

Parent Views
Pupil Views
Well being
Quality of provision
Quality of leadership and management
Test Data
SDP Progress
Attendance Data



Governing bodies and the School SEF

School self-evaluation has become a vital tool for achieving school effectiveness. This is why OFSTED expects schools to carry out self-evaluation and give a full account of its results. The OFSTED SEF – while not statutorily required – is the form which most schools use to record their judgements. Although this is a necessarily complex, often lengthy and sometimes intimidating document, it is too important for governing bodies to leave filling it in to the headteacher and leadership team alone.

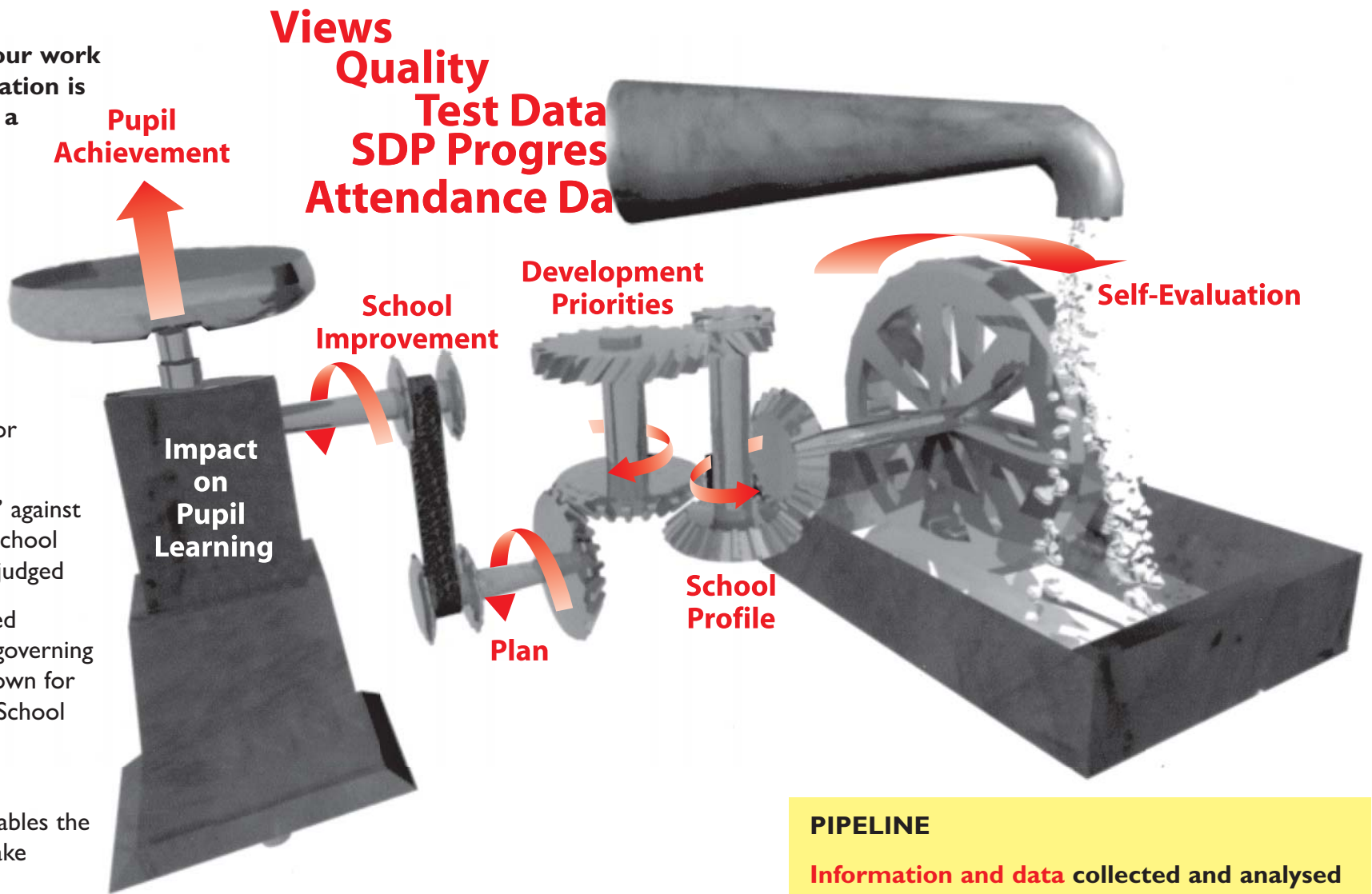
This guidance aims to:

- Show how governing body work on the SEF can **and must** be integrated into all the strategic work of the governing body
- Suggest how working on school self-evaluation can be broken down and shared out over time and between governors or committees
- Describe practical ways that different governing bodies have found to work on school self-evaluation
- Demonstrate how working on school self-evaluation with the headteacher and leadership team will help to build a strong partnership and lead to better strategic decisions;

**See Pipeline overleaf
How the SEF drives school improvement
and raises pupil achievement**

Integrate the SEF into your work because school self-evaluation is a crucial activity and not a 'bolt-on' chore.

- It leads to a clear understanding of what the school is good at and aspects of the school which need to be improved,
- It informs priorities for school improvement
- It provides 'a baseline' against which the impact of school improvement can be judged
- It provides the detailed information that the governing body needs to boil down for summary text in the School Profile
- It provides the key information which enables the governing body to make reports and fulfil its accountability to parents, pupils, staff and others.
- It leads to opportunities for genuine praise and celebration of what is going well.



....but don't become enslaved to the SEF!

It is not advisable for a governing body to organise all its work around the SEF. The SEF does not address directly all the strategic responsibilities of the governing body e.g. for the budget. Also, it can lead to governors producing the SEF just for the inspectors rather than using it as an important tool in their strategic work.

PIPELINE

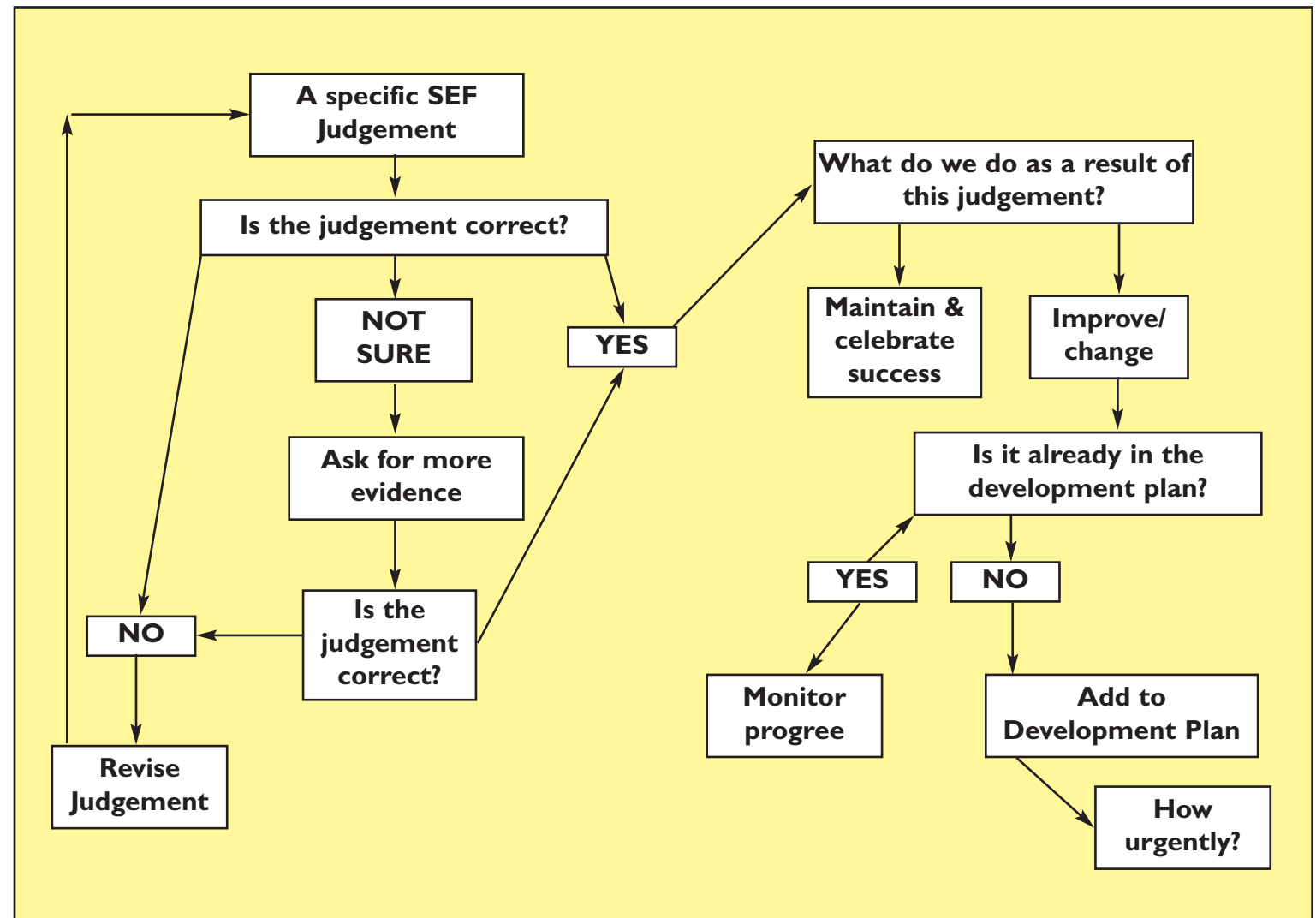
Information and data collected and analysed by school staff and governors drives **Self-Evaluation**. This is reported to parents and the wider community in the **School Profile** and helps the governing body to clarify **Development Priorities**. These are translated into the **School Development Plan**, which drives **School Improvement**. **School Improvement** must have an **Impact on Pupil Learning** and raise **Pupil Achievement**.

Governors, get involved in your school SEF as early as possible

Most schools have already produced the first draft of their SEF (and may have reviewed and revised it several times already). These initial judgements will have been reached by the headteacher with the leadership team, often drawing on evaluation data previously discussed with governors and probably with advice from the LA Adviser or School Improvement Partner. Some judgements may be new to governors who may feel uncomfortable questioning the professionals. But passive agreement would be an abdication of governors' responsibility and the 'critical friend' role.

How to do it

- Do not allow yourselves to be intimidated by the SEF's size and complexity; tackle a section at a time and share it out.
- Be methodical in the way you review judgements. The flowchart suggests a process for reviewing each judgement and deciding what action needs to be taken.
- Summarise and prioritise the review of judgements using the tracking checklist below.



SEF Tracking checklist

The governing body does not need to have the whole SEF revised every year, but should have a clear understanding of which aspects of the SEF need to be focussed on in the year. This chart enables you to summarise the judgements in the SEF and identify what needs further work.

	Judgement deemed correct			Judgement deemed doubtful			
	Judgement	Action required?		Judgement	How Urgent ?	Action	
		Y/N	What?			What?	Who?
Section 2:	Parents broadly satisfied with standards....	N		Pupil well-being good	Term 1	Questionnaire	DH VC
Views of learners, parents/carers stakeholders	Parents less satisfied with aspects of personal development	Y	SDP priority 3	Other stakeholders views - none	Term 2	Cttee plan strategy to collect views	Performance & Standards Cttee
Section 3:	Real strength in Foundation Stage	Y	Share good practice	Insufficient evidence on disadvantaged groups	Term 1	Collect and analyse evidence	P & S Cttee
Achievement & Standards	KS1 Writing is below expectations	Y	SDP priority 1a				
	Good progress from KS1 to KS2	N					
	Maths and Science are strengths	N					
	Good progress by pupils with SEN	N					
	Summary: Good	N					
Section 4:	Good progress on Healthy lifestyles	N		Learners feel safe	Term 1	Q and focus groups	DH VC
Personal development & well-being	Attendance & behaviour only satisfactory	Y	SDP priority 2	Pupils express views & contribute	Term 1	Q and focus groups	DH VC
				Evidence on economic wellbeing	Term 3	Collect evidence	P & S Cttee
	Summary: Satisfactory						
Section 5:	Teaching & Learning mostly Good	Y	SDP priority 1	Guidance & support good	Term 2	Review evidence	P & S Cttee
Quality of provision	Good provision on 'be healthy'						
	More focus needed on 'stay safe'	Y	SDP priority 3				
				Summary: Good	By Term 3	Review evidence	P & S Cttee
Section 6:	L&M in Foundation Stage Outstanding	N		Clear direction (inc GB) good	Term 3	Review evidence	Full GB
Leadership & management	Links with other providers Satisfactory	Y	SDP Year 2	Quality of monitoring good	Term 2	Focus on middle	P & S Cttee
	Inclusion policies very effective	N		Value for Money good	Term 2	Collect evidence	Resources Cttee
				Summary: Good	Term 3	Review evidence	Full GB

Overall judgement: Good – depends upon confirmation of judgements above

Updated: (date)

4

NB. This checklist will inform the governing body's (and committees') schedule of work and request for information in the Headteacher's Report.

Audit Trails

An Audit Trail can be part of the process of asking the professionals to produce evidence that supports their judgement relating to a section of the SEF. It also relates to the monitoring work of the governing body.

The example below illustrates how an audit trail can help governors to explore an aspect of school management for which there may not be hard evidence already in place.

Example of a school's SEF statement

4b: To what extent do learners feel safe and adopt safe practices?

- whether learners feel safe from bullying and racist incidents
- the extent to which learners have confidence to talk to staff and others when they feel at risk
- a recent parental questionnaire has revealed some low-level poor behaviour, including bullying of younger pupils, amongst older pupils at break and lunchtimes
- the school operates an 'open door' policy and staff are approachable in school
- there is a Behaviour Policy, which is reviewed bi-annually, which is available for parents
- a risk assessment of premises is carried out annually by the governor's Premises Committee, designated Health & Safety teacher and the caretaker.
- Child Protection Policy and practices are in place
- Staff CRB checks are up-to-date, with all school staff checked

The Key Priorities for Development for Section 4 include:

- A review of the Behaviour Policy
- A more pro-active approach by teaching staff to promote good staff/pupil relationships

Questions for governors to ask

1. Is the judgement in the SEF correct? How do we know? Is this only 'low-level' poor behaviour?
2. How approachable are the staff? Do they listen to children's concerns, and what action do they take?
3. Does everyone know the Behaviour and Child Protection Policies? How are they implemented?

Following the trail

1. Analysis of the questionnaire responses:

- What is the percentage return from all parents?
- What is the percentage suggesting poor behaviour/bullying in school?
- Is there a pattern to the answers? For example, do they suggest a type of bullying, e.g. verbal or physical; when does the bullying take place?
- Do the responses need a follow-up? Should parents be asked for further information?

2. Further research:

- Is there additional supporting evidence from teachers and other staff?
- What do pupils themselves say?
- Has there been an increase in the number of complaints from parents?
- Has there been any increase in the use of sanctions?

3. Behaviour Policy / Child Protection

- When was this last reviewed?
- Are all staff aware of the policy and practice? Are staff being consistent?
- Are there aspects of the policy that no longer meet the school's need?
- Do all staff know the Child Protection policy?

4. Governor Monitoring

- Do reports from governor's visits mention any poor behaviour seen at break/lunchtime?
- What is behaviour like in class when governors visit? Following a visit have governors raised any issues about behaviour with the headteacher?
- Are there other factors that should be investigated? For example: attendance rates; reports that some children are achieving less well than previously; children complaining of feeling unwell or unhappy at school.

5. Forward Planning

- What action has already been included in the School Plan?
- Who is going to take responsibility for this?
- What are the expected outcomes?
- Is there any other action that the school should be taking?
- How will governors be involved in monitoring for progress?
- How will the school report back to parents on action taken and outcomes?

Tips

Knowing whether your school SEF is good quality

Does your SEF:

- Convey a clear picture of **how well the school is doing**
- **Provide proof** of how you know what you know
- **Show what you are doing** to build on successes and remedy weaknesses?
- Does it show how the **progress pupils make** in learning and personal development **are linked to what the school does well or not so well?**
- Does it **analyse the impact** rather than merely **describe** what the school does?

Adapted from Ofsted's Writing a SEF that Works
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/3950.doc>

Governing bodies can lead in the completion of Section 2

The views of pupils, parents and other stakeholders will be collected in a systematic way by the governing body through questionnaires, focus group discussions, meetings where appropriate. The leadership team will almost certainly be able to add information that comes unsolicited to school via compliments, complaints and chance comments but it could be governors who take responsibility for reviewing this section.

Checking the accuracy of judgements

- Formal audit trail - asking the professionals to produce the evidence that can clearly support a particular judgement; *example provided above*;
- Less formally, asking the professionals to talk through their reasons for making the judgement;
- A governing body may receive information not explicitly linked to the SEF review or concerning school development plan progress; this may trigger the question: *'what have we said in the SEF on this aspect? Should the extra information we have received, lead us to change our judgement in the SEF?'*
- some governing bodies hold a meeting with staff where they sit in groups, divide the SEF up between them and go through it. The staff can answer any questions the governors have;
- Some governor visits focus on an aspect of the SEF that is an agreed priority for review.

Keeping all governors informed about changes to the SEF

- Committees will report changes arising from their reviews
- The Headteacher will report other changes in the Headteacher's Report (with explanation of evidence supporting the change)
- Some schools have put the SEF on a password protected part of their web site for governors to view. E-mails are sent out to notify governors of changes.

Involving the governing body in the SEF review represents a good investment for headteachers

If a headteacher gives the governing body clear evidence and careful explanation to justify a judgement, governors will have confidence in and an understanding of the judgement; this will enable them to make better decisions affecting school improvement. They will also develop more confidence in the leadership and management since they will better understand the processes that the leadership team uses to arrive at judgements.



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