Step 1 Identify Focus
Chapter 3 of the SSE Guidelines 2016-2020

Learner Outcomes
- Attitude to learning
- Understanding of themselves and others
- Acquisition of curriculum knowledge & skills
- Levels of attainment

Learner Experiences
- Levels of engagement as learners
- Growth as learners
- Self-reflection & ownership as learners
- Development as life-long learners

Teachers’ individual practice
- Teachers’ knowledge & skills
- Use of practice that progress students’ learning
- Use of appropriate teaching approaches
- Responsiveness to individual learning needs

Teachers’ collective/collaborative practice
- Teachers’ professional development & collaboration
- Co-operation to extend students’ learning opportunities
- Collective use of dependable assessment practices
- Sharing of expertise to build capacity

Step 2 Gather Evidence
Chapters 4 and 5 of the SSE Guidelines 2016-2020

Always consider - relevance, simplicity & clarity, efficiency, protocol and validity of qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered.
Schools may decide to analyse assessment data and records of student progress as a starting point.
Teachers’ views and their records (assessment, uptake at foundation, ordinary and higher level in specific subjects and attainment in state examinations) are useful examples of evidence.
Schools should gather information from students and parents to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge to make accurate judgements.
Professional reflection and dialogue between teachers, focusing on specific aspects of teaching and learning, are very important when gathering evidence.
As collaborative practices are further developed among the teaching staff, team teaching and professional collaborative review will become an effective means of gathering evidence.
Sample tools to support the effective gathering of evidence may be accessed at www.schoolselfevaluation.ie and should be adapted to suit the particular context of each school.

Step 3 Analyse and Make Judgements
Chapter 4 of the SSE Guidelines 2016-2020

Evaluate the effectiveness of your current practice using statements of practice on pages 15 to 21 of the SSE Guidelines 2016-2020.
Using the statements as a benchmark, schools can evaluate their own practice and make sound judgements based on the evidence they have gathered. Schools will naturally aspire to very effective practice, but should in the first instance compare their findings to the statements of effective practice. In this way, they can identify existing strengths as well as possible gaps or weaknesses. Then, by considering the statements of highly effective practice, schools can build on existing strengths and work towards excellence.
Step 4
Write and Share Report and Improvement Plan

The first section of the document is the report and should outline:
• An account of progress that has been made on implementing improvement in areas that were the subject of evaluation and improvement plans in the previous year
• The new aspect of teaching and learning chosen for self-evaluation, where relevant
• The areas that the school has prioritised for improvement

The second section of the document is the improvement plan and should contain:
• Targets for improvement with a focus on learner outcomes (The setting of specific targets is the starting point. Having formed a judgement based on the relevant information or evidence, a school will be in a position to decide on specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound (SMART) targets to bring about improvement. This is an important step in determining the actions that need to be taken).
• The actions that are required to achieve the targets over three years
• Reference to who will undertake the actions outlined
• Reference to who will monitor and review the implementation and progress
• Reference to how parents can help
• A timeframe for the achievement of the targets

Note re: DEIS schools: The school’s DEIS action plan is its school improvement plan for the purposes of school self-evaluation, and no additional or separate improvement plan is required.

The final part of this step asks schools to share a summary of the self-evaluation report and improvement plan with the whole school community.

Step 5
Put Improvement Plan into Action

This is the key step in the process. It is only when the actions in the improvement plan are implemented that the work of the school can improve. All relevant school personnel should share ownership of the actions to be implemented at individual teacher, subject department, or whole-school level. These actions should become part of the normal teaching and learning process.

Step 6
Monitor Actions and Evaluate Impact

In order to evaluate the impact of the actions, they must be monitored. A number of questions are useful when considering this:
• Has practice changed in classrooms?
• What are teachers’ experiences of the agreed changes?
• What are students’ experiences of the agreed changes?

Schools will need to decide:
• How monitoring will occur
• Who will be responsible for monitoring
• How progress will be determined and reported
• When and to whom progress will be reported (for example, at staff meetings, planning meetings, board meetings)
• If targets and actions are realistic or need to be changed

The role of those leading the process, and the role of all teachers, in the ongoing and systematic monitoring of the implementation of the plan is important. In this regard, the gathering and use of information at specified intervals to check if the required improvements are being made is necessary. The implementation of the school improvement plan ultimately leads to a new cycle of school self-evaluation.

* The four year period allows for an investigation year for scoping out and developing the improvement plan, and preparing for its implementation. However some schools may feel confident that they can implement an improvement plan without a preliminary investigation year, for example where baseline data is already available and the actions required are clear.

Typically, the school self-evaluation report and improvement plan should be a single document of no more than three pages in length. Normally, it should be completed once annually. A template for this document is available on www.schoolself-evaluation.ie.

Chapter 6 of the SSE Guidelines 2016-2020

Literacy and numeracy practices embedded, with regular review - 2016-2020

Assessment practices
Investigation year 2016/17
Implementation year 2017/18
Consolidation year 2018/19
Review year 2019/20

Teaching and learning the key skills
Investigation year 2017/18
Implementation year 2018/19
Consolidation year 2019/20

Engagement in learning
Investigation year 2018/19
Implementation year 2019/20