

Grading Your Ability to Self-Evaluate by Means of an Audit Grid

'It is useful to come to a conclusion of the quality of the school's self-evaluation as quickly as possible, as this will have a major bearing on how the rest of the inspection is conducted. To do this inspectors will need to get evidence of the processes the school has in place for evaluating its effectiveness.'

Ofsted 'Guidance for Inspectors of Schools: conducting the Inspection' p5 (Draft 7/03/05)

In Part 3 you will notice that as well as being asked to grade the school's level of attainment in each aspect, you are also asked to rate your school's capacity to self-evaluate each area. The evaluation box does not appear on the SEF but as you can see from the quote above, Ofsted will be asking this question of the school at the beginning and throughout its inspection and it is crucial that you know what your strengths and weaknesses are so that you can address any shortcomings.

Using the Audit Grid

To help you ask the right questions about the quality of your self-evaluation processes, overleaf is an auditing grid. The grid is split into six sections, each section begins by posing one of Ofsted's 'acid test' questions about the self-evaluating school. On the left-hand side of the grid in the 'Outstanding' column we have listed what self-evaluation would look like in the very best school as set against the six questions; the right-hand side expresses the very opposite. In between there are grading boxes for good and satisfactory.

Use the Grid as an overview

You could begin by looking at the chart and giving yourself, as a school, an overall rating for self-evaluation. By rating yourself against each of the bullet points you will be able to see the strengths and weaknesses.

Use the Grid to judge each aspect or elements of an aspect.

It is possible that whilst most of the processes of self-evaluation are well established and working well there are certain aspects that are weaker. For example, there may be weakness in evaluating Personal Development and Well-being, or a specific subject is poorly evaluated. It is possible that some departments or key stages are stronger than others. You will want to test this out and the grid overleaf would help you to do so.

It is important to note that not all of the key questions will be as relevant for each aspect: for example, judging oneself against other schools in some elements of Personal Development is not possible because that data is not so readily available.

Use your Link Adviser

The link adviser will comment upon the school's self-evaluation procedures and the auditing grid can act as a useful tool for this dialogue.

Actions

Should you find that any aspects of self-evaluation are lacking, it would be strongly advisable that you make plans to rectify these as soon as possible.

Note of Caution

It is dangerous for a school to assume that because it can grade itself as 'good' or 'outstanding' against the majority of the criteria overleaf that it is therefore 'good' or 'outstanding' at self-evaluation. Only if there has been reciprocated impact on standards can a school judge itself to be good or better.