

# You Can... **Complete a robust Self-Evaluation Form**

*Since 2006 schools have been required to keep an up-to-date school self-review, or Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). This review document is designed to inform an Ofsted inspection team and direct the school inspection under the new framework for inspection. It is not meant to be a descriptive history of the school but a robust document that is both current and analytical.*

## Thinking points

- As with most areas of school life, a SEF requires management. There are natural times of the year when it makes sense to update different sections. See pages 59–61 for a timetable of school events, including suggested times to update different SEF sections. This is only a suggestion but can support the management and distribute the workload that the SEF presents.
- At heart, the SEF is an evaluative assessment of current practice. It is not the vision of the school and should not be used to drive the vision. It is true that the SEF may reveal aspects of review that may be sufficiently significant to form an area for short-term school improvement but should not be used as the central vehicle for long-term vision implementation.

## Tips, ideas and activities

- When writing SEF sections make sure you are responding to the question. It is good practice to work with a team (usually made up of your School Leadership Team (SLT) but it is also an opportunity to involve a governor) to review the document. Keep asking yourself if you have answered the question and if your answer is concise and accurate.
- A consistent writer's voice is important throughout the document and does not have to be the responsibility of the headteacher. If the deputy or assistant headteacher writes clearer English, consider delegating the role to them. This will also go towards ensuring that a broader range of leaders have a corporate understanding of the school.
- The SEF is a joint responsibility and should be communicated to the whole staff at least once a year. Where there are areas of responsibility, such as the Foundation Stage or extended schools, the area leader should provide the evidence for that section.
- Ofsted recommends that before you submit your SEF you should consider the following points:
  1. Have you read it through?
  2. Is it short and to the point?
  3. Have you answered all of the questions?
  4. Are your judgements clear?
  5. Have you reflected stakeholders' views?
  6. Does it give a fair and honest picture of what the school is like?
  7. Have you been clear about actions being taken to improve?
  8. If you were an inspector what questions would your SEF lead you to ask?
- A document written by Ofsted may help when you are writing your SEF. Visit [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) (search for the document *Writing a SEF that works*).