



Circular 0056/2022

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teachers in Primary Schools and Special Schools

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teachers in Post-Primary Schools

To: Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

School Self-Evaluation: Next Steps September 2022 – June 2026

Introduction

This Circular sets out the requirements in respect of the next cycle of SSE which begins in September 2022. It follows on from, and supersedes Primary Circulars 0039/2016, 0016/2018, 0040/2020, 0032/2021 and 0029/2022 and Post-primary Circulars 0040/2016, 0041/2020, 0033/2021 and 0030/2022.

Background

In the first cycle of SSE, 2012-2016, schools were encouraged to develop and implement improvement plans for teaching and learning with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy.

Teaching and learning continued to be the focus in the second cycle of SSE, 2016-2020. Schools were encouraged to use *Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary / Post-Primary Schools* to support their engagement with the SSE process. In this second cycle of SSE, schools had a degree of flexibility in selecting the curriculum/subject areas or aspects of teaching and learning on which they wished to focus.

In light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in schools, the completion of the second cycle of SSE was extended from 2020 to 2022. In this extended second phase, schools were encouraged to use the SSE process to help them to address challenges arising from the pandemic, to complete remaining work on SSE, and to address areas identified by the school as a priority.

The third SSE cycle

The third cycle of SSE, 2022-2026, comprises two phases:

2022-2023: Review year: During this year, schools are required to:



- Use/Continue to use the SSE process to identify and reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on their pupils'/students' educational experiences and outcomes, their wellbeing, their motivation to learn, and their engagement in learning.

It will be important that the information arising is used to plan learning experiences, programmes of work, and, as needed, relevant supports to ensure that all children and young people, including those with special educational needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage, are enabled to engage with and progress effectively in their learning.

- Consider the requirements regarding use of the SSE process to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle by 2025 as set out in Circular 0032/2021 and Circular 0033/2021.
- Take stock of the effectiveness of their SSE process to date, developing and consolidating it as necessary to ensure it is collaborative, inclusive and impactful.

2023-2026: During this three-year period, schools will have the autonomy to choose the focus of their SSE, subject to having a concise three-year SSE plan that enables them to address:

- Context-specific school priorities related to teaching, learning, equity and inclusion
- National wellbeing goals
- National curriculum goals
- Other national strategies, for example, the Digital Strategy for Schools and the National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.

In this regard, the SSE process will enable schools to address context-specific school priorities and also review the effectiveness of their current provision and its impact on pupils'/students' learning and experiences in the context of national priorities and national curriculum goals. It will also enable schools to put actions in place to improve their provision and the experiences of pupils/students in relation to these areas while also meeting national policy and curriculum requirements.

It is likely that some areas of focus selected by a school will complement each other. In such cases, schools will have the flexibility to address these areas of focus concurrently. In other cases, schools may choose to address areas of focus consecutively using a staged approach. The three-year SSE plan should indicate the school's intentions in this regard.



DEIS schools and schools participating in the Gaeltacht Education Recognition Scheme will take account of the above themes in their DEIS action planning and Gaeltacht education action planning processes respectively.

Approach to SSE

Schools are advised to take account of the guidance in Sections 1 to 6 of this document in planning for and conducting SSE and in reflecting on the efficacy of the process in their individual school context.

Supports for SSE

- Schools will be supported in their SSE processes in the period 2022-2026 as outlined in Section 6
- Inspectorate resources and materials to support SSE will continue to be available on the Inspectorate's dedicated [school self-evaluation website](#)
- Inspectors will continue to address SSE-related queries and to respond to requests for SSE advisory visits through sse@education.gov.ie
- Schools wishing to participate in the Inspectorate's *Shared Evaluation for Learning Project* should email sse@education.gov.ie. Schools that have previously expressed an interest in working with the Inspectorate to develop SSE practices in their school do not need to re-apply.

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