

# The EYFS Inspection in practice

Your step by step guide to the new Common Inspection Framework

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# Introduction

The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) aligns inspections across all of the different education remits, with four common inspection judgements. The purpose of the CIF is to provide consistency and comparability across all the types of provision that Ofsted inspects. Each type of provision has its own remit specific inspection handbook. It is the Early Years Inspection Handbook to which we refer in this book.

The four judgements for inspection are:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Outcomes for children and learners.

Inspectors will also make a judgment on the effectiveness of safeguarding.

In the new inspection framework there is greater emphasis on the importance of leadership and the decisions you make and the impact on the children.

The book is set out in clear chapters to guide you through the processes of the inspection, with checklists and reference charts for you and your staff to work through.

## Reflective practice

We begin with reflective practice, as this is an essential tool for continual development within a setting, both for

individuals and the setting as a whole. The skills and awareness that are honed through reflective practice will support both the completion of the SEF and, going forward, looking at how to develop practice following your inspection.

## The SEF

The chapter on the SEF has a comprehensive grids, guiding you through each section of the SEF with suggestions and points for consideration to help you complete the SEF relevantly and constructively. These grids provide a much fuller explanation of the questions posed in the Ofsted Early Years Self Evaluation Guidance document. Additionally, there are suggestions for evidence that you could make available to back up your statements.

## OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR JUDGEMENTS

### EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Emphasis on the curriculum
- Teaching and learning in the curriculum
- Ambitious vision, ethos and culture
- Safeguarding
- Supervision
- School readiness
- British values
- Behaviour

### QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- Evidence of different kinds of assessment
- Parent involvement
- Teaching and learning

### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

- Consistent safeguarding
- Keeps safe
- Self awareness
- Going beyond welfare requirements
- Behaviour/interactions
- Evidence children understand personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Independence
- Next stages of learning

### OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNERS

- Progress from starting points for individuals and groups
- Helping children catch up
- Best fit for all
- Quality of teaching and impact on progress and achievement

## How to prepare for the day

We then move onto other preparations you may need to make for an inspection: your general principles of good practice for all visitors to your setting and the involvement of all practitioners working in the setting. These are explored in the chapters 'First impressions count' and 'Preparing for your inspection.' A first impressions checklist will help you to objectively look at supporting your own setting and identify how a visitor might see it. We have included a compliance checklist and a systems checklist to help ensure you have in place all the necessary processes and paperwork.

## The inspection day

The chapter 'The inspection day' explores how to cope on the day and support staff as well as the importance of paying close attention to the feedback you receive from the inspector. 'After the inspection' looks at how you can take your practice forward and move on, regardless of your grading outcome.

This book is designed to enable anyone working in the early years to ensure their EYFS inspection is a positive and stress-free experience.



# The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

The inspector will talk to you about your SEF, to test the accuracy of this as a self reflection tool and your knowledge of quality improvement needs.

Why is there now so much emphasis on the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)? Research has proven that self-reflection and evaluation both support good practice within a setting as part of continual development. Importantly, this self-reflection supports good outcomes for children.

The EPPE (Effective Provision of Pre-School Education) project was very influential in informing us of the significance of self-reflection and evaluation.

*'The use of self evaluation...should enable settings to reflect on their current strengths and identify next steps which will have a direct impact on children's learning experiences.'*

In their efforts to continually improve outcomes for children, Ofsted decided to implement a specific early years self-evaluation tool.

Although the completion of the Self-Evaluation Form is not compulsory, all settings are advised to complete the form. Both the completion of the form or the failure to complete the form can have a very significant effect on the outcome of your inspection.

- If you do complete your SEF, it is likely to decrease the length of the inspection and helps the inspector

to know what to focus on in the inspection. If completed properly the SEF can ease the process of inspecting for the inspector.

- If you do not complete your SEF, you will more than likely be asked why and will need a good reason as to why it has not been completed.
- Failure to complete the form could also mean that your inspection will be longer and more searching. The self-evaluation criteria is likely to be graded lower, although the inspector will check to see what other methods of self-evaluation have been implemented.

Before tackling the SEF, it is worth spending some time reflecting on your setting and its current self-assessment strategies. Settings where reflective practice occurs regularly will find completion of the SEF a much easier task. For further tips on becoming a reflective practitioner please see the previous chapter.

Managers and leaders in settings need to consider what is already being done in the setting to evaluate quality and practice, and how good practice is shared throughout the setting.

The basic key questions of self-evaluation are:



- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Involving all staff in the process of self-evaluation will produce higher standards and a sense of ownership over the process of continual development. It is worth remembering that self evaluation only works where individuals within a setting are committed to ensuring high standards and are able to look objectively at practice.

All practitioners need to be aware of what the priorities for improvement are as identified in the SEF, and their role in the ongoing process of working towards

# Preparing for inspection

## NOTIFICATION OF INSPECTION

- You will receive a phone call around midday the day before the inspection.
- It will be a short focused call regarding practical issues.

Ofsted will still inspect without notice if there is a concern.

As we reflect more and more on our practice, less and less specific preparation will be required for an Ofsted inspection – as the idea is that ‘we should always be ready’. When considering preparation for an Ofsted inspection, we’re not talking about the stereotypical image of the caretaker painting the walls two minutes before the inspector is due to arrive. In this chapter we are looking more broadly at what practitioners need to do to prepare for inspection, both physically and mentally, because readiness can’t just be pulled out of the bag on the day. A knock on the door by the Ofsted inspector should be a welcome visit that isn’t going to phase any of the practitioners in the setting because they are all prepared and equipped with the knowledge understanding and strategies to cope.

As previously mentioned, in preparation for inspection you need to ensure that your SEF is completed competently, accurately and that it is up to date. It isn’t compulsory, but it is strongly recommended that you have it filled in. Not having done so could adversely effect the outcome of the inspection,

so don’t delay, guidance is given in this book to help you complete it. If you haven’t completed the form before the inspection, you may be asked to do it on the day and this can cause anxiety and in the rush you could miss vital points, it simply isn’t possible to fill it in properly under these conditions. Make sure that you have a hard copy on hand for yourself to refer to during the inspection.

As you update your SEF, be certain to send the updates to Ofsted – this is easy to do online – so that they always have current and relevant information. The inspector will read your SEF before visiting your setting so (remember, the online version of the SEF may be frozen approximately two days before the inspection giving you clear indication that you are about to be inspected – but this is NOT a guarantee).

When starting the SEF you need to be organised and share the task of completing it between the entire staff team. Effective teamwork is an essential component in any setting. Without effective teamwork, a setting cannot function properly and maintain standards. The inspector will be very experienced in looking for and identifying signs that show teamwork is either effective or ineffective in the setting. The sense of teamwork in a setting reflects the culture and ethos. Leaders and managers in settings can use the following checklist to

help gain an insight into the sense of teamwork established in different rooms and/or the setting as a whole.

## Improvement

The Ofsted inspector will probably take points from the SEF to concentrate on during the visit – although this won’t necessarily be the entire focus of the visit – but it does mean that information needs to be accurate and an honest reflection – this is no time for modesty! It is also a time to think of moving your practice forward in a positive way and not seeing problems as obstacles or barriers to improvement, but as challenges to overcome. But don’t panic – nothing is perfect straight away and the inspector is not looking for perfection, but looking that you are moving forwards and trying to improve all the time. Even if you judge yourself to be outstanding



## Paperwork and systems checklist

Ensuring all of the below are in place will help maintain high quality standards and practice and therefore impact positively on your inspection outcome.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Year plan of appraisals, supervisions and staff observations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluated staff records with clear and accurate performance records.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff meeting yearly plan, to include any information on reviews, file kept of agendas, minutes and actions with clear follow ups, include in file the same for room meetings.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accident and incident forms in folder with monthly divider, with analysis sheet at the front of each month.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cover sheet for recruitment indicating reference checks, DBS, 5-year employment record check etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear overview of professional development linking to reviews, both the individual and nursery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as a whole, clear commitment for each practitioner.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Targeted plan of when core training needs to be updated.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overview of 2-year-old progress checks when they were completed, parent seen, manager seen and any targets.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A clear and specific action plan as well as the SEF, including how and when staff and parents contribute.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> DBS records clear and to include date to renew, date of issue, number and the name of the agency issuing the check.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Indication within policies and procedures of any amendments, with follow through of how staff are informed if relevant.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> System for management daily check of registers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Record detailing when planning and profiles are reviewed and any necessary actions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Records of how links are established and maintained with schools children may move on to and other settings they may attend.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear and accurate cohort analysis with evaluation of that analysis.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Individual room enabling environment reviews showing changes to improve practice/ meet children's needs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Annual staff suitability check.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> First Aid certificates.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

she will want to see how you intend to improve even further. A positive outcome of having an accurately completed SEF could be that the inspector may not check out everything that you do and it may shorten the inspection.

Not only do you need to complete your SEF but also get to know your SEF: be aware of, and have a working knowledge of, what actions are being taken, exactly what progress has been made, where your strengths are and where more work is required. It is important that the whole team is involved in this and not just the person responsible for completing the SEF.

If your setting is taking part in any kind of quality assurance award, it is useful to have the relevant information for that to hand also. Ofsted will be interested to see any completed or current modules

with development plans and evidence of the impact these schemes have had on your practice and experiences for the children within the setting. If you have any certificates or plaques for quality assurance awards or training these need to be displayed, as they evidence continued professional development and good practice.

Now we need to think of the more practical things. Can the inspectors find your setting easily? Is the address and phone number up-to-date with Ofsted and are postcodes accurate for your building? This is especially important if the inspectors are using a satellite navigation system to find you.

If you are a pre-school or day care setting, are you clearly advertised and signposted? Are car parking places near by and easy to find? If the answer

to these two questions is no, is there anything that you can do about it? There is nothing more stress-inducing than not being able to find your way somewhere, then not being able to park the car, not having the right change for the meter and then having a long walk laden down with bags – you really don't want your inspector to arrive to inspect you facing these sorts of conditions. It may be that all you can do is inform them before the visit where they will need to park and if they will need money and how much etc.

Consider the access to your building; this needs to be easy to use for all people including those with additional needs, such as a wheelchair. Can the inspector find where to get in? Is there an efficient way of the door being answered at all times including before the session begins?