

## SURE START

### Guidance for the Evaluation of Sure Start

2018/19

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



### ***Why are the Education and Training Inspectorate evaluating Sure Start?***

The Department of Education provides funding for Sure Start, pre-school education and the foundation Stage in primary schools. It is widely understood that high quality early years experiences, education and support alongside working in partnership with parents are important contributory factors to a young child's future educational success.

The Education and training Inspectorate ( ETI ) currently inspect and report on the outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management in funded pre-schools and the foundation stage. A key action in the Department of Education Learning to Learn Framework was "Ensuring all DE funded services in the 0-6 age range are subject to a thorough area based inspection process". The Independent Review of Sure Start published in February 2015 recommended that the ETI contribute to the evaluation of Sure Start.

### ***What will ETI be evaluating?***

The focus of the evaluation in 2018-2019 will be:

- How effectively does Sure Start promote and improve the development of children's speech, language and communication skills to prepare them for the next stage of their learning and development.
- How effectively does Sure Start support the role of the parent as a child's first educator and promote improvements in the home learning environment?
- What progress is being made to developing systematic and meaningful self-evaluation at all levels leading to improvement?
- How effectively is communication and partnership working between Sure Start and feeder pre-schools and schools being developed?

### ***Which projects will be evaluated?***

A small sample of projects will be chosen to represent a cross section of geographical areas, size and range of lead and accountable bodies.

### ***What can I expect to happen during an evaluation?***

Sure Start projects which have been selected to be part of this evaluation will be notified two weeks in advance of the visit.

The visit will take place over two consecutive days with a small evaluation team of two or three, led by a member of the ETI early years team.

The leader Inspector will contact the Sure Start project manager following the notification to arrange a suitable timetable for the two day visit.

During the visit the team will gather evidence based on a range of first hand evidence including:

- observation of a sample of practice with the children and the parents;
- reading relevant documentation;

- discussions with key staff;
- online questionnaire responses from local pre-schools;
- meeting with leaders from local pre-schools; and
- engagement with a sample of parents.

At the end of the evaluation each Sure Start project visited will receive a short oral feedback and summary of key findings to inform the projects own self-evaluation leading to improvement.

### ***How can I prepare for an evaluation visit?***

There is no need to change your normal working practices in advance of the visit. The ETI lead Inspector will discuss the specific working arrangements during a phone call following notification by Inspection Services Branch.

The project manager will be asked to:

- complete a data capture form;
- inform the staff about the guidance materials available: <https://tinyurl.com/Eval-Sure-Start>;
- inform parents about the evaluation visit and invite them to make their views known during a short meeting or incidentally during the visit, to a member of the ETI team; and
- invite the leaders from the local pre-school settings to which children transfer to a focus group meeting.

Information on the project's own review of its child protection and safeguarding procedure should be included in documentation made available to inspectors at the time of the visit.

The team will require a base room to work over the two days and easy access to relevant documentation.

Reassure staff and parents that the purpose of the evaluation is to promote improvement in the best interest of the children.

### ***What will happen after the evaluation?***

The final published report will represent findings across all projects visited; there will be no published reports on individual centres. The report findings will be disseminated.

### ***What documentation will I make available to the inspection team?***

The inspection team will review a sample of current documentation to provide evidence of how effectively the project promotes and improves the development of children's speech, language and communication skills to prepare them and their parents for the next stage of their learning and development.

The documentation provided should only be that which you already have in place, and may include, for example:

- an overview of the weekly timetable and provision available for children and their parents;
- a list of the key staff, their roles and responsibilities;
- the address, with post code, of any programmes to be visited over the two days;
- samples of how the children's progress is tracked and how this information is used;
- samples of how parents progress is measured and how this information is used;
- feedback from parents or other stakeholders;
- photographic evidence of the range of experiences being provided for children and parents;
- samples of planning and assessment records for any of the programmes to be observed;
- samples of information provided for parents;
- action plans from the support specialist and self-evaluation from the two year old programme;
- information on the effectiveness of links with pre-schools or primary schools;
- examples of how leadership and management monitor and evaluate quality and outcomes;
- examples of self-evaluation, action plans and evidence of improvement linked to any aspect of the project.

The information needs to be provided in a form that is succinct, well labelled, easily located and accessible to the ***What questions will the team ask?***

The team will meet with a range of staff, parents and pre-school leaders at an agreed time over the two day inspection. They will also interact informally with staff, if appropriate during their observation of sessions. The following questions are only a guide as to the type of questions to expect. A team may ask supplementary questions to clarify a point or follow a line of enquiry.

## **Key points to guide discussion with staff**

*Those working directly with children or parents including the two year old programme.*

1. How long have you been in this role?
2. What evidence do you have that children's social interactions, speech and language are improving as a result of participating in this programme?
3. What evidence do you have that parents confidence and skills to support their child are improving as a result of participating in this programme?
4. What training have you received to support to identify Speech Language and Communication (SLC) delays and the development of SLC for children? Can you give any examples of how this has improved your practice?
5. What training have you received to help you to support the role of the parents? Can you give any examples of how this has improved your practice?
6. Do you have any further training/development needs?
7. How do you link with other staff to promote an integrated approach to supporting children and their parents? What are the benefits of this integrated approach?

Developmental programme for 2 -3 year old staff only:

1. What guidance materials are you currently using to inform your work with the children/parents?
2. Is it effective? In your view what ways could it be improved further?
3. How effective is the support and guidance provided by the Programme Support Specialist? What has improved as result of their guidance?
4. How is your work monitored and evaluated? Have you made improvements/ changes as a result of any feedback provided?

## Key questions to guide discussions with Leadership and Management

- Introductions, name, role and length of time in role.
- How do you measure the impact of your work in relation to outcomes for children and parents?
- How do you monitor and evaluate the **quality** of the provision and the effectiveness of the work of the staff?
- How is the information analysed and used to bring about further improvement?
- How do you build the skills and capacity of all of your staff to promote the children's language and communication skills and support the role of the parent/carer? How do you monitor and evaluate whether the training and support has been effective?
- How effective are your links with the pre-schools and primary schools, and any other early year's partnerships within the area? How do the links help the children and their parents? How can they be improved?
- How do you reflect on your work, identify strengths and areas for improvement and set out actions to bring about improvement in quality and outcomes? What improvements have been made in the last 2 years? Are they documented?
- At what stage of development is the implementation of the RSLCM this project? (*Impact/benefits/challenges to date.*)
- What guidance documents do you currently use to inform your own internal self-evaluation and improvement processes?
- How do the different team managers ensure effective integrated working? Case study example of how it led to better outcomes for child/parent.
- What are the key strengths in the work you do? Have you identified any priorities for further improvement?