FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-EVALUATION POLICY

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Source: Governing body
POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the procedures for self-evaluation which we aim to have in Hampton Wick Infant and Nursery School. It was devised in consultation with senior staff and governors of a Richmond school in February 2000.

It incorporates guidance given by DfEE and Ofsted on school self-evaluation. From 2000, schools’ self-evaluation records will provide an important starting point for Ofsted inspection, and part of the work of inspection will be to endorse or refine a school’s view of itself.

2 FOREWORD - PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

“If schools are to maintain high standards or secure improvements, they need a strategy for appraising their own performance which complements the thorough but occasional health check provided by inspection. Monitoring and evaluation are essential to effective teaching and learning in the classroom and to good management and governance of the school”.

HMCI’s Foreword to School Evaluation Matters

The two main reasons for self-evaluation are:

♦ To know how well we are doing
♦ To know how to improve standards and provision

Self-evaluation means that not only those who manage and work in schools but everyone concerned with what happens there can feel confident that they are on track to improve learning and teaching, and therefore the standards achieved by the children. It will ensure that they know and build upon their strengths, and that they are focussed on the quality of the education they provide, while constantly seeking ways to improve it further. It will depend on more than conjecture, but actively look at the evidence of what they are doing, how they are comparing with other schools, and what different sections of the school community feel about them. It will increase their knowledge about themselves, and enable them to face outside evaluations of their work with confidence. It will make them consistent in their approaches, and help them to share their strengths with each other. The main focus will be what they do well, but through this they will create a climate where critical review in the context of strength is found to be constructive.

Therefore, the principles of self-evaluation will be that it:

♦ Is based on collection of evidence from a range of sources
Involves making judgements based on standards through the interpretation and evaluation of a range of data and evidence
Looks closely at quality of teaching, pupils’ attainment and progress, and management
Identifies effective practice
Examines what pupils are doing well and not so well, and assesses how well they are progressing
Identifies strengths and weaknesses in teaching and management
Looks at trends over time
Regards staff confidence in the procedures as paramount
Follows the evaluation process with action

The **instruments of evaluation** will be:

- Assessment results, including comparative data in PANDAs and the autumn package
- Individual records of pupil progress
- Management data: for example, roll trends, expenditure levels, and numbers of pupils with English as an additional language
- Teachers’ plans
- Children’s work
- The school’s learning and teaching policy
- Parental and pupil satisfaction

**Methods of self-evaluation**

Using the instruments listed, schools will regularly engage in:

- Analysis of pupil data
- Scrutiny of planning
- Scrutiny of children’s work
- Lesson observation
- Satisfaction surveys

**Who is involved in self-evaluation?**

In different contexts, each part of the school community will have a role in self-evaluation:

- Governors, through exercising oversight of the process, and participating in specific evaluation activities
- The headteacher and senior staff, through managing the process and being key evaluators of the quality of education provided
- Other staff, through identifying strengths and weaknesses using their particular knowledge of the school, through maintaining an evaluative overview of the areas for which they are responsible, and through participating in peer evaluation
- Pupils by being provided with opportunities to express views about their school, and knowing that they will be valued
◆ Parents, through expressing their views formally and informally, and being provided with a proper forum for doing so

3 USING DATA AND COMPARING WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

A wide variety of data is available, which enables the school to compare itself with others both locally and nationally. Although many of the instruments for comparison, for example the incidence of free school meals as an indicator of the socio-economic profile, are imprecise, they are nevertheless valuable in identifying trends.

This data does not provide all the answers. Its usefulness is in posing the right questions.

The data comes into the school in extensive documents, containing far more detail than is needed by the average reader. It is probable that only the headteacher and the chair of the governing body will need the whole of these documents. However, their apparent inaccessibility should not prevent others in the school from being aware of the generality of their content. The data will be routinely analysed by the headteacher and chair of governors, with the school’s assigned inspector, as part of the LEA’s termly review programme. This analysis provides the opportunity for a summary prepared by the inspector.

Staff and governors’ meetings should consider this summary, to ensure that they share the key knowledge about the school, and the emerging issues, that the statistics provide.

The school’s annual evaluation cycle should include a time frame for a group to assess the data. The second half of the autumn term, after the autumn package has arrived, is a suitable time. The meeting can also then select the data to be included in the summary.

4 GAINING EVIDENCE FROM PUPILS’ WORK

Three times a year, a sample of work will be collected for examination by the subject leaders and senior management team of the school. The work will normally consist of three sets from each class, representing the most able, middle band and less able, although different or random groupings may suit some scrutiny activities. It will not always be the same children. The work of pupils with learning difficulties (Stage 2 upwards) is scrutinised separately by the SENCO.

Issues emerging from this scrutiny will contribute to the audit from which the school development plan emerges. Experience shows that a single scrutiny is likely to identify three or four issues for improvement, which is sufficient to be worked on effectively in a single year.

Subject co-ordinators are also expected to undertake a limited work scrutiny in their own subject at least once a year. This may be similar in method to the whole school scrutiny, or consist of:
◆ Sitting alongside pupils as they write in classrooms
◆ Looking at whole sets of books or folders of a class if they happen to be available in the classroom
◆ Looking at work displayed on classroom walls and in circulation areas; and
Looking at samples of written work on a systematic basis (e.g. the headteacher, head of department or subject co-ordinator calls in groups of books to a regular pattern). The outcomes of this exercise are likely to contribute to subject co-ordinators’ annual action plans.

While work scrutiny is a valuable exercise as part of a self-evaluation programme it is not sufficient on its own. Pupils’ work does not, for example, display any of the inspiration or excitement that might have marked the learning and teaching. It is important to employ a range of self-evaluation strategies, of which this will only be one.

5 Gaining evidence by observing learning and teaching

Every teacher should be formally observed at work in the classrooms by the headteacher or a member of the senior management team at least twice a year. Observations will normally be for a minimum of thirty minutes to an agreed focus that has been notified to the staff in advance. Some areas of focus, for example, how effectively a lesson is begun, may only require a short observation.

The observation programme will be planned, realistic, achievable and practical. Dates for each observation will be known in advance and entered in the school diary. Normally these will be regarded as prime time and would only be altered in extreme circumstances. The areas of focus will be linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. They may have arisen from earlier work sampling, subject audit, or Inset. Prior to any series of observations, there will be staff discussion and briefing on the areas of focus.

Observation forms with prompts reflecting the current area of focus may be issued in advance, to ensure full awareness of the objectives of the observation. In addition to the areas of focus, there will be a general evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching. The basic criteria may be taken from Ofsted criteria on judging teaching quality, or from the school’s own learning and teaching policy.

An important part of the process will be the feedback. The feedback to individual teachers will:

♦ Be fair and backed with evidence
♦ Recognise strengths as well as weaknesses
♦ Be conducted in a relaxed but professional atmosphere
♦ Focus on the act, not the person
♦ Give opportunities for discussion
♦ Address professional development needs, including training
♦ Avoid identifying too many weaknesses
♦ Give helpful advice which will lead to action points
♦ Review date to discuss achievement of action points

A short confidential written record should accompany verbal feedback, with a copy to the teacher and a copy retained in the teacher’s file. Any improvement should be acknowledged as soon as possible.
Feedback to the whole staff and governors will focus on emerging school issues, without identifying individuals.

In addition to observations for the purpose of evaluation, schools may also wish to encourage peer observation for professional development purposes.

6  **GAINING A WHOLE SCHOOL VIEW – STAFF, GOVERNORS, PUPILS, PARENTS**

Staff, governors, pupils and parents can all contribute to the school’s self-evaluation from their own standpoint.

**Staff** have an evolving and relevant view of schools where they work, and should be consulted annually, through the School Improvement Planning process, as part of the audit preceding the construction of a new development plan.

**Governors** vary in their availability to visit the school during the day, but where it is possible for them to do so, it will normally be on the basis of a non-professional informing him/herself about what happens in the schools, in order to increase the effectiveness of their oversight. The literacy governor, the numeracy governor and the SEN governor are examples of governors who have undertaken special areas of interest. Governors might also evaluate non-professional issues, for example, movement about the school, or pupil courtesy. The school should establish ‘ground rules’ for their visits.

Governors also receive reports on all aspects of school development. In addition, the sub-committees may evaluate school development on the basis of the previously agreed success criteria. Key points are passed on to the main governing body. Normally reports to governors will be about emerging trends and whole school issues rather than about named staff and pupils.

A typical channel for sounding out **pupil** opinions is the Year 2 School Council. The work of this group is aimed at enhancing pupils’ investment in the school, developing their own responsibility, and establishing expectations of pupils.

**Parents’** views are often communicated informally, but there also needs to be a system of formal consultation. The ideal system, which we have in place, an annual satisfaction survey. The collation of these exercises is an appropriate and useful task for governors. Satisfaction surveys have been carried out 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

7  **THE IMPACT OF MANAGEMENT**

The aim is that the impact of the leadership on the quality of the education provided and the standards achieved will be apparent.

The criteria for evaluating the management and leadership are based on Ofsted criteria, and will be as follows:

- Strong leadership provides clear educational direction
- Teaching and curricular development are monitored, evaluated and supported
- The school’s aims, values and policies are reflected throughout its work
- Development planning identifies relevant priorities and targets and the school monitors progress towards them
There is a positive ethos, reflecting commitment to:
- high achievement
- an effective learning environment
- good relationships
- equality of opportunity for all pupils

Once a year, in a confidential discussion, the headteacher and the chair of governors should apply these criteria to themselves. They will need the help of others to obtain an objective view. Outside assessors will, in various contexts, report on the effectiveness of management from time to time. In the school, staff can contribute through their responses through the School Improvement Planning process. Governors will make judgements about the headteacher and deputy in their annual review of targets.

ACTION PLANNING, AND LINKS TO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A key principle of self-evaluation is that there is no point unless action follows the evaluation.

It is recommended that the process of self-evaluation be specifically linked to the development planning cycle. Self-evaluation will contribute to the SIP audit, and action planning should address issues identified.

9 RECORDING SELF-EVALUATION

It is necessary to keep records of self-evaluation activities. There will be occasions when outside bodies will need to see them.

Some elements of the process will be confidential. Notes of individual lesson observations will be confidential, and retained in a secure file. The headteacher and the teacher concerned may wish to call upon them from time to time, but they will be open to no one else without express permission. Nothing that identifies individual pupils or teachers will be in the central record, beyond a dated note that an observation or other activity has taken place.

The record file for one year should consist of:
- A minute of the annual data analysis meeting
- A summary of the responses from the staff audit
- A summary of issues emerging from the school council
- A summary of issues arising from the parent questionnaire
- A note of each sequence of observations, the dates on which they took place, who undertook the observation, the agreed focus, and the whole school issues emerging
- A note of the date and focus of the whole school work scrutiny, and the issues emerging
- A note of the date and issues emerging from any subject audit which takes place
- Termly SMIF reports
- A reference to any action plan arising from self-evaluation
This file will be a key supplement to the school development plan

10. **VALIDATION THROUGH INSPECTION AND OTHER EXTERNAL REVIEWS SUCH AS THRESHOLD ASSESSMENT**

Ofsted inspection is relatively infrequent. The framework for inspection effective from January 2000 takes school self-evaluation as a starting point. This is a good step forward, allowing the school to contribute positively to its own inspection. Having followed this policy, schools will be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses with confidence. Everything will be in place for the inspectors, who will then be in a position to corroborate the school’s own evaluations, or to suggest further areas for improvement where necessary.

11. **A SUGGESTED TIME SCALE FOR SELF-EVALUATION**

The dates will be agreed and published prior to the start of the school year.

**Autumn term**
- Meeting to analyse data and prepare a summary report (headteacher, senior management team)
- Report on data/attainment trends to staff and governors
- Staff meeting to explain focus for next round of lesson observations
- Lesson observations
- Staff meeting to feed back on issues emerging from lesson observations

**Spring term**
- Meeting, to evaluate leadership and management (headteacher and chair of governors)
- Whole school work sampling exercise
- Feedback to staff on issues arising from the work sample
- Whole school audit using School Improvement Plan pro-formas
- Construction of outline development plan for the following school year

**Summer term**
- Staff meeting to explain focus for next round of lesson observations
- Lesson observations
- Parent /Carer questionnaire
- Action planning for School Improvement Planning
- Meeting to agree dates and programme for following year