

Blaenau Gwent County Council

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

SELF EVALUATION POLICY

September 2020

1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness.

The Education Directorate has adopted a standard approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES).

Self-evaluation activities are undertaken throughout the year and the self-evaluation report (SER) for LGES is updated in October and March of every academic year. Updates are aligned to data release dates from Welsh Government and other time points when data and information becomes available.

At the heart of self-evaluation process are four key questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What do we need to do to improve further?
- How are we going to do it?

The established self-evaluation processes allows both the Council and the Education Directorate to take a critical reflective look at practice, performance and effectiveness. In this way, the Council is corporately able to ensure that its work remains focused on those areas that require improvement and is aligned to the provisions set out in the LGES framework and is aligned to our statutory obligations. The Education Directorate endeavours to ensure that all our children and young people and our educational establishments are well supported to achieve and make good progress in all learning settings across the school estate and partners e.g. Coleg Gwent and the Post 16 Learning Zone.

2. Who should be involved?

All relevant stakeholders should be involved in evaluating the Council's Education Services to ensure its continued effectiveness. To achieve this, a range of approaches are used to ensure that any barriers to participation and engagement

are minimised and where possible removed. Moving forward, this will be verified on an annual basis with additional quality assurance processes undertaken to further secure the engagement of stakeholders in this key process. To support this process, a summary SER has been developed at the end of the self-evaluation cycle. The document will highlight the key areas of progress and areas for further improvement and can be used for elected members, schools and wider stakeholders.

The summary SER document is to be distributed to the key stakeholders to ensure that they understand the organisational context and are able to recognise their important contribution to facilitate further improvement. Going forward, this will be managed through core business activities that are aligned to business as usual activities, where officers will provide greater context e.g. breakfast meetings, member briefing sessions, open evenings, parents and other corporate road show events.

For consistency, the following grading question is used in order to assess the response to the question and is used to inform the judgement as to how well the Education Directorate takes account the view of stakeholders in its improvement planning and the services it offers.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
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3. What should be involved?

Self-evaluation will involve:

- Asking deep and searching questions about outcomes and progress, quality of provision and effectiveness of leadership and management;
- Using a range of performance data to inform and guide reflections, including that of matched data to inform judgements about progress for specific groups of learners;
- Using other information such as the Corporate Improvement Plan and family benchmarking data relevant to the particular context;
- Using ongoing reflections and enquiry into practice;
- Considering the needs of children and young people (and the various groups) in context; and,
- Using evidence from a range of sources to inform and support self-evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative.

Officers and commissioned services use a FADE approach to support the collection of this information with individual FADE requirements being set out in a FADE Register. The FADE Register also acts as a deployment list for officers and stakeholders. Deployment of FADEs is kept under review by the Education Directorate's Management Team. The Corporate Director oversees the process and

the compilation of the final SER. To complement this policy a SE Toolkit has been devised comprising aides to support the SE processes.

The toolkit is updated on an annual basis in the summer term based upon the learning from the previous self-evaluation cycle.

4. Why have self-evaluation processes?

- To provide an evidence base upon which to arrive at judgements about pupil outcomes and progress, quality of provision and the effectiveness of leadership and management of Education Services and its future improvement journey;
- To reflect on what has been done to consistently deepen understanding;
- To recognise and celebrate good practice, and where appropriate, use this to support others in line with the Vision for Education and our agreed approach to a school-led, school to school methodology;
- To ensure that stakeholders understand the context of the organisation and the contribution that they can make to further facilitate improvement; and
- To improve the performance, impact and effectiveness of Education Services and its constituent parts, including commissioned services to further enable officers and schools to make informed decisions for our children and young people.

The SE process is a cyclical one and the high level activities are summarised below, however, it should be noted that the COVID-19 response will have an impact on some aspects of self-evaluation work in 2020-21 academic year, such as suspending school categorisation:

Date	What
April to August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional Teacher Assessment analysis • Performance analysis (school LA vulnerable learners and ALN) • Categorisation review • Self-evaluation toolkit updated • FADES completed in line with the register for last academic year • Improvement tracker for year ahead developed • Emerging findings are reflected as actions in Directorate’s business plans
September to March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All business plans completed on a quarterly basis. • Heads of Service challenge sessions via Wider Corporate Leadership Team (WCLT). • Categorisation confirmed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from current self-evaluation process to inform next process.
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MER: Monitoring (gathering the evidence), Evaluation (arriving at judgments) and Review (making changes as a result) are fundamental components to the improvement process and hence self-evaluation (SE). Findings from SE underpin all business, service and team plans.

There are a range of approaches in place to support this which include:

- Regular reporting to Scrutiny and Executive Committee meetings and Full Council.
- Regular reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- Termly Estyn monitoring meetings with the Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) meetings.
- Regular reporting to Directorate Management Team (DMT) meetings.
- Individual – evaluation of the effectiveness and the performance of Heads of Service through peer challenge sessions and the quality assurance FADEs and the resultant business improvement plans.
- Departmental – through team meetings, processes to hold the EAS to account such as regular EAS/ other commissioned service quality assurance meetings, DMT, FADE approach, Directorate business plan
- Monitoring by specific officer groups e.g. ALN QA, School Admission Forum, Budget Forum, JCC, HT meetings etc.
- Headteachers – engagement with Headteachers occurs throughout the year and evaluated as part of the agreed approach to self-evaluation. This work is further supplemented by a two yearly questionnaire of the assessment of the quality of the services offered by education, which coupled with the level of buy back of SLA services offered to schools which are arranged on a 3 yearly basis provide an overview of the level of satisfaction. Engagement on the draft summary SER takes place at cluster level and is facilitated by Education DMT representatives in the latter part of the autumn term. This work is concluded with the final SER presented to Headteachers for final comment in the spring term.

5. Summary

The purpose of self-evaluation is to secure ongoing improvement across services, particularly to enhance wellbeing and progress in pupil outcomes. Self-evaluation is not done in isolation and will be influenced by stakeholders with a key interest and ability to support the implementation of any identified agreed action.

The provision of high quality and tailored education services, which both support and challenge learners is a complex process frequently requiring highly effective

partnership and collaborative working and the involvement of stakeholders being a fundamental aspect to the Council's now mature approach to SE. The Self-Evaluation Policy is considerate of these complex arrangements and seeks to simplify and share the understanding, process and purpose of effective self-evaluation so that ongoing improvement is secured.

This policy is under review in September 2020 and features in the Council's Scrutiny/Executive forward work programmes. The implementation of this policy will be monitored via regular DMT meetings, through performance coaching sessions with relevant officers and by elected members via the forward work programme.