IPPN Resource

School Self Evaluation Road Map

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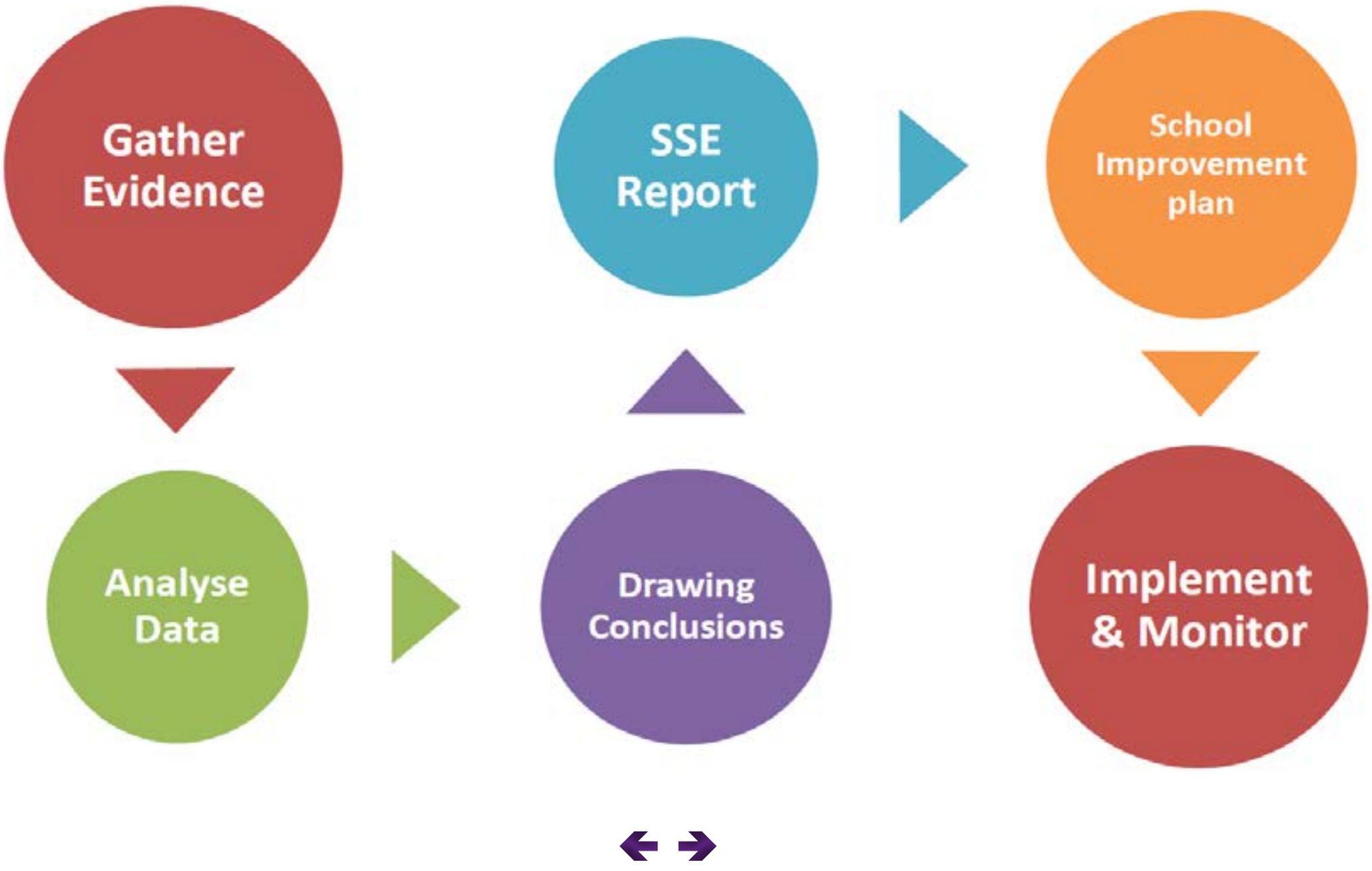
Leading and Learning



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An Overview of the Process with a focus on School Self Evaluation Report

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The School Self Evaluation Road Map

This School Self Evaluation Resource Bundle will support and guide you through the SSE process, from whatever stage your school is at. It explains how to start effectively at the very beginning, and the steps necessary for you, your staff and the Board of Management to take, to successfully develop the process in your school over the coming months and years.

It begins with what is expected of schools in chronological order until the 2016/2017 school year. This is followed by a short and simple explanation of each of the six steps. In addition, Step 4 looks at the detail of the School Self Evaluation Report section by section.

The Frequently Asked Questions at the end of the Resource Bundle attempt to reflect the current concerns of principals about the process and the main queries they have.

A Road Map from Now into the Future

2013/2014	If you are only beginning SSE in your school	If you have been working on SSE in your school
	• Choose one aspect of either literacy or numeracy Examples: Oral Language, Reading, Writing, Mental Maths and Tables, Problem Solving • Develop your School Improvement Plan(SIP) • Produce a School Self Evaluation Report by June 2014	• If you have been working on literacy, change to numeracy • If you have been working on numeracy, change to literacy • Develop your School Improvement Plan (SIP) in your new area and produce a School Self Evaluation Report by June 2014 (You may already have a plan and a report in place for your first area. However, only the plan was required by June 2013)
2014/2015	• If you have been working on literacy, change to numeracy, develop your plan and produce a second report by June 2015 • Continue with Year 2 of your first area	• In this first cycle of SSE, there are two years for one area • If you changed to literacy last year, stay with literacy for this school year • If you changed to numeracy last year, stay with it for this school year • Your School Improvement Plan may need to be amended this year • Continue with Year 2 of your first area • Produce a School Self Evaluation Report in June 2015
2015/2016	• Continue with Year 3 of your first area • Continue with Year 2 of your second area • Choose a third area	• Continue with Year 3 of your first area • Continue with Year 2 of your second area • Choose a third area
2016/2017	• Continue with Year 3 of your second area • Continue with Year 2 of your third area • Choose a different aspect of your first area Example: If your first area was numeracy, move from mental maths/tables to problem solving for example. If your first area was literacy, move from oral language to reading for example	• Continue with Year 3 of your second area • Continue with Year 2 of your third area • Choose a different aspect of your first area Example: If your first area was numeracy, move from mental maths/ tables to problem solving for example. If your first area was literacy, move from oral language to reading for example

Now that you know when to choose each area, we must look at how to make the right choice!

The School Self Evaluation Process is a series of 6 steps (page 14 of your guidelines)

Step 1: Gather the Evidence

- ❖ This should result in Quantitative Data from assessment results
- ❖ In numeracy for example, look at the last standardised test results completed in your school
- ❖ Compare your results to the national norms
- ❖ If you and your staff are happy with the comparison, look more deeply at the results
- ❖ Take a section of the school to analyse. Check a sample of tests to determine the strengths and weaknesses

Step 2: Analyse the Data

- This process involves looking at the Learning Outcomes-what the students are actually learning (page 15 of the guidelines)
- These outcomes are made up of the attainment, knowledge and skills of the students (pages 30 and 31)
- An examination of the standardised test results as above is central to this step but it is also necessary to look at teacher designed tests and tasks, samples of children's work, portfolios, children's self-assessment, teacher observation, conferencing and concept mapping, all methods of assessment recommended by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
- Discuss the findings with the entire staff. Choose the area of literacy or numeracy most in need of improvement.
- Decide what other evidence would be useful to gather
- This will result in Qualitative Data from questionnaires maybe, or focus groups or interviews. To choose the evaluation tool which is best suited to your school and the area that you have chosen to work on with your staff, go to pages 51 to 58 of the Guidelines
- This is still looking at Learning Outcomes but this data gives you further evidence about the attitude and progress of the students (pages 30 and 31)
- The second perspective looks at how the students are learning. This focuses on their learning environment, their engagement in learning and how the pupils are learning to learn (pages 32-37 in the guidelines) Parents' opinions are an essential part of this perspective
- The third perspective focuses on the Teacher's Practice, the preparation for teaching, teaching methodologies, the classroom management and assessment (pages 38-45 in the guidelines)
- The best advice is to begin with the Learner Outcomes, and then to reflect on the Learning Experiences and Teachers' Practice which have led to these outcomes. They come naturally into the conversation

Step 3: Drawing Conclusions

- As you go through the perspectives, look at the Quality Statement for each one. The Quality Statements are aspirational and are useful in bench marking your current position in relation to the ideal
- Using the Quality Statements, you can draw conclusions about progress in the area that you are working on, as the statements work as valid benchmarks against which to judge quality
- They can be used to determine your strengths and to decide on aspects of your work that need to be improved or developed
- Please remember that the Quality Statements describe schools that have significant strengths. It is very acceptable for your school to have a range of strengths in your focus area without attaining the level described in the statements
- Using the statements and the information you have gathered, you must indicate whether your school has:
  - Significant Strengths
  - Strengths outweighing Weaknesses
  - Weaknesses outweighing Strengths
  - Significant Weaknesses

  in your SSE area of focus.

Step 4: The School Self Evaluation Report

This is a short 2/3 page document. Its main focus is to list the school's evidence based judgements in areas of strength and the areas of work requiring improvement.
The report can be used in the following ways:

- To show evidence of annual performance
- To be used as a discussion and reflection document within the school community
- To report to parents and the patron on the work of the school
- To be the basis for the School Improvement Plan
- To inform the inspectorate when an external evaluation is taking place

The Report-Section by Section

The Front Cover

- Name of the School
- Address of the School
- The School Roll Number
- The Evaluation Period e.g. September to June 2013/2014
- The Report Issue Date e.g. June 2014

The Second Page

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in [School Name] N.S was undertaken during the period September 2013-June 2014. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum areas were evaluated.

- Literacy
- Numeracy

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 The School Context

- The Type of School (vertical, senior, all boys etc)
- The School Patronage
- The Number of Teachers (to include class, learning support, resource, language)
- DEIS status
- The Number of Newcomer Children, Members of the Travelling Community
- The Number of Children accessing Learning Support, Resource, Language Teaching
- Literacy/Numeracy Initiatives being used in the School e.g. Reading/Maths Recovery, Literacy Lift Off, Peer Tutoring, Guided Reading etc.

All of the above are suggestions only. You decide as a staff what should be included in the report. The purpose of this section is to give as clear a picture as possible of the school context.

2. The Findings-Literacy

(All the bullet points below are simply suggestions as to what your school may come up with in any SSE focus-Use Figure 3.3 on page 25 of the Guidelines for assistance)

2.1 Pupils' Attainment

Our strengths regarding pupils' attainment in literacy are (examples only):

- How well the school is doing in relation to national norms
- The progress since the last standardised testing
- Attitudes towards the focus e.g. the students' attitudes towards reading
- Two or three strengths in other areas of literacy

Areas requiring Improvement in Literacy

- List two or three areas

2.2 Teaching

Our Strengths in the Teaching of Literacy (examples only)

- A successful initiative e.g. Reading Recovery
- A common teaching approach
- Use of resources
- A successful planning initiative

Areas requiring Improvement in the Teaching of Literacy (examples only)

- A lack of consistency in the teaching of a particular area
- A lack of explicit teaching in an area
- Use of discrete time
- A lack of variety in assessment approaches

2.3 Learning

Our Strengths in Pupils' Learning (examples only)

- A print rich environment in each classroom and around the school
- A positive attitude towards the focus
- Varied resources
- Differentiation in lessons
- Access to support
- Pupils' own Self Evaluation

Areas requiring Improvement (examples only)

- Inconsistency in the teaching of skills for learning
- Insufficient IT integration in lessons

3. Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current School Improvement Plan

If you are producing your first plan this year, it is not necessary to complete this section. However, most schools like to include some success they have achieved in any area. This could be in any aspect of literacy or numeracy.
In future reports, include progress made from your School Improvement Plan in the last area worked upon.

4. Summary of School Self-Evaluation Findings

This is a summary of your strengths in list form, and a list of areas requiring improvement.

5. The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed.

Get this list on pages 64-68 of the Guidelines, fill it in and add an area or two in need of development into this section of your report.
Attach a full copy of the Legislative and Regulatory Guidelines to your report.

It is important to remember that only a summary of this report is shared with the whole school community. This summary will merely include the strengths identified and the areas prioritised for development. This summary can be sent to parents in letter form, can be included in a newsletter, can be explained at a parents' meeting or it can be placed on the school's website.

Step 5: TheSchool Improvement Plan

The content of the SIP is explained in detail in the first SSE Resource Bundle.

- The main stress for teachers and principals is the development of targets. Targets must be rooted in gathered evidence and analysed data. They must be SMART-specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound
- They often become clearer after staff discussion. For example, when your staff-looks at maths results in your school, they will identify the potential in each sTen or standardised score or percentile for improvement. The knowledge of the staff of classes or in smaller schools of individual children will be most useful here. Members of staff will be able to guide the conversation towards what can be expected of the particular cohort of children being discussed
- Choose small targets in Year 1 (e.g. presently 55% of the entire school (120) are scoring above a sTen of 7 in May 2013. We would like to increase this by 2% by May 2014)and learn from the progress in each area as the School Self Evaluation process rolls out

Step 6: Implement and Monitor

- This is about the actions in the Improvement Plan being implemented
- The actions must be worked on by each member of the teaching staff simultaneously
- Everyone must know exactly what to do
- The actions should become part of normal teaching and learning so that the practice is embedded
- The actions must be monitored by discussion at staff meetings and planning meetings and by the monitoring and encouragement of the principal and members of the management team
- Amendments need to be made to targets that are not realistic or are simply not working

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the most recent time-frame requested by the DES?

- The DES requested in Circular 39/2012 that there would be both a School Report and a School Improvement Plan (SIP) in place by June 2014
- Most schools gathered the evidence for one area during 2012/2013, devised a SIP which they are currently implementing and they will complete their first School Report by June 2014
- The best advice for any school only beginning the process now, is to be currently engaging in gathering evidence for an area of either literacy or numeracy and developing a SIP for implementation as soon as possible

What SSE documentation is my school currently supposed to have?

- You must have a School Improvement Plan and A School Self Evaluation Report completed by June 2014
- If you are only at the beginning of the process, you should be gathering evidence for an aspect of literacy or numeracy and keeping a record of this gathering in a folder together with the outlines of your First School Improvement Plan

Does the once off four year cycle mean that my school can spend two years at one aspect of literacy or numeracy in the first cycle of SSE?

The four year cycle does mean that you have two years on one area if you have begun SSE in your school prior to September 2014.
For example, Numeracy 2012/2013, Literacy 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, Third Area of Focus 2015/2016. (Please refer to Table 1 for more detail)

How will I keep all the areas we are reviewing monitored into the future?

As you go through the various aspects of literacy and numeracy, and other curricular areas, good practice will be developed and utilised by all teachers in the school. If the good practice is tweaked to meet the challenges, it will be completely accepted as the best possible way to teach and learn. As you go through the different areas, these methods and approaches will be soundly embedded and can be amended the next time around. Remember that you spend an entire year working on an area and another two tweaking the area (each SIP has a three year cycle). This time spent ensures the development of the best practice possible for your school in any area.

Useful Resources

This document is interactive, by clicking the name of the resources will bring you directly to the resource which is available online.

- **www.ippn.ie - Supports**
  - School Improvement Plan Resource Bundle
  - School Improvement Report
  - Maths – Problem-Solving Resources
  - School Self-evaluation: Oral Language Questionnaire
  - Comparing School Data Against the Normal Bell Curve
  - Language Skills Plan
  - Literacy Questionnaires for Oral Language:
    - » Comprehension
    - » Parents
    - » Infants
    - » First to Third class
    - » Fourth to Sixth class
  - Maths Language

- **Department of Education & Skills - Publications**
  - School Self-Evaluation, Guidelines for Primary Schools (2012)
  - An Introduction to School Self-Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools (2012)

- **Department of Education & Skills - Circulars**
  - Circular 56/2011 - Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
  - Circular 39/2012 - Implementation of School Self Evaluation-Primary

- **National Council for Curriculum & Assessment (NCCA)**
  - Assessment in the Primary School Currculum, Guidelines for Schools

- **Other Websites**
  - Professional Development Services for Teachers
  - National Council for Curriculum & Assessment (NCCA)