

**14–19: Programme of Support
for Delivery of Change on the Ground**



department for
education and skills

14–19
Quality Assurance
series

Book 1:
**Good practice in
school self-evaluation and
college self-assessment**



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Published by the Learning and Skills Network

www.LSNeducation.org.uk

Registered with the Charity Commissioners

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To request additional copies of this publication or a different format
please contact:

Information Services
Learning and Skills Network
Regent Arcade House
19–25 Argyll Street
London W1F 7LS.
Tel 020 7297 9144
Fax 020 7297 9242
enquiries@LSNeducation.org.uk

Authors: Dr Cheryl A Jones
Copyeditor: Susannah Wight
Cover designer: Joel Quartey
Designers: Joel Quartey and David Shaw and associates
Printer: Impress, Gillingham, Kent

CIMS 062503GR/06/06/5000

ISBN 1–84572–490–9

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Further information

For further information about the issues discussed in this publication
please contact:

the helpline
Tel 0870 872 8080
enquiries@LSNeducation.org.uk

**This publication was funded by the Department for
Education and Skills as part of LSN's 14–19: Programme of Support
for Delivery of Change on the Ground.**

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Acknowledgements

This guide was written by Dr Cheryl A Jones for the Learning and Skills Network. It is the first of a set of three inter-linked guides to 14–19 quality assurance that covers self-evaluation in schools and self-assessment in colleges. The other two guides are *Book 2: Reviewing documentation for school self-evaluation and college self-appraisal* and *Book 3: Managing internal inspections and teaching observations*.

Dr Jones and LSN would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the series: Jayne Morgan, Damien Page and Grace Young of Lewisham College; Toni Beck of Oaklands College; Stephen Miller of Barnfield College; Joe Greenway of Huntingdon Regional College; and Saira Ibrahim of Hertford Regional College.

Foreword

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has agreed to extend LSN's Vocational Learning Support Programme contract to include the delivery of a new programme in 2005/06 – the 14–19: Programme of Support for Delivery of Change on the Ground.

This is a very exciting development. Besides building on LSN's track record on vocational learning, it will also make available to schools and colleges the good practice brought about through the 14–19 Pathfinders and local initiatives. The programme will help to:

- improve delivery in the classroom and workplace through the dissemination of good practice as well as provision of training and resources
- support collaboration between institutions to help increase partnership working and provide high-quality management, organisation and effective delivery
- broaden curriculum provision to include the latest developments in vocational, work-related and work-based learning
- promote inclusive provision
- support the involvement of employers in curriculum design and delivery.

LSN is commissioning the necessary work to deliver the programme with training, consultancy and materials flowing from February 2006 onwards. More detailed information is available via '14–19 news' and the website www.vocationallearning.org.uk/14-19.

The author Dr Cheryl A Jones is an experienced and highly respected inspector of education and training, accomplished researcher, conference speaker and consultant. She has a plethora of knowledge and experience of educational issues and, with a doctorate in the management of the quality of education, is best placed to offer practical guidance to support staff in meeting learners' individual needs to promote learning and ultimately achievement.

Alan Goulbourne

Executive Manager
Vocational Learning

1 Introduction

In the school sector, quality monitoring arrangements are referred to as self-**evaluation**. There is now a mandatory requirement for self-evaluation to culminate in the completion of a self-evaluation form (SEF) completed on a template provided by the Inspectorate. In the post-16 sector, quality monitoring arrangements are referred to as self-**assessment** rather than self-**evaluation**. The self-assessment process must result in a self-assessment report (SAR); although it is compulsory for institutions to complete a SAR, they can decide on the format of the report. These documents are key to inspections under the two new inspection frameworks: Every Child Matters for children's services, and the revised Common Inspection Framework for the post-16 sector.

The 14–19 Quality Assurance series of publications is aimed at senior and middle managers in schools and colleges. This first book provides an overview and the other two guides provide supporting materials. The other two guides are:

Book 2 *Reviewing documentation for school self-evaluation and college self-assessment*

Book 3 *Managing internal inspections and teaching observations.*

It must be stressed that the primary sources of reference for managers are the two inspection frameworks, the DfES publication *A new relationship with schools: improving performance through school self-evaluation* (March 2006) and the LSC publication *Quality improvement and self-assessment* (2005). The three guides in the 14–19 Quality Assurance series should be seen as complementing these key documents.

School SEFs and college SARs are only as good as the outcomes of the quality assurance mechanisms they are based on. Developing quality assurance systems and procedures is one thing, embedding them into daily operations of a school or college is quite another. With SEFs and SAR playing such a crucial role in inspections under the new frameworks, the internal quality systems and procedures of each and every educational establishment will be scrutinised and will need to be 'fit for purpose' in providing a sound evidence base on which to compile a SEF or SAR. DfES and other monitoring bodies look to all providers to adopt strategies for securing continuous improvement:

Primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision rests with the provider.

(DfEE 1999)

Schools and colleges will need to demonstrate to the Inspectorate :

- their capacity to make further improvements
- the effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection.

This publication will analyse the critical success factors that need to be present to evaluate success and puts forward strategies, including checklists to be used by staff at every level to monitor and review 14–19 vocational provision effectively. Schools and colleges will be expected to ‘do it to themselves’ before an inspection as a means of assuring quality and undertaking performance management. Some schools and colleges are going to need a lot of practical support to do this.

A key theme running through this publication is that self-evaluation and self-assessment arrangements have to be ‘robust’, but that does not mean they should be ‘complicated’ ; they should be ‘thorough’ but never ‘bureaucratic’.

This publication has been compiled as a practical guide for busy managers at all levels. It has five sections, and each main section concludes with a key messages fact sheet (or more than one), which summarises the most important points covered. There are also checklists in the annex, which are designed to be photocopied and used by staff as ‘how to’ guides. Managers can use the checklists as part of their quality management arrangements. These documents will help standardise the process and make it easier to focus on what to look for to meet the requirements of both inspection frameworks.

Section 2 clarifies what self-evaluation and self-assessment are, and why institutions are required to carry them out. In Section 3 the critical success factors in self-evaluation and self-assessment are identified. Sections 4 and 5 provide advice and guidance on compiling an effective SEF for a school and a SAR for a college. The annex contains a series of checklists.

2 Self-evaluation and self-assessment

Why undertake self-evaluation/self-assessment?

Primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision rests with the provider. This was made clear in the White Paper *Learning to succeed* (DfEE 1999). To meet this challenge, schools and colleges must effectively devise and successfully implement quality assurance mechanisms as part of their self-evaluation / self-assessment arrangements as a means of continually driving up standards. Maurice Smith, Chief Inspector of Schools, stated:

The new inspection arrangements have raised the bar, and rightly so, but not out of reach. The performance of schools, and the public's expectations of them, have both risen: it is right that inspection should reflect that. Every school should serve its pupils well and should aim to serve them better. (Smith 2006)

Self-evaluation is a mandatory requirement of the inspection frameworks:

- The quality framework used to inspect schools and 14–19 provision as part of Joint Area Reviews is detailed within the Every Child Matters framework.
- The key document used to inspect post-16 provision is the revised Common Inspection Framework (CIF) 2005.

Educational institutions are required to adhere to mandatory external agency requirements which include:

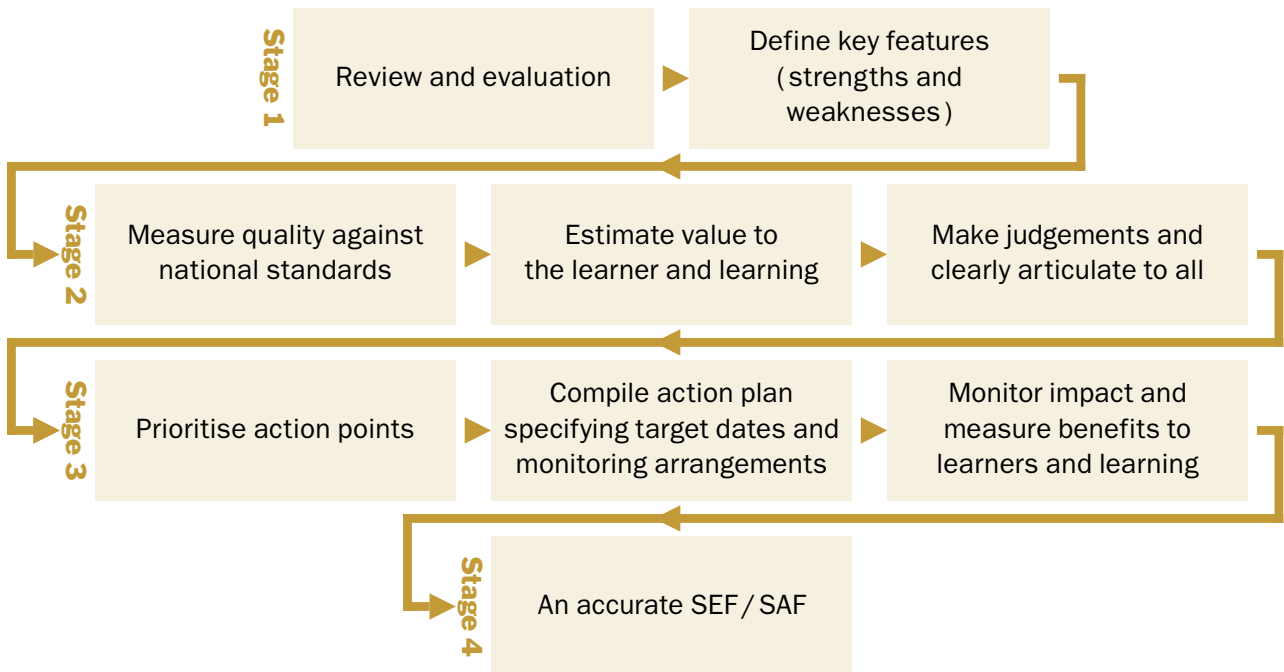
- the Inspectorate
- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- individual examination and awarding bodies' requirements for specific qualifications.

Strengths and weaknesses

All aspects of provision must be reviewed and evaluated using robust quality assurance mechanisms. It is of crucial importance to identify correctly the strengths and weaknesses within each area of provision. Strengths need to be identified to highlight and celebrate good practice. Institutions can use their strengths to resolve areas of concern. Critical issues that manifest themselves in weaknesses must be correctly recognised; they can then be addressed by undertaking the necessary remedial action to rectify them, which in turn will contribute to an institution's capacity to improve.

The continuous monitoring and reviewing of the quality of provision of the school or college, by the school or college, using robust mechanisms can provide evidence on which to compile an accurate SEF and SAR. The challenge for schools and colleges is to obtain a wide range of reliable evidence and make judgements to national standards. Figure 2.1 illustrates the main stages and the steps in completing a SEF or SAR. Managers should also refer to checklists 1 and 2.

Figure 2.1 The key stages and steps of self-evaluation and self-assessment



Internal quality assurance

A key focus of self-evaluation and self-assessment is to use identified good practice to raise standards across the institution, and to promote continuous improvement. Self-evaluation / self-assessment involves drawing on the outcomes of a range of quality assurance systems and procedures such as :

- internal verification
- observations of teaching and learning
- review of learners work
- focus groups to ascertain learners' views.

Quality procedures are important in providing a high-quality service for 14–19 learners, and in producing first-hand evidence on which to compile an accurate SEF or SAR.

Self-evaluation / self-assessment is at the heart of the inspection frameworks :

Self-evaluation/self-assessment will inform the judgments of the inspectorates about how far providers have been successful in securing improvement. (LSC 2005)

Change in ethos

Both inspection frameworks are designed to promote greater emphasis on self-evaluation / self-assessment and to reduce bureaucracy. However, the new inspection frameworks and the principles embedded within them will only contribute to a change ethos within institutions, and indeed between education and training providers and the Inspectorate, if schools and colleges are implementing robust quality assurance mechanisms with genuine integrity, which is reflected in an accurate SEF / SAR. SEFs and SARs that have been sanitised with criticisms and weaknesses removed before an inspection play no part in quality management. It is important to stress that inspectors will make judgements based on the quality of the self-evaluation / self-assessment process as part of the improvement strategy; and will evaluate the school's or college's capacity for improvement.

Types of inspections

Provision for 14–19 year olds may be inspected as part of:

- institutional inspections (individual schools and colleges)
- re-inspections
- Joint Area Reviews
- subject and thematic surveys.

All types of inspections use as a principal document the school's SEF or the college's SAR, together with the appropriate inspection framework. In fact the SEF / SAR is as important a source document as the framework itself, as it says much about the quality of leadership and management of an institution.

The Inspectorate attached to the college will undertake an annual assessment visit (AAV; see Checklist 9) and it is the inspector's responsibility to:

- review and evaluate any changes in performance at the college
- identify whether changes and their causes have been highlighted in the SAR
- evaluate the impact of action taken to promote quality improvement and its influence on the learner and learning
- identify if any changes to the curriculum offering or the performance of existing provision have been taken into account in the internal quality assurance arrangements and resulting SAR
- where appropriate, manage re-inspection arrangements
- report in writing to the college and LSC.

Quality systems and procedures

An institution's self-evaluation / self-assessment process draws on the outcomes of a range of quality assurance (QA) mechanisms to make judgements about the quality of provision. Any SEF / SAR is only as good as the quality systems and procedures it derives its evidence from. Schools and colleges need to demonstrate to themselves and to external agencies that QA systems and procedures:

- are robust
- are embedded into the day-to-day management of their institution
- contribute to creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Quality mechanisms need to be capable of promoting improvement since the last inspection. It is the impact of such quality mechanisms that promote improvement which inspectors will be concerned with. As well as securing improvement, institutions must continually sustain and build on their strengths and, by using appropriate strategies and intervention techniques, turn weaknesses into strengths.

The process of constantly managing quality should be embedded into the daily operations of an institution – not put in place after a brown envelope has arrived heralding an inspection. ‘Doing it to yourself’ pro-actively before an inspection is a key component of successful quality management. In response to previous inspection frameworks, many schools and colleges undertook mock inspections as part of inspection preparation. Under the new inspection frameworks there is no such thing as a mock inspection. Instead these should be regarded as internal inspections that dove-tail with the external inspection process.

Internal inspections must be built in to the change in ethos of day-to-day quality management of an institution. They are not something that is undertaken before an inspection as this will only contribute to the ‘fear factor’ associated with inspections. When robust quality assurance mechanisms lead to an accurate SEF or a SAR, inspections become a confirmation of the findings as detailed in the SEFs / SARs – judgements are validated.

These QA systems and procedures include :

- observations of teaching and learning
- review and evaluation of individual learning plans (ILPs)
- examination of learners’ work
- analysis of robust data indicating retention and achievement rates over a three-year period, and comparisons with benchmarks
- analysis of external moderators’ and verifiers’ reports and subsequent action plans
- feedback from 14–19 partners
- feedback from learner surveys and focus groups
- feedback from employers via employer consultancy committees.

Stakeholders – employers and learners

Meeting employers' needs and contributing to economic well-being is a principal outcome of Every Child Matters and the revised Common Inspection Framework. Evaluating how successful an institution is at addressing this requirement is an integral component of quality assurance mechanisms:

Evaluating the success of learners is at the heart of self-evaluation/ self-assessment, but it is also very much about assessing how well the needs of employers and communities are being met and the active promotion of equal opportunities and health and safety.

(LSC 2005)

Of increased emphasis in both inspection frameworks is the 'learner's voice'. Schools and colleges need to identify reliable methods of obtaining learners' views and, where appropriate, acting upon them (LSDA published *Developing the learner voice* as part of the 14–19 Programme of Support for Delivery of Change on the Ground).

Key messages fact sheet

Rationale for self-evaluation and self-assessment

- 1 Primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision rests with the provider.
- 2 'The new inspection arrangements have raised the bar, and rightly so, but not out of reach.'
- 3 It is of crucial importance to identify **strengths** and **weaknesses** correctly. Strengths need to be identified to highlight and celebrate good practice and also for an institution to use their strengths to solve areas of concern.
- 4 It is of vital importance that critical issues that manifest themselves in weaknesses are correctly recognised. Addressing these shortcomings, by undertaking the necessary remedial action to rectify them, will contribute to an institution's capacity to improve.
- 5 The challenge for schools and colleges is to obtain a wide range of reliable evidence and to make judgements to meet national standards.
- 6 Evaluating how successful an institution is at successfully responding to employers' needs and contributing to economic well-being must be an integral component of quality assurance mechanisms.
- 7 SEFs and SARs that have been sanitised, removing criticisms and weaknesses before an inspection, play no part in quality management and do not foster an agenda of trust.

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- 8** Inspectors will make judgements on the quality of the self-evaluation / self-assessment process as part of the improvement strategy; an evaluation of a school's or college's capacity for improvement will be undertaken.
- 9** All types of inspections use, as a principal document, each school's SEF or each college's SAR, together with the appropriate inspection framework, to inspect an institution.
- 10** Any SEF / SAR is only as good as the quality systems and procedures and the outcomes of them that it derives its evidence from.
- 11** Quality mechanisms need to be capable of promoting improvement since the last inspection. Inspectors will be concerned with the **impact** of such quality mechanisms that promote improvement.
- 12** The process of constantly managing quality should be embedded into the daily operations of an institution – not put in place after a brown envelope has arrived heralding an inspection. 'Doing it to yourself' pro-actively before an inspection is a key component of successful quality management.
- 13** Under the new inspection frameworks there is no such thing as a 'mock inspection' – they should be 'internal inspections' that dove-tail in to the internal and external inspection model.
- 14** When robust quality assurance mechanisms lead to an accurate SEF or a SAR, inspections become a confirmation of the findings as detailed in the SEFs / SARs where judgements are validated.
- 15** Accurate SEFs and SARs play a major part in promoting an agenda of trust and openness and contribute to the change in ethos and culture that manifests itself in internal and external inspections.

3 Critical success factors

Role of senior managers

Self-evaluation in schools and self-assessment in colleges must be effectively led and managed by a senior manager who has a hands-on approach to quality management. To make self-evaluation / self-assessment work for the benefit of the learners, it must be an integral part of the organisation's day-to-day management. Moreover, teachers and support staff need to have been involved in the design of internal quality assurance mechanisms, which they in turn are empowered to use and embed. It is these staff who will make things happen for an institution and the way in which they are valued and respected will pay a major part, or not, in effective quality management. The hallmark of an effective self-evaluation / self-assessment process is one that is owned by staff, especially teachers.

Managers at all levels need to create a climate of trust in which members of staff are constructively self-critical about their performance. Self-evaluation / self-assessment is not a mechanism to identify issues to use to beat teachers with. Quality management is a team effort. Self-evaluation / self-assessment needs to be pro-active not re-active and this is where continual professional development (CPD) can play an important role. Prevention is far less costly and more effective than a cure. Support mechanisms, including CPD programmes, need to be built in to all quality assurance systems and procedures so that staff are provided with the necessary help to bring about improvements.

Managers at all levels must actively participate in the self-evaluation / self-assessment process throughout the academic year as part of their responsibilities for raising standards and improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of provision. Managers can refer to checklists 3 and 4, which list critical success factors. Checklist 8 summarises the main points to consider in preparing for an inspection visit.

Senior managers also need to ensure that:

- self-evaluation / self-assessment is built in to the day-to-day management of every department, subject sector category and service area
- governors and senior managers are committed to the aims of self-evaluation / self-assessment
- governors and senior managers evaluate their own performance and demonstrate leadership by example
- governors and senior managers approve the SEF / SAR that they have had hands-on involvement in compiling.

Standardised documentation

The starting point of a self-evaluation / self-assessment process is the quality assurance arrangements that are an integral part of the evidence-gathering process. Self-evaluation / self-assessment systems and procedures need to involve robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and include standardised documentation to evidence the findings (see Book 2 in this series for examples of standardised documentation). The merits of having standardised evidence-capturing documentation is that it can be assured centrally that these documents are fit for purpose and do actually capture the information required to make judgements against outcomes of the appropriate inspection framework. The trick is ensuring that monitoring takes place to promote compliance of use of standardised documentation throughout the school or college.

Systems and procedures

Institutions should ensure that systems and procedures :

- identify and evaluate good practice – what a school or college does well, and also what needs improving
- include documentation that has the capacity to demonstrate how high quality is sustained and continued improvement is ensured
- monitor and evaluate progress against specific objectives
- evaluate the extent to which weaknesses identified in the previous report have secured improvement
- draw on the findings of a wide range of performance data
- provide opportunities to compare performance with national comparative data and trends over time
- methodically use identified good practice to raise standards within other parts of the organisation to resolve shortcomings
- incorporate proven intervention strategies to raise standards
- demonstrate that intervention strategies are fit for purpose and are effectively implemented to improve the quality of provision.

External involvement

Around 2000, a 'cottage industry' developed in helping schools and colleges in the process of self-evaluation / self-assessment. It is widely believed that external involvement in self-evaluation / self-assessment is a vital component. However, schools and colleges need to develop the potential of their own staff to take an active part in self-evaluation / self-assessment and to make judgements against the inspection framework to national standards. The key here is making judgements focused on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and the five key questions of the revised Common Inspection Framework, but crucially to national standards.

For commissioning consultants to descend like an army on an institution to undertake a 'mock' inspection and then leave a report listing points for staff to address has limited value and often promotes the 'hype' associated with inspections. But it is recognised that external involvement, where appropriate, raises issues and questions and can be of immense value in adding robustness. It may also be used to validate the process and ensuing quality outcomes. External involvement can be effectively used to test the clarity and effectiveness of the analysis in the SEF or SAR.

It is good practice to ensure that:

- self-evaluation / self-assessment incorporates proven intervention strategies to raise standards
- self-evaluation / self-assessment processes demonstrate that intervention strategies are fit for purpose and are effectively implemented to improve the quality of provision
- external involvement, where appropriate, raises issues and questions
- external involvement tests the clarity and the effectiveness of the analysis in the SEF / SAR.

Key messages fact sheet

Self-evaluation/self-assessment

- 1 Self-evaluation / self-assessment must be effectively led and managed by a senior manager who has a hands-on approach to quality management.
- 2 To make self-evaluation / self-assessment work for the benefit of the learners, it must be an integral part of the organisation's day-to-day management.
- 3 Teachers and support staff need to have been involved in the design of internal quality assurance mechanisms, which they in turn are empowered to use and embed.
- 4 The hallmark of an effective self-evaluation / self-assessment process is one that is owned by staff who have a vested interest in making it work.
- 5 Managers at all levels need to create a climate of trust in which members of staff are constructively self-critical about their performance.
- 6 Self-evaluation / self-assessment is not a mechanism to identify issues to use to beat teachers with.
- 7 Quality management is a team effort.
- 8 Support mechanisms, including CPD programmes, need to be built in to all quality assurance systems and procedures, so that staff are provided with the necessary help to bring about improvements.
- 9 The merits of having standardised evidence capturing documentation is that centrally it can be assured that these documents are fit for purpose and do actually capture the information required to make judgements against outcomes of the appropriate inspection framework.
- 10 The trick is ensuring that monitoring takes place to promote compliance of use of standardised documentation throughout the school or college.
- 11 It is widely believed that external involvement in self-evaluation / self-assessment is a vital component.
- 12 Schools and colleges need to develop the potential of their own staff to take an active part in self-evaluation / self-assessment.
- 13 The key here is making judgements focusing on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and the five key questions of the revised Common Inspection Framework but crucially **to national standards**.
- 14 It is, however, recognised that external involvement, where appropriate, raises issues and questions and can be of immense value in adding robustness and validity to the process and ensuing quality outcomes. External involvement can test the clarity and the effectiveness of the analysis in the SEF / SAR.

4 Compiling a self-evaluation form

Introduction

There is common agreement that school improvement depends largely on good self-evaluation which, in good schools, becomes the driver for raising standards across the institution. Indeed, this is one of the key documents used by inspectors when inspecting schools along with the revised Common Inspection Framework, Every Child Matters, PANDA information pertaining to a particular school and other published documents. The SEF informs dialogue with staff and will help inspectors to decide what to focus on during an inspection. The school SEF should document the outcomes of the work governors, head teachers and all staff are doing to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the school.

The SEF should be supported by simple but robust quality assurance mechanisms. It is for the school to decide what quality mechanisms they should employ and what model they adopt when undertaking self-evaluation. Remember, self-evaluation arrangements have to be robust but that does not mean they should be complicated, they should be thorough but never bureaucratic. Checklist 5 summarises the main points of this section.

School self-evaluation

The DfES publication *A new relationship with schools* states:

- 1** *The underlying process which the school employs to identify its strengths and weaknesses is not prescribed. Schools are free to follow any model which gives them the best insights into their improvement priorities. Some elements of practice will be common to self-evaluation in all schools. The best schools have simple processes which enable their leaders to measure progress in practical ways through their day-to-day work.*
- 2** *School Improvement Partners (SIPs) play an important role in challenging the processes used by the school in carrying out its review and the outcomes which result from this. Through the single conversation SIPs can pose questions, suggest sources of evidence and challenge interpretations of the school's evidence. They can discuss the accuracy of managers' improvement priorities and act as critical readers of the SEF without writing it.*
- 3** *To help ensure that self-evaluation is effective, schools should have the following six questions in mind; these will help them to focus on the process.*

The Implementation Review Group (IRG; November 2005) stated:

There is no perfect SEF and Ofsted inspectors know this. There is agreement that your SEF is likely to be fit for purpose if it:

- *conveys how the work of the school contributes to the learning, personal development and well-being of pupils, pointing to supporting evidence.*
- *shows how the school discovers and responds to the needs and aspirations of learners, parents and other stakeholders.*
- *sets out what you are doing to build on successes and remedy weaknesses and explains why you are focusing for now on these areas rather than others.*

What is a SEF?

The SEF is at the heart of the new inspection arrangements. It serves as the main document when planning the inspection with the school. The SEF is a summative document, intended to record the outcomes of a school's ongoing process of rigorous self-evaluation. A completed SEF should be an accurate diagnostic document with all conclusions fully supported by the evidence. It should indicate key strengths and weaknesses, and what needs to be tackled to effect improvement. The impact of your self-evaluation in helping to bring about improvement will be a major factor in the judgements made about the effectiveness of your leadership and management and a school's capacity to improve in the future.

When should a SEF be completed?

There is no fixed time in the year when a SEF should be completed. It is usually best completed to fit in with your normal cycle of review and planning, but it should be completed at least annually.

Key features of a SEF

A SEF should convey a clear picture of how well the school is doing. Before writing the SEF:

- cite evidence of what you know
- show what you are doing to build on successes and remedy weaknesses
- update it to fit in with your school development cycle.

The SEF comprises three sections:

- evaluative questions in Part A
- data and information in parts B and C.

These three parts follow the format of the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule in the Framework for Inspecting Schools. There are seven questions, each with subsections.

The SEF is crucial in evaluating the quality of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve.

The SEF asks schools to :

- evaluate their progress against an inspection schedule
- set out the main evidence on which this evaluation is based
- identify strengths and weaknesses
- explain the action the school is taking to remedy the weaknesses and develop the strengths.

Schools should evaluate all they do, but not necessarily all at once.

Completing a SEF

This is the advice of the Implementation Review Group on how to complete an effective SEF template :

Within the format of the SEF questions you need to make sure your completed SEF is fit for purpose as set out above. You may find it helpful to have the above bullet points in mind as you shape your answers. We suggest, to get into the flow, you might find it helpful to start at Question 3 of Part A, Achievements and Standards.

Draw on processes you already have in your school to complete your SEF. Evidence will include paper-based and electronic records. It can also include conclusions of key discussions. You can expect inspectors to test evidence in the course of their inspection.

Choose data and information that shows the value you add. Summarise it in the SEF and cross refer to sources. Set out the key actions you think contributed most to adding that value. Identify areas where you need or want to increase the value you add. Explain why you chose those areas and give reasons for selecting particular actions to increase your capacity to add value.

Ofsted are clear that schools should evaluate all that they do, but not necessarily all at once – the SEF can reflect that. Good self-evaluation will identify areas where more work is needed. This will cover new work to improve outcomes for children generally or groups of children. It should also cover work to properly assess the impact of any existing school activities where presently available evidence is inadequate to determine their effectiveness. The SEF should show how you will prioritise work in the future in the light of what is likely to add most value for pupils.

At the very most your Part A might reach 20 pages. Schools whose Part A exceeds that length are probably describing what they do in too much detail rather than outlining their actions and analysing the impact of those actions. In terms of tone and length you might try pitching your SEF at a new governor or interested parent.

Writing an effective SEF

Before writing a SEF, ask yourself what the key messages you want to convey are and how you would summarise the findings for a new governor or interested parent.

Begin by completing the sections dealing with achievement and standards, and personal development and well-being, since these outcomes will form the basis for your judgements in other sections.

There are four key points about self-evaluation that schools should keep in mind:

- 1** Rigorous self-evaluation helps schools to improve – it should not be undertaken solely for the purpose of inspection.
- 2** Schools should shape for themselves a process that is simple and integrated with their routine management systems.
- 3** Schools must listen to and do something about the views of their stakeholders.
- 4** Unsupported assertions and lists of initiatives are unhelpful.

Each section of the SEF asks you to grade aspects of a school's work on a four-point scale:

Grade 1 outstanding

Grade 2 good

Grade 3 satisfactory

Grade 4 inadequate.

It is most important that schools undertake grading rigorously and objectively. The grade descriptions in the Ofsted publication *Evaluating educational inclusion* (2000) will help you to reach accurate judgements.

When writing your SEF remember :

- to think about the outcomes for pupils
- to be clear about the progress pupils make in their learning and personal development ; then you will find it easy to make links with the other sections
- to show a link between the progress pupils make, the quality of teaching, and the effectiveness of leadership and management, as inspectors will expect to see this
- to leave the overall effectiveness section until the end
- that inspectors will analyse and draw hypotheses from data before the inspection
- to use the data effectively
- to show what conclusions you draw from it and what action you have taken as a result
- to include data that is not in the public domain.

The new framework puts more onus on a school to be proactive and demonstrate to inspectors that it can diagnose where its strengths and weaknesses are, but, more crucially, can do something about improving and developing them.

Attainment

Schools should know how well learners perform in terms of the overall standards they attain and the standards attained by different groups such as :

- girls
- boys
- the gifted and talented
- children in public care
- those from different ethnic groups
- those with different special needs
- progress made by different groups of learners over time.

The SEF should include evidence of outcomes from learners' personal development and well-being, including how far they meet the five outcomes sought by the Every Child Matters agenda.

Schools should also evaluate the quality and impact on standards of:

- provision, teaching, the curriculum, and the care, guidance and support provided
- leadership and management at all levels including governance
- features and objectives that are special to a school
- links between the school and other providers, services, employers and organisations.

Governors and staff will want to evaluate :

- the plans they have implemented
- any strategies for improvement
- whether resources are being effectively used
- the impact of action taken on the learning and well-being of learners.

Some plans have less direct impact on learners than others, for example the relationship a school develops with external agencies, but nevertheless leaders will want to evaluate the effectiveness of such relationships and whether or not they are making a positive difference.

Conclusions

Writing a SEF is not, in itself, self-evaluation. The SEF is only a place to record and summarise the findings of a thorough self-evaluation process. If the SEF is a fair reflection of the school, it provides headteachers, governors and others with an excellent basis for school improvement. A robust and professional SEF will virtually amount to the school's own inspection report on itself.

Further guidance

Joint Ofsted–DfES guidance was issued on 31 March 2005. This looked at the way eight schools in the very early stage of the pilot inspection programme (summer 2004) tackled the SEF – see illustrative extracts in Appendix A of *A new relationship with schools* (DfES 2006) at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3862

Consider working through the tutorial before you start your SEF.

The interactive SEF website has additional information at www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/sef.cfm

Key messages fact sheet

Compiling an effective self-evaluation report

Characteristics of a good SEF

A good SEF:

- is short
- is evaluative, and gives evidence which is clearly and honestly set out
- tells it how it is
- provides numerical judgements and avoids long lists of assertions
- interprets this evidence
- gets to the heart of evaluating the impact that, for example, assessment and changes to the organisation, curriculum and staffing, systems have on pupils' achievement and personal development.

Hints and tips

These are some hints and tips that may be helpful :

- Keep it simple.
- Avoid jargon.
- Try to be accurate, clear and honest.
- The SEF should not be time-consuming to read, nor should it detail a bureaucratic self-evaluation process.
- Refer to other reliable evidence where it is relevant.
- Use evidence selectively to support judgements.
- Indicate clearly in the SEF where more detailed evidence can be found.
- When you are summarising your evaluation of the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, remember to comment on what the school has done to promote the outcomes, as well as on the impact that this has had on learners.
- Comment on the difference that the school's action has made to particular groups of learners' behaviour not just in terms of their attendance and attitudes to school, but also in relation to their progress.

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Before you submit your SEF

Think about the type of questions that an inspector will expect your SEF to address. Read it through and check that:

- it is short and to the point
- you have answered all the questions
- your judgements are clear
- you have reflected stakeholders' views
- it gives a fair and honest picture of what the school is like
- you have been clear about actions being taken to improve
- you have answered the questions that an inspector is likely to ask.

If you were an inspector what questions would your SEF lead you to ask?

5 Compiling a self-assessment report

Introduction

The requirement for post-16 providers to undertake self-assessment resulting in a self-assessment report (SAR) began as a preparation for inspection, but has now evolved into a process in its own right. The SAR should meet the dual purposes of serving the provider's needs as well as those of the inspection. The SAR is a key document used by the Inspectorate when inspecting post-16 providers. The SAR plays a key part in measuring the effectiveness of development / improvement plans. Checklists 6 and 7 summarise some of the main points of this section.

While the focus on the learner is retained, there will now be a much greater emphasis in the SAR on meeting the needs of employers. Providers are required to complete an annual SAR that evaluates all aspects of their provision, accredited and non-accredited. This will derive from their continuous process of self-assessment, which needs to draw on robust quality assurance mechanisms. Remember, self-assessment arrangements have to be robust but that does not mean they should be complicated; they should be thorough but never bureaucratic. The philosophy underpinning the annual SAR is to enable providers to devote more of their resources and energies to meeting the needs of learners, employers and communities, and to improving quality.

Five key questions

There are five key questions embedded within the revised Common Inspection Framework which can be cross-referenced with the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, which should provide the focus and structure of the SAR:

- Key Question 1** How well do learners achieve?
- Key Question 2** How effective are teaching, training and learning?
- Key Question 3** How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
- Key Question 4** How well are learners guided and supported?
- Key Question 5** How effective are leadership and management?

The questions should be flexibly interpreted in the light of each provider’s own mission, goals and context. Attention will be paid to pre-16 learners studying in a post-16 environment, particularly on how much they enjoy and achieve. Grades will be awarded for all five outcomes using the five-point scale.

Every Child Matters outcomes for children

- 1** Being healthy
- 2** Staying safe
- 3** Enjoying and achieving
- 4** Making a positive contribution
- 5** Achieving economic well-being

CIF key questions

- 4** How well are learners guided and supported?
- 5** How effective are leadership and management?
- 1** How well do learners achieve?
- 3** How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
- 4** How well are learners guided and supported?

Key features

The SAR should be graded using the four-point scale and descriptors for each key question and for separate curriculum or subject sector areas. Providers will need to demonstrate in the SAR their understanding of what they do well, what needs improving and how improvement can be monitored, achieved and evaluated. Whatever the precise approach, the key test of the resulting SAR is its ability to demonstrate how high quality is sustained and improvement is ensured. The SAR should directly relate to and drive the provider’s development or improvement plan. The SAR should include an evaluation of the extent to which actions identified in the previous report have secured improvement.

The provision and analysis of robust data will be a vital foundation of the SAR. Providers are expected to draw on a wide range of performance data to inform their SAR and compare their performance with others through use of national benchmarking data. Of particular importance in the SAR are trends in the college performance over time, and how the SAR has influenced and responded to these trends. Providers must remember that the emphasis on meeting employers’ needs is a crucial issue to be addressed.

External involvement

Involving people external to the provider can bring many benefits to the self-assessment process. They can :

- scrutinise the SAR
- raise significant issues which had not previously been considered
- strengthen objectivity and rigour
- test the clarity and the effectiveness of the analysis in the SAR.

Responsiveness and skills needs

It is crucial for providers to evaluate how responsive they are at meeting the full range of their clients' needs. The SAR needs to document the judgements made on provider responsiveness and cite appropriate evidence, where applicable. When compiling the section of the SAR denoting responsiveness providers should identify how they are responding to the needs of learners, employers and the local community. The SAR should state how the college has ensured that curriculum and subject sector categories are well attuned both to learners' and to employers' needs.

The SAR should highlight the involvement of employers in the self-assessment process. The SAR should specifically address the effectiveness of providers in ensuring that learners have the necessary workplace skills for employment and indicate how providers are responding to identified needs. Providers will have to demonstrate in the SAR that they clearly understand and contribute to meeting the skills needs of their local area and, where appropriate, they take into account wider regional, sectoral and national demands. Note that the three-year development plan is agreed between all LSC-funded providers and the local LSC. This sets out how the provider will contribute to meeting local, regional and sector needs and how it will improve learners' outcomes.

Equal opportunities

Providers must promote equal opportunities through all aspects of their work, as detailed in the SAR. It is crucial for providers to evaluate how they provide equal opportunities for their clients. The SAR needs to document the judgements made on the effectiveness of the provider's strategies to ensure equal opportunities, citing appropriate evidence. The SAR should demonstrate that the provider is aware of their responsibilities, including the need to implement relevant legislative or statutory requirements, and that a climate of equal opportunities runs through all that they do. The SAR should demonstrate that effective monitoring of the actions taken to support and encourage equality of access and participation in learning has taken place.

Health and safety

The SAR must include a statement of the arrangements for ensuring learners' health and safety and indicate how providers are promoting the LSC's concept of the safe learner. Staying healthy and keeping safe are key outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Minimum requirements

The SAR process should be rigorous, analytical and based on valid and reliable evidence. A clear and urgent timescale for action should be in place with funding to support proposed improvements. At a minimum a SAR should:

- include an introduction setting the context of the provider and a description of the main components of the self-assessment process
- indicate the progress made in relation to its development or action plan with the LSC
- support the agreement with the planning and funding bodies of challenging but achievable targets for learners' success, based on national benchmarking data, where available
- includes judgements against the evaluative requirements of the development or action plan and the revised Common Inspection Framework
- be aligned, where practicable, to the subject sector categories (previously areas of learning)
- evaluate the quality of teaching and learning
- evaluate all learners' achievements
- differentiate judgements into key strengths, areas for improvement and improvements since the last self-assessment
- have a quality improvement plan, which sustains the strengths and addresses the key areas for improvement, and which assigns responsibilities for implementation
- demonstrate evidence of promoting equality of opportunity and meeting other legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Disability Discrimination Act
- demonstrate evidence of promoting the concept of the safe learner, and that sufficient and suitable arrangements for learner health and safety are in place
- indicate how the views of learners, employers, parents and other stakeholders have been obtained and taken into account.

The Quality Improvement Plan is, in effect, the provider's own plan to address the areas for improvement, which is integral to the self-assessment, and the means by which improvement will be achieved. All providers will be expected to review and update their plans to take account of inspection findings. Providers are required to set out clearly what actions are needed and to link this explicitly to the inspection findings within two months of the publication of the inspection report. Senior management should approve the final SAR and continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the self-assessment in securing improvement.

Summary

The summary should contain:

- a brief introduction, including key improvements made since the last review of the development or improvement plan
- information and data on progress made towards meeting performance measures in the development or improvement plan
- key strengths and areas for improvement for the institution as a whole, organised by CIF key questions and for each curriculum area, where practicable, according to the new subject sector categories
- a table of grades awarded to CIF key questions and curriculum areas
- a summary of the grades awarded for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment.

Key messages fact sheet

Compiling a self-assessment report

- 1 The requirement for post-16 providers to undertake self-assessment resulting in a SAR began as a preparation for inspection. It has now evolved into a process in its own right.
- 2 The SAR should meet the dual purposes of serving the provider's needs as well as those of inspection. The SAR is a key document used by the Inspectorate when inspecting post-16 providers.
- 3 The SAR plays a key part in measuring the effectiveness of development or improvement plans.
- 4 While the focus on the learner is retained, there will now be a much greater emphasis in the SAR on meeting the needs of employers.

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- 5** Providers are required to complete an annual SAR that evaluates all aspects of their provision, accredited and non-accredited. This will derive from their continuous process of self-assessment, which draws on robust quality assurance mechanisms.
- 6** The philosophy of the annual SAR is :
 - to serve several purposes, which will reduce bureaucracy
 - to enable providers to devote more of their resources and energies to meeting the needs of learners, employers and communities
 - to improve quality.
- 7** There are five key questions embedded within the revised Common Inspection Framework, which can be cross-referenced with the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. These should form the focus and structure of the SAR.
- 8** It is crucial for providers to evaluate how responsive they are at meeting the full range of their clients' needs. The SAR needs to document the judgements made on provider responsiveness and cite appropriate evidence, where applicable.
- 9** It is also crucial for providers to evaluate how they provide equal opportunities for their clients. The SAR needs to document the judgements made on the effectiveness of the provider's strategies to ensure equal opportunities, citing appropriate evidence.
- 10** Providers must promote equal opportunities through all aspects of their work, as detailed in the SAR.
- 11** The SAR should demonstrate that the provider is aware of its responsibilities, including the need to implement relevant legislative or statutory requirements, and that a climate of equal opportunities runs through all that they do.
- 12** The SAR should demonstrate that effective monitoring of the actions taken to support and encourage equality of access and participation in learning has taken place.
- 13** The SAR must include a statement of the arrangements for learners' health and safety and indicate how providers are promoting the concept of the safe learner (staying healthy and keeping safe are outcomes of Every Child Matters).

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Checklists

Checklist 1 Self-assessment process – quality audit checklist

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Is self-assessment / self-evaluation an integral part of the management of your organisation ?		
Is there a climate of trust within your organisation where all staff are self-critical about their performance ?		
Is the principal / chief executive / head teacher actively involved in the self-assessment / self-evaluation process ?		
Is the senior management team actively involved in the self-assessment / self-evaluation process ?		
Are governors actively involved in the self-assessment / self-evaluation process ?		
Do the principal / chief executive / head teacher / senior manager / governing body critically evaluate their performance as part of their responsibility of raising standards ?		
Is accurate and robust data used as the basis of the self-assessment process ?		
Does your organisation compare itself with national benchmarking data ?		
Are trends over time used within the self-assessment process to evaluate your performance ?		
Does your self-assessment process involve the systematic identification of good practice ?		
Does your self-assessment process methodically use identified good practice to raise standards within other parts of the organisation ?		
Has your organisation identified proven intervention strategies for raising standards ?		
Does your self-assessment process demonstrate that intervention strategies which are fit for purpose are effectively implemented to improve the quality of provision ?		
Does your self-assessment process involve external and appropriate individuals to provide objectivity to your internal quality mechanisms ?		
Are internal quality decisions moderated by an appropriate external person to provide validity ?		
Are your observations of teaching and learning based on national standards ?		

Checklist 2 Internal quality assurance checklist

	Yes	No
My school's / college's internal quality assurance arrangements :		
■ place the learner at the centre		
■ are owned by all staff who are then empowered to make them work to improve the quality of provision for the benefit of the learner		
■ are an integral part of daily operations		
■ contribute to creating a culture of continuous improvement within the educational establishment.		
My school / college has ensured that its quality assurance arrangements are :		
■ fully integrated		
■ undertaken using a bottom-up approach.		
Do the quality assurance arrangements at your institution :		
■ involve learners ?		
■ address learners' needs ?		
■ minimise the duplication of information ?		
■ prevent the duplication of data in different formats ?		
■ avoid the over-reliance on paper-driven arrangements ?		
■ act as an early warning mechanism to detect issues that may affect the quality of provision without timely intervention ?		
■ ensure learners receive consistently high standards of education, training and levels of support ?		
■ inform curriculum planning and continuous professional development ?		
■ identify and disseminate good practice ?		
My school's / college's quality management systems and procedures provide information to produce an accurate picture of the quality of provision at a given time to :		
■ meet external agency requirements		
■ provide evidence on which to compile a SEF / SAR		
■ contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. Is self-assessment / self-evaluation an integral part of the management of your organisation ?		

Checklist 3 Critical success factors (1)

Key features	Yes	No
Self-evaluation / self-assessment is effectively led and managed by a senior manager.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment is an integral part of the organisation's day-to-day management.		
Staff are involved in the design of internal quality assurance mechanisms which they in turn are empowered to use and embed.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment is owned by staff.		
A climate of trust has been created in which members of staff are constructively self-critical about their performance.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment is pro-active not re-active.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment is built in to the day-to-day management of every department / subject sector category and service area.		
Governors and senior managers are committed to the aims of self-evaluation / self-assessment.		
Governors and senior managers evaluate their own performance and demonstrate leadership by example.		
Management at all levels actively participate in the self-evaluation / self-assessment process as part of their responsibilities for raising standards and improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of provision.		
Governors and senior managers approve the SEF / SAR, which they have been directly involvement in compiling.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment systems and procedures involve robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment procedures include standardised documentation to evidence findings.		
Systems and procedures identify and evaluate what a school or college does well and what needs improving.		
Systems and procedures have the capacity to demonstrate how high quality is sustained and continued improvement is ensured.		
Systems and procedures monitor and evaluate progress against specific objectives.		
Systems and procedures evaluate the extent to which weaknesses identified in the previous report have secured improvement.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment draws on the findings of a wide range of performance data.		

Checklist 4 Critical success factors (2)

Key features	Yes	No
Self-evaluation / self-assessment compares performance with national comparative data and trends over time.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment processes involve the systematic identification of good practice.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment processes methodically use identified good practice to raise standards within other parts of the organisation.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment incorporates proven intervention strategies to raise standards.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment processes demonstrate that intervention strategies are fit for purpose and are effectively implemented to improve the quality of provision.		
External involvement, where appropriate, raises issues and questions.		
External involvement tests the clarity and the effectiveness of the analysis in the SEF / SAR.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment incorporates proven intervention strategies to raise standards.		
Self-evaluation / self-assessment processes demonstrate that intervention strategies are fit for purpose and are effectively implemented to improve the quality of provision.		
External involvement, where appropriate, raises issues and questions.		
External involvement tests the clarity and the effectiveness of the analysis in the SEF / SAR.		

Checklist 5 Compiling an effective SEF

	Yes	No
Is your SEF:		
■ short?		
■ evaluative with evidence which is clearly and honestly set out?		
Have you ensured that your SEF includes:		
■ an indication of where evidence can be found to substantiate the grades?		
■ an interpretation of evidence?		
■ evaluations of the impact that, for example, assessment and changes to the organisation, curriculum, staffing and systems had or are having on learners' achievement and personal development?		
Have you:		
■ kept it simple?		
■ avoided jargon?		
■ been accurate, clear and honest?		
■ ensured that your SEF is not time-consuming to read?		
■ referred to other reliable evidence, where it is relevant?		
■ used evidence selectively to support judgements?		
■ indicated clearly in the SEF where more detailed evidence can be found?		
■ summarised your evaluations of the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, remembering to comment on what the school has done to promote the outcomes, as well as on the impact that this has had on learners?		
■ commented on the difference that the school's action has made to particular groups of learners' behaviour, not just in terms of their attendance and attitudes to the school but also in relation to their progress?		
Before you submit your SEF, have you ensured that it:		
■ is short and to the point?		
■ answered all of the questions?		
■ includes judgements that are clear?		
■ reflects the stakeholders' views?		
■ gives a fair and honest picture of what the school is like?		
■ is clear about actions being taken to improve?		
■ effectively evaluates the impact of actions taken?		

Checklist 6 Compiling a SAR (1)

Key issues	Yes	No
Does your SAR include an introduction that sets the report in the context of the organisation?		
Does the introduction to your SAR provide information on the main elements which make up your self-assessment process?		
Does your SAR identify what the organisation does well?		
Does your SAR honestly highlight what the organisation needs to improve?		
Does your SAR include an accurate evaluation of the extent to which actions identified in the previous report have improved?		
Does your SAR include a high-level summary?		
Does your SAR report on the effectiveness of the improvement strategies as set out in your development / action plan, including evidence of how you have implemented the plan?		
Does your SAR evaluate the success at various stages of your development / action plan and how effective the strategies have been in improving quality?		
Does your SAR make judgements against the revised Common Inspection Framework (CIF)?		
Is your SAR aligned to subject sector categories as defined in the revised CIF?		
Does your SAR include judgements about accredited and non-accredited provision inspected by Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate?		
Does your SAR evaluate the success in raising standards since the last inspection?		
Is your SAR rigorous and analytical?		
Is your SAR evidence based on national standards and is it valid and reliable?		
Does your SAR evaluate the quality of teaching and learning?		
Does your SAR evaluate learners' achievements?		
Does your SAR provide information on how learners' views have been obtained and taken into account?		
Does your SAR provide information on how parents' views have been obtained and taken into account?		
Does your SAR provide information on how employers' views have been obtained and taken into account?		
Does your SAR grade all the key questions in the revised CIF?		
Does your SAR grade all the subject sectors offered by your organisation as defined in the revised CIF?		
Does your SAR demonstrate how your organisation promotes and is successful at meeting equality of opportunity?		

Checklist 7 Compiling a SAR (2)

Key issues	Yes	No
Does your SAR demonstrate how your organisation meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act?		
Does your SAR demonstrate how your organisation meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act?		
Does your SAR detail how your organisation is promoting the concept of safe learners?		
Does your SAR detail sufficiently appropriate arrangements for health and safety within your organisation?		
Does your SAR evaluate how responsive you are at meeting clients'/customers' needs?		
Does your SAR evaluate your levels of understanding of skills needed in your local area, the wider region and within sectors, and the national demands by employers?		
Does your SAR evaluate your effectiveness within each subject sector category of learners having the necessary workplace skills for employment?		
Does your SAR provide details on and evaluate your organisation's success at involving employers to ensure that teaching, training and assessment are attuned to both learners' and employers' needs?		
Is your SAR submitted to the relevant funding body each year?		
Do senior managers make an informed decision about approving the SAR?		

Checklist 8 Preparing for inspection

Do:

- have a two-day plan for school inspections and a four-week plan for post-14 for every area that is triggered by the external inspection notification
- provide a quality office to manage administration
- ensure all staff are fully trained in the requirements of the inspection frameworks
- ensure data is validated and available
- keep driving the agenda
- manage dual observations
- confirm Key Question 1 by day 2
- plan for staff absences
- react promptly to staff sickness and put in place a prepared contingency plan
- be prepared to demonstrate rate of change with robust evidence
- sell the rationale that all staff are committed to excellence
- provide staff and inspectors with a key document folder
- standardise paperwork
- ensure that there is greater awareness of quantitative data, three-year trends and benchmarks
- build-in support for new staff
- continue the drive to improve ILT, differentiation, key skills and the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and subject sector categories
- prepare the physical environment including noticeboards, displays and learning environments
- make sure you provide the necessary ILT support.

Good practice

- Devise an inspection base-room that has been established over time to support internal and external inspections – keep data live.
- Create a 'storyboard' of progress.
- Develop an effective communication strategy.
- Keep all staff fully informed at every stage.
- Consider communicating with staff via their pay slips.
- Use institutional newsletter to celebrate to involve all staff.
- Using screen savers to sell key messages to staff.
- Provide staff with a glossary of terms and use the appropriate terminology at all times.
- Create an environment where staff own the data.
- Embed every child matters in key documents such as session plans, schemes of work and course reviews and evaluations.
- Create an ethos where collaboration and sharing of resources at course team level is the norm.
- Monitoring of the content of team meetings, to ensure sufficient emphasis on teaching and learning and meeting individual learner and employer needs.
- Internal inspections are invaluable. Embed them into your quality cycle.
- Prepare staff for an interview with the inspectors, ensuring that they know the issues associated with their learners and historical data.
- Capacity build at middle management level.

Checklist 9 Annual assessment visit (AAV)

Do:

- know your data well, including the justification of trends over time
- focus on areas of improvement since last inspection
- produce graphical representation of improvements to illustrate capacity to improve
- locate the meetings as part of AAV visit in the inspection base-room – illustrating plethora of ‘live’ evidence and data
- be mindful of what your institution looks like and prepare the environment as if it is for an inspection
- stand your ground when challenged ... but only when you know you have the evidence to prove your assertions accurate!
- be holistic and hold organisational intelligence.

Good practice

- Use effective communication strategies throughout the visit.
- De-brief staff after each interview and learn from each other.
- Manage dual observations.
- Take an active part in the AAV – it is done with you not to you.
- Know what the day will look like.
- Know your organisation better than anyone else does and paint an accurate picture not a smoke screen.
- Rehearsal the script and scrutinise supporting evidence – if evidence is not robust, leave it out.
- Produce flow-chart to show Every Child Matters is addressed at every level of the organisation.

14–19: Programme of Support for Delivery of Change on the Ground

