

**Linking the
School Self-Evaluation (SSE)
Guidelines for Primary Schools
and
SALF**

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In the introduction to the School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Primary Schools, and in answering the question: Who are the Guidelines for, it is stated: The Guidelines are: ‘intended to support, in a practical way, the inclusion of the voice of pupils and parents in school self-evaluation’. (School Self-Evaluation guidelines for schools pg. 9)

Why pupil voice?

In his synthesis of a wide range of research relating to educational achievement, Hattie (2009) identifies,

“that feedback was amongst the most powerful influences on achievement” (pg 173). He clarifies that research shows that not all types of feedback are equally effective and proposes the idea that feedback is most powerful when it is from the student to the teacher.

“When teachers seek, or at least are open, to feedback from students as to what students know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are not engaged-then teaching and learning can be synchronised and powerful.” (pg 173)

The Challenge of Pupil Voice

The value of including pupil voice can be further contextualised when we consider research carried out by Nuthall (2005). Nuthall’s work describes how personal learning is to each child, and how much of this can be missed in teachers’ observations. In the classrooms that Nuthall studied, talking about learning (both teacher and student) was not common, and there was over-reliance on visible indicators such as pupil engagement and the responses of small number of students to inform teachers’ understandings about learning.

A challenging finding from this work was that:

“the students lived in a personal and social world of their own in the classroom, they already knew at least 40% of what the teachers intended them to learn, a third of what each student learned was not learned by any other student in the class, students learned how and when the teacher would notice them and how to give the appearance of active involvement”. (pg 241)

Additional context factors such as socio economic background of children and inclusion of SEN and migrant children in mainstream settings may further inhibit children from active participation in their own learning.

In using the messaging system of assessment, SALF enables children to learn the language of learning, to develop a value system on their personal learning and to share insights into personal learning. In the School Self-Evaluation process children who are experienced in the SALF process have the potential to contribute insightfully to pupil voice.

SSE process

As you have seen earlier, the Guidelines propose a six step self-evaluation process for schools to engage in as follows:

1. Gather Evidence
2. Analyse Evidence
3. Draw Conclusions
4. SSE Report
5. Improvement Plan
6. Implement and Monitor

In thinking about gathering evidence, pupils' work (copies, files, folders, displays, portfolios, demonstrations of skills-SSE Guidelines pg 48) is cited as an important source. Another important source of evidence is 'the views of pupils and parents'. (SSE Guidelines pg 48).

As pupils develop a deeper understanding of the language of learning and assessment through their engagement in the SALF process, they are better equipped to collaborate and provide insightful feedback that supports their own learning and the teaching they are experiencing.

In the SSE guidelines a 'quality framework for evaluating teaching and learning is provided'. (SSE guidelines pg. 22) Teaching and learning are looked at from **three main themes - Learner outcomes, Learning experiences, Teachers' practice**. These are then further broken down into **subthemes**, as outlined in the diagram below.

TEACHING and LEARNING



<http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/primary/index.php/teaching-learning-framework>

Each of the sub-themes then has specific '**Evaluation Criteria**'. The criteria identify what quality means in terms of each of the sub-themes and helps schools to make 'judgements about pupils' achievement or aspects of teaching and learning'. (SSE guidelines pg. 28)

In step one of the SSE process, a school gathers evidence on teaching and learning in the school. While pupils' work samples are often readily available, a pupil's deeper insights into their own learning and in evaluating their own learning is often more difficult to source in concrete format. Many of the SALF methodologies provide a valuable insight into the pupil's perspective.

Outlined below are just **some** examples of how various aspects of the SALF process support the collection of evidence to use in discussions on what is working well or needs to be improved in terms of pupil contributions. (See Chapter 4 of the SSE Guidelines for Primary Schools.)

References:

- Nuthall, G A (2005). The cultural myths and realities of classroom teaching and learning: A personal journey. Teachers College Record , 107 (5), 895-934
- Hattie , J (2009.) Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement. London: Routledge

Linking SSE and SALF methodologies

Theme	Sub-theme	Evaluation criteria	SALF methodology
<p>1. Learner Outcomes (SSE Guidelines pg. 30)</p>	<p>1.1 Attainment of curriculum objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoy their learning of the curriculum area and are motivated to learn. • Pupils at risk of underachieving are attaining well, in accordance with their ability, and make very good progress from their prior levels of achievement. 	<p>Junior classes:</p> <p>WALT (We are learning to) chart: The class teacher shares the learning intention/objective with the class at the beginning of a lesson and together with the children, takes time to think, talk about and record how they will know they have achieved that learning.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>As above</p>
<p>2. Learning Experiences (SSE guidelines pg. 32)</p>	<p>2.1 Learning Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, high quality displays promoting the development of literacy and numeracy in each curriculum area are evident 	<p>Displays of collaborative charts at different stages of lessons e.g. an ‘ideas’ chart at the beginning of a lesson, or a ‘learning goals chart or a ‘review of what we have learned’ chart ‘, “contributes significantly to their language development at all class levels” (SALF Guidelines for teachers pg 25)</p>

<p>(SSE guidelines pg. 34)</p>	<p>2.2 Pupil's Engagement in Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils are enabled, when appropriate, to engage actively in their learning • Pupils get opportunities to report on/explain their learning • Pupils reflect on the activity and thus consolidate the learning that has taken place 	<p>The premise of SALF is engaging pupils in their learning. This happens at regular intervals both as a collective lesson and individually. For example Step 1 of the 10 Steps for Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in both Junior and Middle/Senior classes is: Learning Conversations and Discussions.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>Work samples: Pupils are required to reflect on and comment on a piece of their own work. In cases where pupils are compiling a SALF folder/scrapbook and need to make a selection for their folder, they must put a written comment under the work sample and justify the selection, identifying and reflecting on the learning that took place.</p>
<p>3. Teachers' practice</p> <p>(SSE Guidelines pg. 38)</p>	<p>3.1 Preparation for teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers plan for how they are going to assess the pupils' learning and take account of assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment of learning AoL approaches 	<p>Assessment for learning processes are premised on the fact that children know, understand and can act on the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is good work? • Consider the extent to which they have achieved the criteria for good work • Agree ways of bridging the gap/s between what good work is and the next steps needed to achieve that. <p>(SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 10)</p>

<p>(SSE Guidelines pg. 40)</p>	<p>3.2 Teaching approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons are guided by expected learning outcomes that are curriculum linked and are shared with the pupils • Expected learning outcomes are achieved during lessons 	<p>Junior classes:</p> <p>Checklists: these can be devised based on curriculum objectives and used by individual children. The teacher and child discuss the content of the checklist to outline learning intentions so that success criteria can be identified. The child then colours in the matching symbol when the learning outcome has been achieved.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>Rubrics: These are constructed using learning objectives from the curriculum. Children/Teachers use these rubrics to assess how well the child has achieved the different learning objectives. They also can lead to a discussion to set new learning goals.</p>
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<p>(SSE guidelines pg. 42)</p>	<p>3.3 Management of pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' contributions and questions are encouraged and respected in the classroom • Due account is taken of pupils' views and opinions in accordance with their age and maturity 	<p>Developing Questioning Skills is one of the four Building Blocks of SALF (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 16). The skill of questioning is modelled by the teacher.</p> <p>“This ethos of enquiry leads to children really believing that what they have to contribute is recognised, acknowledged and valid.” (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 20)</p> <p>Junior classes:</p> <p>Whole class KWL (Know – want to know – learned) charts: The teacher records what the pupils know at the beginning of a lesson / topic/ unit of work. This is recorded in the first column. Next the teacher elicits what more the children want to know about this topic. This is then recorded in the second column. The third column is completed after the topic/unit of work is completed, where the teacher now documents in consultation with the children, what they have learned. These frameworks allows for the opinions, views and interests of pupils in terms of the content of the lessons.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>Task review sheet: Children complete these frameworks to foster self-reflection. They assist the child and teacher to discuss how a task or project is developing. It encourages a child to self-assess.</p>
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<p>(SSE guidelines pg. 44)</p>	<p>3.4 Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are involved in assessing their learning through self-assessment and peer assessment • The gathering of information on pupils learning is timely and happens at regular intervals 	<p>Junior classes:</p> <p>Step 10 of Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in Junior Classes is the SALF Review Workshop in the Classroom. Here children participate in a class discussion about the folders are working for the children. It provides an opportunity to revisit their own folder and gives children time to see other folders.</p> <p>“Where children are ready, this presents an opportunity to introduce early stage peer reviews.” (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 86)</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>In middle and senior classes peer review takes place as Step 7: Introducing an audience for the SALF Folders: (i) in the home : (ii) in school</p> <p>During these reviews children readily exchange information and ideas.</p> <p>“When the first peer reviews have taken place, children can have an opportunity to write a short review of one other folder and receive a written peer review of their own SALF folder.” (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 115)</p>
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