certainly not be bureaucratic files of paperwork to show that class visits have happened. The end product should be an improvement in learners' experiences.

“HMI asked me to show them where learning visits have resulted in improvements in learning and teaching. I scabbled around to find records of visits and quickly realised that whilst they had been happening, we had no system for collating them and in reality no idea of the impact of them.” *Highland Head Teacher*



Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Senior managers should establish a CLPL programme that links into the school/department or ASG improvement plan and takes forward practice in learning and teaching. The class teacher also has a responsibility to reflect on their own CLPL, and in discussion with their line manager, should identify activities to help achieve their agreed areas for development. This may well link into peer visits e.g. a teacher who has identified the sharing of success criteria as a development may well wish to visit a teacher who shows strong practice in this area either across the school or wider. The time spent on diagnosis and self-evaluation needs to be balanced by the time spent on development.



Always revisit agreed priorities for development

The starting point for the follow up visit should be the areas the teacher was working to develop. Observers should consider these when they are undertaking the follow up visit. The developments/changes made since the last lesson and the professional development activities that led to these should form the basis of the follow up discussion, with the focus again being on the learners' experiences. Where appropriate there should then be further agreed next steps which should form the basis of the process the following session.

In this way the process then becomes cyclical. Schools may arrange the cycle of learning visits in different ways. They will have to balance the need for continuity of personnel with the benefits of feedback on practice from a range of perspectives. The important thing is that a system is in place to ensure that developments have “impacted” and can be seen in the classroom in terms of learners' experiences.

Initial visit

Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Learning visits – to be completed collaboratively by the staff involved

Date	Staff involved	Lesson observed
Agreed focus (This may include areas from the SIP and/or areas identified by the teacher). It is likely that reference will be made here to QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.		
Strengths:		
Areas for Development:		
Agreed Actions to achieve Developments:		

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Follow-up visit

Self-evaluation for self-improvement

Learning visits – to be completed collaboratively by the staff involved

Date	Staff involved	Lesson observed
Agreed focus (This may include areas from the SIP and/or areas identified by the teacher). It is likely that reference will be made here to Q1 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.		

Agreed Areas for Development:

Improvements in agreed areas since first visit:

Areas for development for next cycle of visits

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Gathering People's Views

Head Teachers have overall responsibility for ensuring the school has a clearly communicated strategic plan for self-evaluation which is ongoing and evidence-based. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring active self-evaluation in partnership with all stakeholders is at the heart of school improvement. Self-evaluation should not be seen as an “add-on” or involve lots of additional time and bureaucracy. It should focus on the key work of your school - learning and teaching.

What do we mean by gathering people's views?

Gathering people's views will help individuals and teams of staff and partners across the school community to analyse the impact of their work on learners. Developing self-evaluation questions and identifying relevant partners can create a focused context for gathering views from across the school community. This approach can help schools identify aspects of school life which need a greater focus through individual professional development or collegiate working. Staff, pupils, parents/carers, partners and other stakeholders such as the local authority or governing body should all have regular opportunities to share their views about the school. Examples of how people's views can be gathered include through:

- surveys,
- focus groups,
- ongoing professional dialogue,
- learning visits and
- minutes of team meetings.



Through regular and effective collaboration our community has a shared understanding of the school's strengths and improvement needs. We have developed very effective mechanisms to consult with stakeholders and can show how their views inform change and improvement.

(How good is our school? 4th edition – QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement, Level 5 illustration)

Steps to Success



Ensure that agreed school improvement priorities are the result of collegiate working

Plan a cycle of consultative processes to gather views from the school community to support work on agreed improvement priorities

Communicate and agree with staff the scope of these consultative processes and the format they may take

Allow time for professional dialogue to take place after the consultations have taken place and agree resulting actions for future improvement activity

Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of consultation processes to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Always revisit agreed priorities for development



Ensure that agreed school improvement priorities are the result of collegiate working

Each session's School Improvement Plan should be the result of collegiate working leading to agreement across the school community about improvement priorities and associated actions. All staff in the school should be clear that self-evaluation activity throughout the session, including gathering people's views, is intended to support the monitoring and evaluation of current improvement actions and to inform decisions about future improvement priorities. Allied documents, such as Department and Faculty Improvement Plans, should also be the result of such collegiate working.

"Learners, parents, staff and members of the community all have important perspectives on learning. Individually each is valuable. Taken together, people's views can be a major force for innovation and improvement."

Education Scotland, Opening up learning through exploring and using people's views



Plan a cycle of consultative processes to gather views from the school community to support work on agreed improvement priorities

The process of gathering people's views should be planned alongside the development of the annual School Improvement Plan (and allied documents, such as Departmental or Faculty Improvement Plans). Gathering people's views throughout the school session should allow staff to consider the impact of interventions being implemented to support the school's improvement priorities. The cycle of gathering views should be clear and transparent for the whole school community, with the purpose of this work known and understood by all. Careful consideration should be given to the timing of the process, so that people's views are gathered at a time when they can most usefully contribute to monitoring and evaluating progress with agreed improvement priorities or to helping to inform future priorities.

The important implication here is that gathering views is a process of discovery, and should not be used simply to confirm previously held views.



Communicate and agree with staff the scope of these consultative processes and the format they may take

This is an important part of the process. In advance of any gathering of views, staff should be clear about the methods being used (for example, surveys, questionnaires or focus groups). This would include collegiate discussion with staff regarding the specific areas of enquiry and questions to be used, and the ways in which the consultation links with agreed improvement priorities, as well as the names of those whose views are being gathered (this would include clarity about the rationale for selecting those whose views are being sought: for example, the membership of staff or pupil focus groups).



Allow time for professional dialogue to take place after the consultations have taken place and agree resulting actions for future improvement activity

Data and other information gathered as the result of gathering people's views should be shared across the school community, in such a way that confidentiality is protected as appropriate, and that bias and preconception does not affect the interpretation of findings. Conclusions to be drawn from views gathered should be reached through collegiate discussion, so that all possible interpretations of the views expressed can be considered. In this way, the gathering of views can contribute to the school community agreeing about the effectiveness of current improvement work and the rationale for decisions about future improvement activity.

“It is important to keep in mind that the intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalise but to determine the range, not to make statements about the population, but to provide insights about how people perceive a situation.”

R A Krueger, Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Sage Press, 1994



Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of consultation processes to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Conclusions from the process of gathering people's views should be recorded and the outcomes used to inform teacher, departmental and whole school improvement agendas. Staff should be given opportunities to share and discuss the outcomes from the process of gathering views, and promoted staff, in consultation, should begin to seek out links and evidence for whole school and departmental improvement planning. This should include engagement with staff about how carefully planned CLPL can provide support in bringing about agreed

improvement priorities. Time for such planning should be built into the school's Working Time Agreement.

“Any form of reporting of focus group results should address the questions of whether the objectives were achieved, what was confirmed or challenged by the findings, and what new ideas emerged.”

Lia Litosseliti, Using Focus Groups in Research, Continuum Press, 2007



Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Senior managers should establish a CLPL programme that links into the school/department or ASG improvement plan and takes forward practice in learning and teaching. The class teacher also has a responsibility to reflect on their own CLPL, and in discussion with their line manager, should identify activities to help achieve their agreed areas for development. Where the gathering of views helps the school to identify areas of good practice, time should be planned to allow such practice to be shared across the school. The time spent on diagnosis and self-evaluation needs to be balanced by the time spent on development.



Always revisit agreed priorities for development

It is important to continue to gather views from the whole school community about progress with agreed improvement priorities. In each year's improvement cycle, time should be planned in to gather views about how well previous improvement activity has been maintained. There should, as always, be a collegiate approach to deciding on how this might be best achieved.

Using Quantitative Data

Headteachers have overall responsibility for ensuring the school has a clearly communicated strategic plan for self-evaluation which is ongoing and evidence-based. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring active self-evaluation in partnership with all stakeholders is at the heart of school improvement. Self-evaluation should not be seen as an “add-on” or involve lots of additional time and bureaucracy. It should focus on the key work of your school - learning and teaching.

What do we mean by using quantitative data?

Schools collect a wide range of quantitative data, for example about attainment, attendance, bullying and prejudice-based discrimination and option choices. Effective self-evaluation includes rigorous interrogation by data-literate staff who use the data to recognise emerging issues and when specific interventions are necessary. Schools should have effective systems and processes in place to gather and interrogate quantitative data to inform improvement across a range of areas. Schools should use this to establish a collective understanding of the rationale for improvement to ensure effective collaboration across the whole school community. Schools should ensure their community has a clear understanding of what quantitative data is being used to measure progress linked to the Quality Indicators (QIs) in *How good is our school? 4th edition (HGIOS?4)* and improvement planning. They should analyse and discuss this collectively and timeously to inform measurement and next steps.



All staff analyse and use evidence very well to ensure a clear focus on those priorities which will have greatest impact.

(How good is our school? 4th edition – QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement, Level 5 illustration)

Steps to Success



Ensure that agreed school improvement priorities are the result of collegiate working

Plan a cycle of data collection and analysis to support work on agreed improvement priorities

Communicate and agree with staff the scope of the planned data collection and analysis and how it links to improvement planning

Allow time for professional dialogue to take place following data collection and analysis and agree resulting actions for future improvement activity

Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of data collection and analysis to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Always revisit agreed priorities for development



Ensure that agreed school improvement priorities are the result of collegiate working

Each session's School Improvement Plan should be the result of collegiate working leading to agreement across the school community about improvement priorities and associated actions. All staff in the school should be clear that self-evaluation activity throughout the session, including data collection and analysis, is intended to support the monitoring and evaluation of current improvement actions and to inform decisions about future improvement priorities. Allied documents, such as Department and Faculty Improvement Plans, should also be the result of such collegiate working.

"We regularly interrogate data, making use of digital technology to support this where relevant and appropriate. We have taken steps to ensure all planning, monitoring, tracking and evaluating is manageable and relevant for all involved."

How good is our school? 4th edition – QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement, Level 5 illustration



Plan a cycle of data collection and analysis to support work on agreed improvement priorities

Planning the cycle should be a collegiate activity and should be designed to assist the school in monitoring progress against already agreed improvement priorities or to help to establish areas for future improvement activity. Examples of the types of quantitative data gathered for analysis include:

- Tracking and monitoring – On-going assessment of progress
- Attendance
- Behaviour and rewards systems
- Summative attainment and achievement – CfE achievement of a level judgements, Scottish Qualifications Authority results and other accredited attainment and wider achievement awards
- Diagnostic assessments – Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) and other assessments
- Socio-economic data
- etc

Tools that should be used to aid the analysis of data include:

- Seemis Click and Go
- Seemis Tracking, monitoring and reporting package (secondary only)
- School-based tracking and monitoring systems
- SNSA reports - individual, class and school
- Seemis Risk Matrix package
- Broad General Education (BGE) toolkit and BGE dashboard
- Insight Senior Phase benchmarking tool
- School Business Intelligence Libraries - school datasets collated by the local authority
- etc

School collection and analysis of data should be linked to the QIs in *How good is our school? 4th edition*.

A key message here is that collecting and analysing data is a process of discovery, and should not be used simply to confirm previously held views.



Communicate and agree with staff the scope of the planned data collection and analysis and how it links to improvement planning

This is an important part of the process. In advance of any collection of data, staff should be involved in planning what quantitative data is being used to measure progress linked to *HGIOS?4* QIs and improvement planning. They should analyse and discuss this collectively and timeously to inform measurement and next steps. Schools should ensure that tracking and monitoring systems and processes are manageable and reduce bureaucracy. They should also be planned in a timeous manner to ensure they inform improved outcomes for learners while considering workload implications for teaching staff.



Allow time for professional dialogue to take place following data collection and analysis and agree resulting actions for future improvement activity

Information gathered as the result of data collection and analysis should be shared across the school community, in such a way that confidentiality is protected as appropriate, and that bias and preconception does not affect the interpretation of findings. Conclusions to be drawn from the data analysed should be reached through collegiate discussion, so that all possible interpretations of the data can be considered. In this way, the gathering of views can contribute to the school community agreeing about the effectiveness of current improvement work and the rationale for decisions about future improvement activity. It is important that data relating to school outcomes should not be seen as being

“owned” by any group within the school, but instead should be seen as the property of the entire school community.

“All staff have a very clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community. They use this knowledge well to shape the vision for the school community.”
How good is our school? 4th edition – Q1 1.3 Leadership of change, Features of highly effective practice



Make sure that a system is in place to communicate and collate outcomes of data collection and analysis to inform teachers' CLPL plans

Conclusions from the process of data collection and analysis should be recorded and the outcomes used to inform teacher, departmental and whole school improvement agendas. Staff should be given opportunities to share and discuss the outcomes from the process of analysing data, and promoted staff, in consultation, should begin to explore the implications for whole school and departmental improvement planning. This should include engagement with staff about how carefully planned CLPL can provide support in bringing about agreed improvement priorities. Time for such planning should be built into the school's Working Time Agreement.

“All teachers have well-developed skills of data analysis which are focused on improvement.”
How good is our school? 4th edition – Q1 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment, Features of highly effective practice



Inform whole school improvement planning and identify effective staff CLPL to help take forward agreed aspects for development

Senior managers should establish a CLPL programme that links into the school/department or ASG improvement plan and takes forward practice in learning and teaching. The class teacher also has a responsibility to reflect on their own CLPL, and in discussion with their line manager, should identify activities to help achieve their agreed areas for development. Where data collection and analysis helps the school to identify areas of good practice, time should be planned to allow such practice to be shared across the school. The time spent on diagnosis and self-evaluation needs to be balanced by the time spent on development. Some specific training around data use should be planned relevant training should be provided to ensure all teaching staff are able

to use the data tools, listed above, to analyse data effectively to inform improvement. For example, all teaching staff should have access to, and be

sufficiently trained in, the Risk Matrix tool. Staff should be encouraged to use this tool to understand the context of their learners and use this to inform planning around potential barriers to learning for children and young people they teach. Schools should ensure effective systems are in place for moderation, with time allocated for staff to discuss and analyse teacher judgement and summative attainment against benchmarks, diagnostic and baseline assessment. Schools should ensure staff have sufficient training to be able to use the BGE benchmarking and Insight tools to analyse effectively their cohort attainment data to inform next steps in improvement.

“Very good progress is demonstrated through robust tracking of attainment over time in all curriculum areas and at all stages.”

How good is our school? 4th edition – QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement, Features of highly effective practice



Always revisit agreed priorities for development

It is important to continue to collect and analyse data about progress with agreed improvement priorities. In each year's improvement cycle, time should be planned in to gather data about how well previous improvement activity has been maintained. There should, as always, be a collegiate approach to deciding on how this might be best achieved.