

THE FRIARY SCHOOL
SELF-EVALUATION POLICY

Issue 2
Spring 2006
Review 2010

This policy is designed to support all our School Aims and Objectives

1. Principles

- Continuous improvement and development depend principally on the school itself being the main agent in appraising its own effectiveness, establishing what needs to be done, deciding how to do it and aiming for maximum impact upon standards and quality, especially of teaching and learning. The prime function of our self-evaluation structure is therefore to ensure that the key elements of the work of the school are regularly and systematically reviewed as part of normal school routines and planning cycles.
- The support of ‘outside’ agents and critical friends, including the Local Authority, will also be sought as part of this process.
- Our procedures will be based largely on the Ofsted model of self-evaluation.
- Self-evaluation will encompass aspects of the work of individual departments or sections of the school in addition to whole school issues (including those arising from Ofsted inspections).
- Self-evaluation – and in particular the frequency of reviews – will be linked to school priorities.
- The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) will be a summary of the outcomes of the school’s self-review process.

2. Process

2.1 The self-evaluation process will:

- be based on a collection of evidence from a range of sources
- involve making judgements based on the interpretation and evaluation of data and evidence
- be applied consistently and objectively, incorporating moderation from ‘outside’ the school where appropriate
- look closely at the quality of teaching; pupils’ attainment and progress; leadership, management and governance
- identify effective practice and seek to establish an open climate for discussion and support
- examine what pupils are doing so well and not so well and address how they are progressing
- identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and management
- look at trends over time
- celebrate success
- be followed by appropriate action

2.2 Each review will have a clear focus using appropriate criteria to facilitate analysis and evaluation. The criteria should be reliable, valid and agreed in advance.

2.3 Responsibilities for the reviews, timescales and evaluation procedures will also be clarified well in advance, as will the role of all persons who are to be involved or consulted as part of the process (including e.g. Local Authority Officers, Line Managers, governors, parents and pupils).

2.4 Examples of appropriate sources of evidence which will be obtained include:

- performance data (including prior attainment data)
- comparative external data (benchmarking)
- school and departmental documentation
- pupils' work
- lesson and task observations
- interviews
- questionnaires
- pupil tracking

Colleagues are already familiar with most of the above as they have been utilised in previous departmental reviews as well as in the performance management process. In particular lesson observation and the revision of school and departmental documentation are well established. Parental questionnaires and discussions with pupils (e.g. the Pupils in Focus scheme) and other stakeholders are used appropriately to inform strategic planning.

The main purpose of data analysis is to seek confirmation that pupils of all abilities are learning and achieving as much as they are capable of, especially in relation to their prior attainment. It can provide evidence to support (or otherwise) a perception; identify trends; and enable the school to target resources where necessary.

The scrutiny of pupils' work may enable those conducting the review to assess the relative demands made of pupils in different subjects; pupils' strengths and weaknesses; how effectively they are learning and making progress; and whether they appear to be attaining as well as they should be. It may also reveal whether teachers are setting high expectations so as to challenge pupils and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding; employing methods and setting work which match curricular objectives and the needs of their pupils; marking work systematically and constructively in accordance with the agreed marking policy; and making effective use of assessment to inform their teaching.

Lesson observations will inform senior staff and subject leaders about the quality of teaching and learning and in particular the key judgement will be related to the extent of progress pupils make in the lesson. Each full-time member of staff will be observed three times in a year: by the subject leader, by a member of the leadership team and also as part of the performance management process.

2.5 The outcomes of each review will include a written report, most commonly a SEF, produced by the review team in addition to verbal feedback. Any obvious confidentialities emerging from the process (e.g. concerning individual colleagues or pupils) will of course be respected absolutely.

2.6 Review outcomes will also impact upon future school development, continuous professional development and individual action plans.

3. Responsibilities of those directly involved in the self-evaluation process

3.1 The Headteacher and School Leadership Group will need to monitor on a continuous and consistent basis certain on-going 'maintenance' items such as standards of achievement; quality of teaching; special educational needs; attendance; behaviour; and budget. Added to these will be those 'development' items identified in the strategic plan and built into the self-evaluation structure. A realistic balance will need to be kept between the review of maintenance and development items in the light of priority but also of workload. Typically the SLG will propose the review cycle; the issues for review; the personnel comprising the review team; and the detail of each particular process in negotiation with other colleagues involved in the review. The Headteacher, supported by the senior team, will ensure that the SEF is updated on a regular basis – at least termly. The SLG will also be responsible for ensuring that any outcomes of the self-evaluation process are built into the appropriate school development and/or action plan. The Line Manager of a Subject Leader or Head of Section/Department will normally be included in the team reviewing that area of the school.

3.2 Subject or Section Leaders are increasingly accustomed to review, recognising that schools exist in an accountable society where we are increasingly subject to external scrutiny and that accountability is indeed part of the role. Self-evaluation can:

- enable subject teams to judge whether they are meeting the targets and objectives they have set themselves
- provide teams with real insight into areas of both strength and weakness
- help teams to plan changes based on real rather than assumed needs
- help to ensure that scarce funds are wisely spent
- help to focus the team's individual and collective professional development needs
- help to ensure greater consistency of practice across the team
- help to ensure that success receives recognition

Subject leaders need to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the curriculum and progress towards targets for pupils and staff, in order to draw up future priorities and targets for their area. They should ensure that the appropriate evidence referred to in paragraph 2.4 is in place and that its analysis is used to support the raising of standards of achievement and pupil progress.

Taking the view that the subject leader is the 'resident subject expert' then it is essential that they regularly review the work of their subject area and that they are actively involved in any review of their subject undertaken by the SLG and governors. In addition to other key functions such as motivating staff and building morale, subject leaders need to demonstrate good practice in their own teaching; engage in critical self-evaluation; and seek and encourage improvement through working with others to share ideas and learn from experience – which can have invaluable consequences for raising the standards of teaching and learning.

In terms of the review of a subject area it is essential that the subject leader and the subject team should be fully aware of any specific focus where this is the case.

The outcomes of the review will be built into the department development plan. Line managers will then work with subject leaders to monitor and evaluate these outcomes.

3.3 Governors In conducting their own self-evaluation, it is likely that Governors' main priority will be to ensure that they are fulfilling their statutory duties of governance satisfactorily. In general terms they have three key functions:

- To provide a strategic view and establish policy
- To act as a critical friend
- To ensure accountability and best value, being answerable to the wider local community for their work and the work of the school

Although all these functions may contribute to the self-evaluation structure, it is the 'critical friend' role which provides the opportunity for a more objective 'external' view. Governors canvass parental views periodically within this process.

Governors receive regular reports and analyses from the headteacher, the SLG and other staff which enable them to contribute to the review, for example, of the framework for running the school; school ethos; school development; the curriculum; the standards achieved and the performance targets which are set; and the school's physical and human resources. In addition they make formal and informal visits to the school which enable them to form a view about many aspects of school life. Governors are also invited to request any further information which has not been provided for them to assist them in evaluating the school's overall effectiveness.

Governors already have a significant workload and it is therefore important for the governing body to be selective about what it wants to review and its direct role in reviewing the work of others. Where governors are to participate directly in any self-evaluation process involving other staff it is also essential that a protocol for their role is agreed in advance. This also applies to the involvement of pupils or parents (or any external agency) in any review procedure.

4. The Review Cycle

In addition to the annual performance reviews (in the Autumn term) it is feasible to build in a minimum of three and a maximum of five reviews (as identified on the annual Self-Evaluation Schedule) over the course of a typical school year e.g:

Autumn Term:

- Performance reviews - *overall school performance (with reference to e.g. the unvalidated version of the Panda report)
- *departmental performance (Line Managers and Subject Leaders)
 - individual performance management (Line Managers)
 - *setting of statutory KS3 and KS4 targets; departmental targets; individual performance objectives

(*Governors receive detailed information in respect of these)

- plus one other area for review (with Local Authority support where appropriate)

Following the above modify, if necessary, School Development and/or Continuing Professional Development Plans for that year

Spring Term:

One or two further reviews, engaging the services of Local Authority officers where possible.

Draw up provisional SDP for following year linking in financial planning in budget

Summer Term:

One or two further reviews, as above.

Finalise SDP, CPD, Departmental and Self-Review Plans for following school year

Throughout the year; on-going monitoring of priorities, targets and objectives in accordance with respective plans.

5. Embedding Self-Evaluation within the school

When the self-evaluation procedures and annual plan are successfully incorporated into the planning and review cycle everyone within the school should:

- know and understand why reviews are taking place and what will be achieved
- be aware of the positive outcomes from a process which is consistent, manageable and objective
- appreciate the personal benefits to be derived from effective self-evaluation
- feel reassured that: they are providing the best they can for our pupils; their strengths are recognised; they know how they can further improve; they will receive appropriate support.

In addition parents, the wider community and especially the pupils themselves should be able to recognise our clear commitment to the continuous improvement of the education we provide. Also governors should feel reassured that they are fulfilling their key responsibilities more effectively and that any future external inspections can be approached with confidence.

[This policy will be supplemented annually with the School's Self-Evaluation Schedule for that academic year]