



## **Validated Self Evaluation**

### **Initial reports from theme groups**

**February 2012**

**How well do we Self Evaluate and does this lead to Improvement**

## **Section 1 – Scope and Remit of the Working Group**

The Theme Group was set the following scope and remit by the Education and Lifelong Learning Senior Management Team:-

- Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of current systems, procedures and analyse with regard to self evaluation and quality improvement within SBC to include:-
  - effectiveness of data and data analysis
  - quality of evidence gathered
  - embedding/consistency
  - impact
- Highlight areas of good practice.
- Identify areas for improvement/development.

## **Section 2 – Approaches Taken**

The Theme Group decided to take the following approaches to their work:-

- Collate a body of evidence of SBC's self evaluation activities for review and analysis.
- Conduct interviews with a range of personnel.
- Analyse a range of policy and procedural documents.
- It was agreed at the group's inaugural meeting that they would:
  - i) Investigate the understanding of the purpose of self evaluation.
  - ii) Take an approach to self evaluation focusing on the impact of the process.
  - iii) Investigate the consistency of the self evaluation process.
  - iv) Investigate the understanding of the stakeholders roles and responsibilities within self evaluation.
- The evidence base which informed most of the task groups findings was based upon stakeholders' responses to the following four questions:
  1. How do you know what SBC expects of you with regard to self evaluation?
  2. What tools are available to help/what do you use?
  3. Describe your self evaluation process including detailing what is and what is not working.
  4. Provide examples of impact resulting from self evaluation.

## **Section 3 - Specific Activities Undertaken**

The Theme Group undertook the following specific activities throughout the week:-

- Conducted interviews with a range of personnel - a Senior Manager of Community Learning and Development (CLD), a Senior Manager from Cultural Services, an Officer from Integrated Children's Services, a Senior Education Officer, two Secondary Headteachers, six Primary Headteachers, two Secondary Depute Headteachers, one Primary Depute Headteacher, two Secondary Principal Teachers, one Primary Principal Teacher, two Secondary Class Teachers, five Primary Class Teachers and four Peer Reviewers. These staff came from a total of nine different primary and two secondary schools.
- Analysed a range of policy and procedural documents including a comparative study of schools Standards and Quality (S&Q) reports. In order to achieve an outcome within the timescale, decisions were made in determining what areas of self evaluation the group would focus on. At the time of the evidence gathering we considered the 11% of Secondary and 56% of Primary reports that were available at this time.
- Subsequently, when all S&Q reports were submitted we then considered the quality of a further three secondary reports.
- Limitations of time meant that private nurseries and the views of pupils and students were not considered for this report.
- Established what range of evaluative tools and benchmarks were being applied across SBC's Education and Lifelong Learning Department (E&LL).
- Conducted Interviews with E&LL Directorate.

## **Section 4 – Findings**

The Theme Group's initial findings are:-

### **4.1 Strengths**

- There is a clear recognition of the importance of self evaluation and high expectations in SBC through for example, the directors personal commitment, the work of the Schools Strategic Policy and Planning Group (SSPPG) and headteacher meetings
- Most headteachers used the framework from SBC's Guidelines for School Improvement Planning (SIP) and Reporting in Standards and Quality Reports(S&Q).
- All teachers surveyed reported that school self evaluation priorities were regularly and effectively communicated by Headteachers and that these were supported by a structured process for self evaluation.
- Community Services within SBC have comprehensive practices for the identification and communication of self evaluation priorities from and to the Extended E&LL Management Team (EMT), other partner agencies and clients
- Within CLD, staff have been involved in developing processes of self evaluation which has been informed by their involvement in HMle's Continuous Professional Development Programme (CPD)
- Of those surveyed, the HGIO series is used to develop primary and secondary School Improvement plans (SIP) which are referenced throughout the year to measure progress and identify areas for development

- Where all staff were involved in the self evaluation process, this resulted in ownership of the School Improvement Plan by the whole school and resulted in a positive impact for learners
- HMle reports from primary and secondary schools show a significant improvement in self evaluation over the past 4 years
- The Learning Community Review (LCR) process is seen as being a valuable Self Evaluation tool by Peer Reviewers and reviewees
- the inclusion of CLD in LCR's has strengthened the opportunity to strengthen professional relationships between staff

#### **4.2 Areas for Improvement**

- Clarity of expectations and purpose of self evaluation
- Clarify the use of guidelines and toolkits
- Reduce the number of toolkits used
- Within schools there are inconsistencies in the use of HGIOS particularly around the broad view annual audit
- Within schools there were inconsistencies in schools following current SBC and HMle guidance
- Ensure practitioners can understand the link between self evaluation activities and improvements in learning
- Specific areas identified re S&Q reports
  - a significant number of schools had not yet been submitted
  - feedback to establishments was variable
  - the standards of reporting were variable
  - some practitioners did not see the value of writing a S & Q report and stated that they could not see any purpose to doing this
- The Senior Education Officer (SEO) should be central to the effectiveness of SBC's self evaluation process.
- SEO's should be a link for the communication and monitoring of SBC's self evaluation expectations between School Management and EMT

### **Section 5 – Recommendations**

As a result of their findings, the Theme Group recommend that:-

5.1 We investigate other models outwith Scottish Borders and explore the impact they have had on leading to service improvement

5.2 Further training at all levels should be provided to ensure a better understanding of the links between self evaluation and improved outcomes for children which will require staff training at all levels.

5.3 Current guidelines on school improvement planning and standards and quality reporting should be reviewed to ensure a positive impact

5.4 We reduce the number of toolkits

5.5 The roles and responsibilities of Senior Education Officers in relation to S & Q reports should be clarified