

**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**  
**Roinn an Fhoghlaim agus Seirbheisean Chloinne**  
Department of Education and Children's Services

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**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**  
**Standards and Quality Report**  
**Guidance**

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**Revised April 2013**

# GUIDANCE NOTES

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***What really matters is the impact of all the key activities in the school on learners themselves and their learning. (HGIOS 3)***

**Purpose:**

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, made it a requirement for all schools to report annually on school improvement plans and progress in implementing such plans.

## **1 Introduction**

The following guidance is drawn from:

Part 4 of 'Journey to Excellence' (HMIe 2007), entitled Planning for Improvement  
HGIOS 3

HMIe Advice Note of August 2012

## **2 Effective Planning**

### **2.1 Part 4: Planning for Excellence**

This booklet provides clear and concise guidance and helps to simplify improvement planning.

**Planning for Excellence** identifies 4 key **collegiate** activities:

- **AGREE VISION**
- **IDENTIFY PRIORITIES** and specify outcomes for all learners
- **TAKE ACTION**
- **ENSURE IMPACT**

### **2.2 Agree Vision:**

It is important that all those to whom the school belongs explore their values and vision together to achieve shared ownership which is critical to the improvement planning process. Your vision will look to the future and the kinds of challenges which may lie ahead. It will be rooted in what your school or centre already knows about itself. The heart of your vision will always be the provision of the highest quality learning and teaching and the need to ensure that all children and young people achieve to their potential. Discussion of the vision and values can take place among different groupings of people and in a number of contexts, e.g. through approaches for developing citizenship among young people, within the parent council and in focus groups involving the school's wider partners. It will reflect the authority's vision and values.

### **2.3 Identify Priorities**

Your school or centre will need to identify a manageable number of improvement priorities expressed as outcomes for learners. These will emerge from your self-evaluation procedures/processes. Time spent on diagnosis needs to be balanced against the time to spend on improvement. You also need to keep focusing on the key work of the school - learning and teaching. Robust evaluation requires reliable data and

your school or centre needs to be data rich. Data can be of various kinds. For example, data should indicate children and young people's current levels of achievement and be capable of demonstrating improvements. Data should include analysis of people's views which can be compared with their views after initiatives have been implemented. Evaluations based on direct observation of the quality of learning in the classroom or playroom are crucial.

## 2.4 Taking Action

A key focus here is the relationship between the outcomes for learners you have decided on and what the school has to do to achieve these outcomes. If you identify weak practice, you will need to focus on addressing it before you go any further. Ask yourselves how to build on strengths to help address weaknesses. This gives a positive focus to the improvement process. Part 2 'Exploring Excellence' can be helpful when planning how you are going to achieve your outcomes as it gives examples of excellent practice.

## 2.5 Ensuring Impact

After taking the action you have planned, you will need to evaluate its overall success. Relevant quality indicators can be used in order to help you measure progress. The outcomes evaluated will be their impact on, and outcomes for learners. They will not relate to the writing of policies, or the production of teaching materials. They are the means to more important ends; improvements in learning and achievements of children and young people.

## 3 The improvement plan.

Your improvement plan should be 'high level', providing the broad direction of travel for your school/centre's improvement journey. If it is too lengthy, detailed or complicated you should slim it down and limit it to the following essential elements:

### Essential elements of an Improvement Plan

- **Clearly stated and aspirational vision and values**, developed by and shared with children and young people, parents and those with whom the school works in partnership.
- **A small number of improvement priorities**, informed by facts, intelligence or research and expressed as outcomes for learners.
- **Outcomes which focus on learning and achievement**, are based on **evidence and data**, and are **observable** and, if possible, **measurable**.
- **Clearly identified responsibilities** for implementation linked to named individuals and/or teams.
- **Clear timescales** extending to more than one school session, as necessary and with milestones and deadlines.
- **Measures of success** which include performance data, quality indicators and stakeholders' views.

You will need to develop individual action plans for specific projects and /or teams. These will break projects into more specific actions which need to be undertaken by named individuals/groups, and will include milestones and measures of success. These are working documents which do not need to be included in your high level improvement plan.

**3.1** Evaluation is a dynamic process which goes on throughout the year and not at set times. If issues arise that require addressing, you will need to take appropriate action and the plan/s can be adjusted accordingly.

#### **4.0 The 'maintenance agenda'**

**4.1** This is the normal work of the school; the school's important day-to-day business. Whilst work or tasks considered as maintenance are clearly essential, these will not feature as improvement plan projects. However, the time and resources required for such maintenance should be considered when deciding on improvement plan priorities.

### **5 HGIOS 3, QI 6.3 - Planning for Improvement has 5 themes:**

- 1 Developing, implementing and evaluating improvement plans
- 2 Structure and content of improvement plans
- 3 Use of management information
- 4 Joint improvement planning with partner organisations and services.
- 5 Planning for sustainability.

#### **5.1 QI 6.3 focuses on the school's :**

- ❖ arrangements for planning for improvement and their impact
- ❖ approaches to implementing plans
- ❖ approaches to evaluating their outcomes for learners
- ❖ need for clear priorities based firmly on information from self-evaluation
- ❖ partnership approach to secure improvements

From this we can see clearly that to secure improvement, it is vital that a partnership approach is adopted. The identification of improvement priorities require robust evaluation processes. Your school/centre needs to be rich in reliable data which will enable you to set your improvement agenda and demonstrate when improvements have been achieved.

This QI and related QIs eg 5.9, 9.1,9.2,9.3,9.4, can help you evaluate your school's approach to improvement planning. (Appendix 1)

### **6 HMIe advice note June 2012**

This note provides information on how national expectations of Curriculum for Excellence implementation priorities will be addressed in inspections announced from August 2012.

It provides further exemplification to the illustration for **QI 5.9 (Improvement through self-evaluation)** to reflect developing best practice and national expectations of progress in implementing aspects Curriculum for Excellence.

### ***Theme 3: School/centre/learning community improvement***

*Staff are committed to acting on the results of robust and rigorous self-evaluation and can show clear evidence of improvement based on actions as part of our self-evaluation. Improvements focus particularly on continuing improvements to learning and teaching and the achievement of all learners.*

*Improvement planning includes a focus on:*

- *Developing assessment approaches;*
- *Delivering a coherent curriculum and the broad general education entitlement 3-15, including planning for transition P7 to S1;*
- *Raising standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy at every level;*
- *Delivery of and priorities for health and wellbeing across the curriculum;*
- *In primary schools, prioritising improving use of Es and Os and the breadth and depth of learning across all curriculum areas; and*
- *Planning and developing the senior phase to ensure successful delivery of new qualifications for session 2012/13.*

*(ref. HMIe Advice note June 2012)*

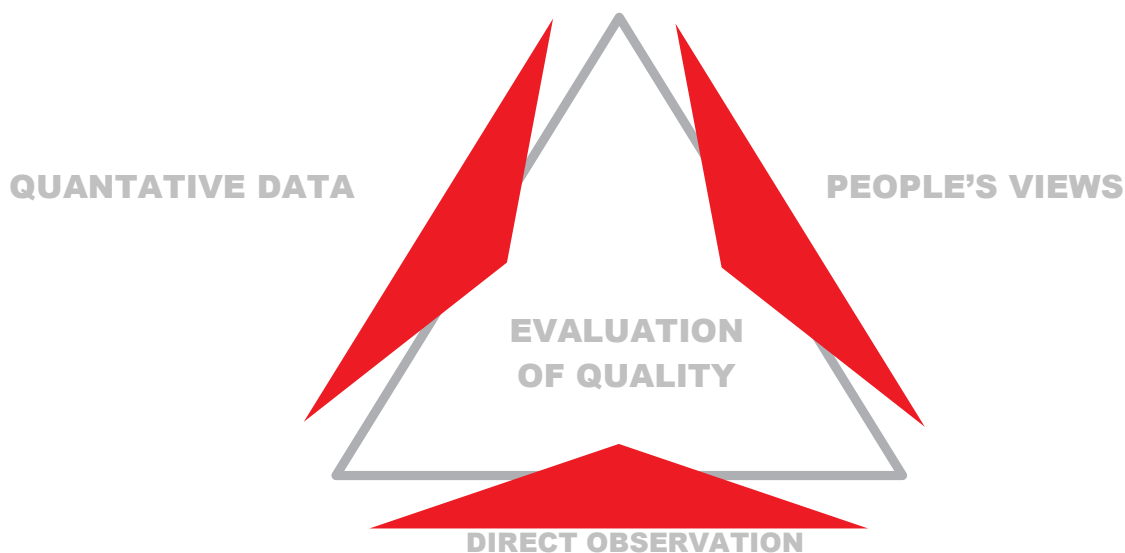
## 7.0 Standards and Quality Reports

*Evaluation rather than description -with a focus and impact on pupil outcomes - has to be the central force, and school self evaluation requires facts, not anecdotes, with clear evidence bases.*

(School self evaluation: a process of change

Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts)

It is essential that the S & Q Report provides an informed basis for improvement planning. Therefore, statements within the report should be based soundly on the outcomes of self-evaluation processes. A robust and rigorous process of self evaluation, generating reliable evidence, will enable you to report with confidence on standards and quality.



(ref.triangular HGIOS3, page 17)

Evidence gathering will be an ongoing task, reflecting the dynamic processes of self-evaluation. Evidence includes observation, attainment and achievement information, discussion, questionnaires and the sampling of views.

The report should contain evaluative statements and only descriptive when necessary. (Appendix 2)

The report should also enable the reader to gain a clear and accurate picture of the school.

The evaluative statements about progress made on the previous improvement plan should be woven through the text. There should be a greater emphasis on conclusions derived from data rather than on the presentation of the data itself

*e.g. A highly evaluated review of the already successful programme of 2011/12 led to a further development of certain key areas of the Supported Study programme, which saw an increase in attendance with 90% of pupils attending at least once a week.*

*Rather than*

*90% of pupils attended Supported Study*

The school's standards and quality report must also serve to provide information to parents and should, as far as possible, be concise, easy to read, free from unnecessary jargon. As with previous reports you should include your school aims/vision/values and append significant achievements over the course of the school session.

The templates issued in 2012, (Appendix 3) will continue to be used as the framework for reporting on standards and quality. All-through schools should use the Secondary school pro forma. Schools are free to amend the template as necessary.

### **Submission of reports**

The school improvement plan and standards and quality report should be forwarded to your Quality Improvement Officer by **31<sup>st</sup> May**.