

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) Guidance 2019-2020 'With the school, for the school'

The focus of the authority supported VSE process is to support improvement and evaluate the quality of:

- Leadership and management
- Learning provision
- Successes and achievements
- Child Protection Procedures

VSE is a process which aims to build the capacity of schools to evaluate their own performance and improve the quality of outcomes for learners and families. VSE involves collaboration between the school and Education Officers (EOs) to support wider challenge and enhance the school's own self-evaluation processes for continuous improvement. VSE is led by the school and is:

- Focused on outcomes
- Proportionate to need
- Flexible, with scope to recognise differences in school contexts
- Rigorous and transparent

VSE teams use How Good is Our School? 4th Edition (HGIOS4), How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC), How Good is OUR School? (learners' version), the National Care Standards and the National Improvement Framework.

The VSE process and activities will be comparable with Education Scotland's short model of inspection and evaluate the nationally agreed core Quality Indicators of 2.3 and 3.2. Further QIs relevant to the school's improvement journey may be evaluated if deemed necessary to further support improvement.

The VSE will be structured around the three high level questions from HGIOS?4:

- How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?
- How good is the quality of the care and education we offer?
- How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

In session 2019-2020, all schools will continue to focus on the national and local priorities in education to deliver Excellence and Equity in line with the National Improvement Framework, West Lothian's Raising Attainment Strategy, West Lothian's NIF Plan and West Lothian's Moving Forward in Learning Framework.

The VSE will evaluate the extent to which every child achieves the highest standards of literacy and numeracy as set out in CfE levels, how their health and wellbeing is being supported, and the appropriateness of the suite of skills, qualifications and achievements available to allow them to succeed.

The following high level questions will help schools to address how well they are addressing the 6 drivers contained in the NIF

- School Leadership: What is the quality and impact of leadership within schools and at all levels?
- Teacher Professionalism: What is the impact of professional learning on children's progress and achievement?
- Parental Engagement: How well do parents, families and professionals work together to support children's learning?
- Assessment of children's progress: How effective is the moderation of assessment of children's progress which is informed by a range of evidence including standardised assessment and ongoing classwork?
- School Improvement: How well does the school evaluate the overall quality of education provided and its effectiveness in driving further improvement?
- Performance Information: How well do we gather and analyse the data collected from each of the other key drivers? How well are children attaining and achieving? Are we closing the attainment gaps?

Discussions around how schools have tackled bureaucracy will be fundamental and it is essential that the VSE does not add to the burden and this will feature in initial discussions with the school.

The VSE programme will be updated annually and shared with all HTs before the beginning of the new session.

2019/2020 VSE Model

Preparation

1. The HT will be informed by the EO that their school is part of the West Lothian Council VSE programme for that session. At this point, dates will be negotiated and there will be an opportunity for a preliminary meeting between the HT and EO to ensure that the HT is fully briefed on the VSE process. This will include agreeing core and wider team members who will participate in VSE activities.
2. From this meeting the HT will plan and co-ordinate the VSE programme of activities. Team members will be allocated with a specific QI to gather evidence, evaluate and identify areas for further improvement. Wherever possible the school will carry on with business as usual and the team will work around the school's needs.
3. The HT will circulate the school self-evaluation summary and school improvement plan to all members of the VSE team at least one week before the VSE is to take place. The core team will read and be familiar with these documents, can prepare questions to further their knowledge of the context of the school and its journey to improvement and begin to scope significant areas for focus.
4. As part of the VSE process, the Child Protection Officer will arrange to visit the school to meet with the DMS to validate the school's self-evaluation toolkit for QI2.1 and provide a subsequent report to the link officer and HT. Likewise, the Educational Psychologist will engage the school in their self-evaluation of approaches to supporting and raising attainment and achievement for Looked After Children.

VSE Activity (2 days)

1. The VSE will begin with a scoping meeting. The HT will lead professional dialogue (based on the self-evaluation summary and supporting evidence) highlighting key strengths and areas for improvement. Other members of the school SLT and staff can contribute to this dialogue. The suggested timescale for the scoping meeting is around 60 minutes.

2. The HT will provide a timetable of QI activities, which includes discussion groups, observation of practice and pupil focus groups. The timetable should be designed to allow for evidence to be gathered supporting the school's self-evaluation summary. Team members will be provided with paperwork to record and summarise their findings.
3. While it is good practice to give brief, constructive verbal feedback to staff that have been observed as soon as possible after the observation, this process is about the school and not individual teachers.
4. At the end of both days the full team will assemble to review findings during the course of the day's activities.
5. The team will summarise its findings towards the end of the process to affirm and agree strengths and areas for improvement in the light of these findings. The HT will agree how the areas for improvement will be taken forward, utilising support from the Education Officer, other relevant colleagues and partners.

Following VSE Activity

1. The HT, working collegiately with staff, will review and update the school's self-evaluation summary to accurately reflect the findings of the VSE.
2. A report based on the VSE findings will be written by the EO, in consultation with the HT. This report will detail the strengths identified and actions arising from the VSE.
3. The finalised VSE report may be presented to the Education Quality Assurance Committee (EQAC) by the HT, and thereafter shared with parents.
4. Following the VSE, ongoing engagement will be proportionate to the needs of each school to ensure appropriate support and challenge to implement recommendations and evaluate progress with the action plan. Progress will be led and monitored by the HT and supported by the EO.
5. A report may be requested to update EQAC on progress within an agreed timescale.

Validated self-evaluation through school collaborations

Schools are supported and encouraged to form partnerships to validate each other's self-evaluation processes, out with the authority supported VSE programme. Schools should use a VSE approach when evaluating the impact of the learners' experiences. The VSE process can be tailored to the needs of individual schools and be planned within the school and cluster annual cycle of review.

