

# Guide to completing your Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

Montessori Schools Association (MSA)

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Dr. Martin Bradley

National Chairman, MSA



**MONTESSORI**  
SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

## **Montessori Schools Association**

### **A guide to completing your Self Evaluation Form (SEF)**

Much has been said about the SEF is now optional. Whilst that is true, you must still undertake self-evaluation, and without self-evaluation your inspection is likely to be very difficult. MSA considers that it would be a major task for you to devise your own self-evaluation format and that since people will already have a SEF, our best advice is to continue with this. If you use other formats, be aware that they may not fully address the points outlined in the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule used by inspectors. You would need to fill in any gaps in other formats.

**Changes to the SEF format:** the Ofsted SEF format has changed significantly from its previous version. Instead of having a series of complex cross-referenced questions, it is much more open-ended, is less repetitive and is based on the three 'key judgements' and the 'overall judgement' which Ofsted inspectors will make when they visit you. Whilst this might sound simpler, it means that you will have to make sure that all the necessary evidence is included without being given specific guidance as to what this might be. Also the necessary information is included in several documents.

#### **To complete your SEF you will need six documents:**

- 1. The Ofsted Early Years Self Evaluation Form** ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Ofsted reference 120332, October 2012). We refer to this as the 'SEF Form'.
- 2. Your existing SEF for the old version of the EYFS.**
- 3. The Ofsted Early Years Self Evaluation Form Guidance** ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Ofsted reference 080103, September 2012). We refer to this as the 'SEF Guidance';
- 4. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage** ([www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) Department for Education). We refer to this as the 'Framework'.
- 5. Evaluation schedule for inspections of registered early years provision** ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Ofsted reference 120086, July 2012).
- 6. Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage in Montessori Settings** (for information on this contact [centre@montessori.org.uk](mailto:centre@montessori.org.uk), or see the website [www.montessori.org.uk](http://www.montessori.org.uk). Make sure that you use the revised version, dated 9/2012 on its back cover as this refers to the revised EYFS). We refer to this as the 'Montessori guide'.

Although this is a daunting list and, despite the cost, it is probably worth printing off the documents rather than trying to use them only in electronic formats.

There are some other government documents you should refer to for specific sections and these are referenced at the appropriate place in the following text.

This guidance seeks to draw together the requirements from the third, fourth and fifth of these documents and considers them in the light of the Montessori document. Together the first three documents provide the basis for your self-evaluation, the fourth (Framework) provides the details as well as the mandatory structure. The Evaluation schedule (no. 5) gives the way Ofsted interprets the mandatory requirements even though it was published before

the SEF and its guidance. We have revised the Montessori Guidance to take account of the revised Framework – do make sure that you are using the 2012 version and not the former one which related to the original EYFS requirements.

What about your old SEF? We have tried to indicate where sections might be slotted into the new SEF, but the details mainly depend on what you put into your old SEF, and so it is for you to see how far you can ‘cut and paste’. Be very careful in doing so, however, as you will probably need to revise most sections or slot sentences or paragraphs into the new form. We suggest that you look through the new format SEF, then go through it using our guidance along with the new documents to make brief points. The next stage might be to expand these brief points using your old SEF updated with extra information. You’ll then need to read it all through again to make sure you have included all you want to say. The SEF should be regularly updated, preferably as a whole staff training exercise. It’s a rather painstaking process, but your thoroughness will pay off with a high quality and detailed self-evaluation.

You will already be aware that the learning and development requirements have changed, and there is an even stronger prominence given to child protection and safeguarding than before.

We are also aware that the government is considering ways of simplifying the EYFS requirements. We will monitor this and let you know of any developments, as well as revising our guidance in the light of any changes.

MSA considers that some aspects of the revised EYFS still pose practical problems for providers delivering the Framework. This is in part due to the way in which the Framework has been written, with some rather ambiguous sections, and also to it now being fully mandatory and not having the ‘specific legal requirements’ as previously. We have indicated in the text where we consider that difficulties may arise and have aimed to clarify these: if you need support or advice regarding any issues, do contact us.

Reference is also made to ‘**Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**’ which is available from Early Education: [www.early-education.org.uk](http://www.early-education.org.uk). This is a publication supported by the DfE and which underpins much of the developmental views of the Framework. It should also form the basis for many of your policies, especially those for Learning and Development and assessment. It is worthwhile getting a copy or downloading this document. We have included references to the Ofsted Evaluation schedule for inspectors of registered early years provision (noted in the SEF form p.5) at relevant points in the present Guide.

Our aim is to make updating your SEF as straightforward as possible – although this means that our guidance is lengthy and detailed. We consider that it is worth spending time on this, not least as Montessori settings and schools have significantly higher overall quality ratings from Ofsted than most other types of provider!

## The Ofsted Self Evaluation Form.

### Introduction.

*The form begins by noting (p.5) that you could use other formats, including a children's centre self-evaluation form - but this would only cover the registered parts of your provision and would need to be supplemented where Montessori government-funded children centres have non-registered provision, such as parent and toddler groups and adult education sessions. To include these you will need to either use parts of the following guidance or devise your own SEF sections.*

*It also suggests that you might use a local authority QA scheme system. Be aware that arrangements for these may be subject to change as two year old funding comes on stream and as the DfE changes its arrangements for funded places, possibly trying to make QA arrangements more comparable with one another.*

**Importantly**, the form indicates (p.5) that you should include reference to the views of children, parents, staff and assistants, other professional you work with, and your strengths, areas for improvement and actions you propose to take to tackle them. **For MEAB accredited settings, your latest MEAB report will be helpful here as documentary evidence to support your SEF statements.** Be aware that there will probably be other areas for development beside the MEAB recommendations in areas of statutory requirements which Ofsted addresses and which are outside MEAB's remit.

**SEF form page 6 Part A Setting details and views of those who use the setting or who work with you** (this last bit is an addition from the previous version of the SEF).

### Section 1: Your setting.

*The SEF Guidance (p.5 and 6) indicates the basic details needed and this is supplemented by the instructions on the SEF form, p.6. The description of your setting at the beginning of your MEAB Accreditation Report may serve as the basis for this section, but you will need to add more detail. This will probably require you to go onto extra pages – make sure that you put your URN and setting name at the top of each extra page. In particular, you may wish to include:*

- The number of child places available each day
- The number of children currently attending, but note that this may vary from session to session
- The number of children attending for all the sessions you are open, and the number attending part time (no need to give how many sessions these attend as this sort of detail can be considered by the inspectors when they arrive – it's a broad guide as to the proportion who are there all the time and those who come for just one or two sessions – obviously this affects how you organize the provision and how friendship groups may develop)

You *should* also comment briefly on (see SEF form page 5):

- The children's culture and background
- Learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEN)

- English as an additional language – including how many different home languages are spoken by your children. This has become more important as the Framework (paragraph 1.8) refers to the need to ‘take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language’ as well as English. Whilst MSA recognises that this is desirable, not all settings will have facilities or staff able to do this, so ‘reasonability’ becomes an issue. If this poses a problem for you, contact us and certainly indicate it in your SEF. Thus if you have children with a variety of home languages or whose languages are unusual in your area and which you could not reasonably be expected to support, you should say so. If this is an issue for you, name the languages.

*We strongly suggest that you do **not** name any adults on your form for data protection reasons, instead give each one a number and keep a separate list securely, with the numbers and the names – your SEF is a semi-public document.*

**Training:** indicate qualifications obtained and their date and equivalent NVQ (e.g. ‘Montessori St Nicholas diploma, 1981, NVQ level 4’) even though the SEF advice says ‘recent training’. The basic qualifications are needed to assess whether they are level 2, 3 or 4. All recognised Montessori qualifications can be found on the DfE website. We anticipate further guidance on qualifications early in 2013 and will update this document in the light of that guidance. The guidance (p.6) refers to ‘Support staff, such as a cook’: be aware that the Framework refers to (para.3.46) to the need for staff training in food hygiene: following different interpretations as to what this means in practice, we consulted with Ministers at the DfE and with Ofsted as to who needs to be qualified. Where staff are preparing snacks with children (say, peeling a banana) in-house training on food hygiene - such as hand washing - is adequate. Where staff are preparing meals and especially where *cooking, an appropriate NVQ qualification is needed. Indicate the qualifications here.*

**‘Methods of teaching’:** this is your first chance to emphasise the Montessorian nature of your work. If you are accredited under the MEAB scheme, say so, giving the date of your accreditation. Note that you organize your day on Montessorian lines, refer to the ‘Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage in Montessori settings’ (Montessori St Nicholas, with the National Strategy and DCSF, 2008). Thus you may say:

***“We follow Montessori principles in planning our curriculum, assessing the children’s progress and organising our work. We believe in developing the children’s initiative and respect for themselves and others. We have a daily work cycle of two and a half hours during which time the children make their own choices of activities, including a free flow between indoor and outdoor play. This supports the four EYFS principles by developing the unique child who is able to form positive relationships in an enabling environment. We believe that children learn and develop in their own ways and at their own rates and aim to promote this throughout our work and play.”***

**Section 2: views of those who use your setting or who work with you**  
(an addition from the former SEF).

Much of this is as on your previous SEF (suitably updated!).

We suggest that you divide this section into **three** parts (formerly two), each with three sub-sections:

1. The children

- How do you obtain their views? Examples might be through discussions at circle time and during the day.
- What have you found are their views? You might quote from any records.
- What have you done as a result of getting their views?

2. The parents

- How do you obtain their views? Examples might be through a questionnaire (?annual, self-devised, or do you use the Ofsted parents' questionnaire), feedback from reports on children, discussion when they drop off/collect children, special one-to one meetings to discuss particular problems.
- What have you found are their views?
- What have you done as a result of getting their views?

Ofsted also asks you (Guidance p.6) whether parents are represented on the management body and how you know the views of staff and volunteers. The second of these opens a new area and you ought to comment on staff meetings/briefings (?daily, weekly, give some idea of the meetings' content such as room organization, curriculum, training needs for both the staff and your setting), appraisals, observations of staff by senior staff, with any feedback.

3. Others who work with you (**the new section**).

- How do you obtain their views – any working protocols agreed. You might be used by the local authority as a training centre, or have your staff deliver training, you might have a quality kitemark, or some recognised speciality such as SEN support, you may have a written report from the authority on your quality, if so, either include a scanned copy on your SEF, or quote from it (and have the original available for an inspector to see).
- Feedback from other professionals such as therapists or others who have assessed or commented on individual children (no names of adults or children, but posts held (such as 'speech and language therapist') can be given.
- If they have made any recommendations, such as via a RAG rating or report, what actions have you taken as a result.

## **Part B: The quality and standards of the early years provision (SEF form p.8)**

There has been an attempt to reduce the complexity of this part of the form, but the judgements made by inspectors have been revised and your SEF needs to take account of this. The details of the revised judgements and their all-important grade criteria by which inspector will judge the quality of your setting (on the four point scale) are in the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule for Inspections of Early Years Provision (document 5 in the list at the beginning of this guide, Ofsted July 2012, ref no: 120086, page 6 onwards).

Inspectors are being increasingly expected to focus on observations made during their time in your setting, so any information you can give in your SEF will help to direct their observations – and do make sure they are aware of your strengths!

### **Section 3 How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.**

The Guidance refers to the Framework pages 4-12. It is important to realise that all statements made in the Framework are mandatory, and so you must aim to apply them. Following discussions, Ofsted's lawyers have stated that as page 1 of the Framework says that 'This framework is mandatory for all early years providers' the whole of it is mandatory and that statements which say 'must' be followed and those where it says 'should' are of equal weight legally.

The Ofsted **Evaluation schedule** (page 6 of the schedule) gives its judgement as: *'The impact of practitioners on children's learning and development, whether children make the best possible progress taking into account their starting points and capabilities, the length of time they have been at the setting, and how often they attend'*.

The key phrases here are:

- impact of practitioners
- best possible progress
- taking into account starting points and capabilities
- length of time attending
- how often attending.

### **Key words and phrases to use and emphasise in commenting on these Ofsted points (from the Guidance pages 7, 8).**

Your focus here should be on the impact which you and your staff aim to have when promoting children's learning and development. So it is about organisation, staff deployment, teaching styles, your use of formative and summative assessments. Look through Development Matters sections under 'positive relationships' and 'enabling environments' which refer to planning, and read

through p.3's left hand column where the last two bullet points explain how to use the document.

Begin by commenting on how you have planned your L&D policies for the seven areas of learning, linked to Development Matters (if you had previously referred to Birth to Three Matters, make that link again, but note that the policies have been updated). Outline how each policy has the area of learning and then its various aspects (see Montessori Guide p.9 onwards and the Framework p.7 onwards). Don't detail the content of individual policies, but say how each is structured to a common pattern – or how you intend to do so if you have not yet updated them – and add this to the list of jobs to be done for the next section. **Don't make this too long as you need to focus on the impact you and your staff have on children's learning.**

**Go on to outline:** (additions to the old EYFS are underlined)

- How you support all children to acquire skills and capacities to develop and learn effectively – cite Montessori practice and your MEAB report
- How you plan for individuals – culture, background SEN, EAL, high achievers
- Planning for individuals: use of observation and assessment, first establishing what they know and can do when they come to you – baseline assessment. Relate this to the Development Matters statements.
- What you do if children are not meeting the expected levels of Development matters (i.e. what you do for children with developmental delay, or other learning needs).
- Learning environment: how it supports play and exploration in and out of doors
- A balance of adult-led and child-led activities (cite your MEAB report!)
- High expectations: put in the Montessori context of attitudes towards learning as well as what is learned
- Children are encouraged to think critically and be active and creative learners
- Your use of observation and assessment to plan personalised support – your 'Learning Journeys'
- How you provide challenging learning experiences – variety, outings
- Working with parents/ carers as partners (use your MEAB accreditation report). Sharing information - a two way process.
- Aiming to be an inclusive and welcoming setting



### Now move to SEF form page 9: Your priorities for improvement

If you have been accredited by MEAB, you will probably have some priorities for action which you are still working on (if you have been able to address these, then begin by noting what the report gave as points for further development and say how you addressed these – otherwise the inspector will be tempted to use them as points still to be addressed).

Then indicate any of your own priorities beside the MEAB ones, if you have any more.

Clearly one major area for development/ improvement will be how far you have been able to amend your policies and practices to meet the revised EYFS. Have a look at the sections of the Framework:

- ✓ Learning and development: are your policies now structured according to the seven areas of learning. Make sure that you have not just altered titles but that the content matches – see the Montessori Guide p.12 onwards for a useful summary of these.
- ✓ Assessment (Montessori Guide p.40 onwards). The **progress check at age 2** is new. If you take in a child who is not yet three and who has not had the 2 year old check made, Ofsted will expect you to make such a check – even if it is just a matter of days before the birthday (we have confirmed this with Ofsted). The National Children's Bureau has produced 'A Know How Guide' for this - [www.ncb.org.uk/ey/peertopeersupport](http://www.ncb.org.uk/ey/peertopeersupport) - which gives some useful models for the assessment report format. You can adapt these, but you should make sure that you have a section for parents' comments and space for any information you can get from other professionals about the child – if you know of their contacts. If the child has not been with you long, then a format such as on p.33 of the NCB guide should be sufficient for most children. However if the child has identified issues, then you should seek further details from the parents/ carers, so that at least you can show that you are aware that there are issues which need to be explored further when planning for the child. The progress check should be shared with the parents. The **EYFS Profile** is not generally completed by Montessori settings as the children leave to go to primary school before the profile is due to be completed. **But you should make sure that your Learning Journey provides records of progress in each area of learning as well as noting other points about the child's development. Tracking children's progress is being emphasised much more under the revised EYFS.**
- ✓ Safeguarding and welfare requirements. These have been amended by the revised EYFS Framework and there is a checklist in the Montessori Guide (p.42 onwards) which covers the main points and gives section references to the Framework. Risk assessment arrangements have been modified

under the revised EYFS: the best outline of what is now required is in Ofsted's 'Requirements for risk assessments' which directly relates to the EYFS ([www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120334](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120334), November 2012).

### **SEF page 9 My practice is...**

Don't worry about the terminology possibly seeming to suggest arrogance (e.g. 'my practice is exemplary') – this is just Ofsted's latest terminology replacing 'outstanding', which Ofsted uses in the Evaluation Schedule. Do note that both satisfactory and inadequate are terms which suggest you need to improve. Be honest – don't inflate your quality or your judgement will appear suspect, but equally don't play down your quality in hope that an inspector will raise the judgement. Both suggest that you don't have an accurate view as to what quality consists of.

Check where you think you are against the grade descriptors in the Evaluation Schedule page 8-9. If you think you come out below where you should be, then go back to the 'priorities for improvement' and cross check what you intend to do against the grade descriptors in the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule (document 5 in the list at the beginning) to see if you can add anything (especially things that can be put in place quickly!) to raise your self-evaluation judgement.

### **Section 4: The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being.**

The references here are given on the SEF form, and you should also look at the Montessori Guide p.20-24 (Personal, social and emotional development).

The Guidance p.8 gives **three bullet points which should form the basis** of the evaluation in your SEF. We set these against the Ofsted evaluation schedule's judgements and criteria as well as the Framework and Development Matters.

#### **Guidance Bullet 1 (Guidance page 8): forming appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with their carers.**

The Evaluation schedule (p.6) refers to this in the last 3 bullets in para 13. This demonstrates an issue with the Evaluation Schedule in that it at times approaches each of the SEF Guidance bullets in several ways. We try to unravel some of these:

Evaluation schedule bullet 2 (the extent to which children are supported etc).

- ✓ Montessori Guide p.7 Positive relationships, also points from p.8 enabling environments (you'll need some of these for later, so only use the most appropriate, such as the piece on stimulating resources etc, rich learning opportunities, and, importantly, support for children to take risks and

explore. Give the reference to the document (see above) to support your statements. Also, if **MEAB accredited**, cite the report sections on 'philosophy', and 'links with parents' (no need to write them into your SEF, just give the reference and the inspector can check the copy of the MEAB report . **Give one or two examples from your setting where children show these benefits.**

- ✓ Say how you deploy staff during the work cycle and at other times. Mention Key persons and cross refer to bullet 4 below ('see below, point 4'). Say outdoor activities are staffed at the same time as indoor activities (if you do this). Comment on how staff interact with children (i.e. the role of the adult in a Montessori classroom). Outline how you plan the learning environment (and use this Ofsted phrase)
- ✓ How are parents/ carers informed of your approach (newsletter, meetings etc)
- ✓ Finally add your own comments about how this is reflected in your own practice – you must personalize your SEF in this way. The Montessori Guide page 7 cites the Framework's 4 principles (Framework p.3) and sets them in the context of Montessori practice.– mentioned all these.

If you receive funding for three and/or four year olds you must follow the SEN Code of Practice – and state that you do so here.

You will have put a lot in here which cross-refers to later sections, so don't forget what you have said so that you save work and don't repeat yourself!

### **Guidance Bullet 2 (Guidance p.8) learn to behave well and develop good relationships with their peers.**

There are some pieces from your old SEF which can help here. The old bullet 2 gave some relevant information:

- Note that Montessori approaches have been seen to be successful for over a hundred years in England and throughout the world – you are working within an international movement - also that the National Strategy has accepted that Montessori approaches do meet the EYFS requirements. That is the general point.
- Check the Montessori Guide pages 20-24 on Personal, social and emotional development, using it to provide examples of your practice.
- Next for more specific points about your setting. Cite comments from parents on how well their children settle, how positive they are about their learning, and how well they get on at their next school (cross refer to section 2, in the new SEF, parents' views). Cross refer to any

children's views previously given in section 2, children's views. Cite comments from teachers into whose classes they go.

- You should refer to your use of a key person for each child. If for any reason you don't follow this (but see the Framework paragraph 3.26 which says that this is mandatory, also paragraph 1.11 which outlines what this means), you must be able to justify your practice. This particularly refers to the Evaluation schedule's second bullet (p.6) on how children are supported to learn and develop effectively and to be ready for their next stage of learning (see next point)
- Ofsted's Evaluation p.6 bullet 3 refers to 'high expectations, enthuse, engage and motivate children'. This can be done by referring to your compliance with the Framework para 1.12 (quality workforce with updated training) and the staff's qualifications and in-service since the last inspection. Also refer to your Learning and Development (L&D) policies and how they seek to deliver the three prime areas and the four specific areas related to Development Matters expectations of achievement at various ages. No need to be too specific – the inspector can follow this up: you just need to say that staff plan using your L&D policies which are related to the Development Matters age-related guidance. Also comment on how children are prepared for the next stage of their education – contacts with the next school, as well as how the 'Learning Journey' document is used by you, the parents and the next school.
- The child as an individual: cross-refer to bullet 1 (above) where you cited the Montessori Guide p.7 on the unique child. You could indicate that whilst valuing the child as a unique person, they are encouraged to develop positive peer relationships – say how you aim to do this for the various age groups you deal with (i.e. babies, toddlers etc). More guidance on this is in Development Matters p.2.
- The Guidance (p.8) refers to children being 'happy and enjoy what they are doing' – say how you achieve this.
- The Guidance (p.8) also refers to good behaviour, playing cooperatively and enjoying independence. You will have addressed some of these in the general first point about Montessori practices. Now relate it to examples of what you do.
- Care routines: if you have children in nappies, say how changing is managed. Also comment on routines about food – snacks (independence encouraged?), any self-serving of food, choice of food. Emphasise the value of routines for the day, the week and seasonally, along with celebrating other cultures, including the children's own

(festivals etc). This point should start with the general routines and then outline more detailed ones for specific age groups or children.

- Peer relationships: how is cooperation developed? Conflicts resolved - possible use of distraction techniques to remove tensions.
- Liaison with parents: cross refer to **Bullet 1 above**, where you have referred to how parents are informed about your approach, extending this to say how you aim to promote Montessorian practices in the home.

### **Guidance Bullet 3 (Guidance p.8) develop the characteristics of effective learning.**

The important point here is that you must show that you understand the difference between (a) the content of your L&D curriculum policies for each area of learning, and (b) the ways in which these are designed to promote effective learning – i.e. how you apply them to the classroom. Focus on (b) but mention (a) at the end (see last point below).

Begin by citing the Framework p.6-7, paras 1.9 and onwards. Emphasise Montessori's provision for:

- ✓ Planned purposeful play
- ✓ The role of the adult in promoting learning (See the Montessori Guide p. 9, top where reference is made to 'Whilst as Montessorians we may question the definitions of engagement etc', but don't put it in this way which could sound negative). Instead note the characteristics of effective learning and teaching (Framework para 1.10, pages 8-9) - playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically – and adapt the wording of the Montessori Guide top of p.9 where it talks about 'our understanding of children's play, the work cycle' (important as this is the first chance to directly comment on and explain it), and the idea of sensitive periods. Also link with Development Matters p.3 and 4 which emphasises the interconnected nature of all aspects of L&D.

Now refer to your practices: put them in the order which suits your setting best

- ✓ Staff assessments of children's progress – annotated Learning Journeys. Any transitions within the setting (changes of room, of key person).
- ✓ Again link to your previous comments (bullet 1 above) on links with parents.
- ✓ Cite comments from parents on how well their children settle, how positive they are about their learning, and how well they get on at their next school

(possibly from your previous SEF). Cross refer to any children's views previously noted. Cite comments from teachers into whose classes they go.

- ✓ Use made of the environment and developing imaginations (MEAB report sections on Learning and Development, prepared environment, Montessori practice: independence etc, classroom management should have points you can refer to). How do you organise free flow?
- ✓ Assessments: (see Evaluation schedule p.7) on entry – how are these structured, who does them, how are they shared with parents: two year old assessments (link to next section possibly), on-going formative assessments – parent contributions including discussions and what happens with any notes made at the time or afterwards.

### **SEF page 9: Your priorities for improvement.**

As before, make notes as you complete your statement for the previous page of the SEF form, then you can prioritise your improvements. Again your MEAB accreditation report may be of help here.

#### **Your view of the quality of your practice:**

See notes above.

### **Section 5: The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Documents:

SEF page 12

Guidance page 9

Evaluation schedule pages 12-15

Montessori Guide pages 42-44

EYFS Framework pages 13-29

Section 5 of the old SEF will give you quite a lot of information for this section – but NOT everything, as some requirements and judgements have changed.

Much of this section covers the safeguarding and welfare requirements, although other aspects of leadership and management obviously need to be addressed. We are aware that the DfE is considering reducing the demands on childminders and will update this document as policies emerge.

**The emphasis has to be on how effective leadership and management (L&M) is, not just what it does.** So you may have staff meetings, but if they

are not minuted or do not have action points which are followed up, then L&M is not likely to be 'exemplary'.

**Taking the evaluation schedule pages 12 to 13 as the format for your self-evaluation:**

- ✓ How have you dealt with any weaknesses identified at the last inspection – and what are the outcomes? If any have not been addressed fully, say why not and indicate how they will be addressed. These will form one of the first points any inspector will consider before they arrive on your doorstep, so lack of action is clearly a weakness.
- ✓ Do you have up to date L&D policies for the revised EYFS. If not all are up to date, what has yet to be done and what is your written development plan for getting them done. How are responsibilities for doing this work allocated (i.e. are they shared amongst the staff or is the manager/owner doing them all – obviously it depends on the size of your setting).
- ✓ How are curriculum plans developed, by whom and who oversees them. All staff probably plan for specific activities or children, but how are their plans related to the overall L&D of children and to the organisation of activities? For example, does the manager see all plans on a weekly basis or is planning undertaken at a staff meeting, led by the manager/owner who thereby has oversight? Probably your arrangements seem obvious to you, but you need to explain them so that the inspector can see that you have a clear leadership overview of what is happening and how. **N.B.** the Evaluation schedule says (p.13) 'the effectiveness of the staff's monitoring and revision of the educational programmes' i.e. it assumes that the staff are collectively responsible for ensuring that programmes are appropriate and challenging (and be sure to use Ofsted's words in bullet point 4 on page 13 – 'depth, breadth and challenge' etc).
- ✓ Say how you monitor progress and how you intervene when it is evident individuals need support. Link this with promoting equality and diversity (you may have someone able to speak the child's home language as a means of settling them in – but say how this will support the use of English in the longer term). Also avoiding gender-specific play.
- ✓ How do you evaluate your provision – staff meetings, development plan (see below) – monitoring children's progress – all with ways of setting new targets for progress (for example, by developing an outdoor area followed by or in conjunction with forest school training for staff).
- ✓ Meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements: use the Montessori Guide pages 42-44 as a quick check as to your policies and staff training qualifications for welfare. In particular check safeguarding – **all inspectors will home in on this as a priority** – also note:

- A trained designated child protection practitioner with up to date training and who is on site
- Up to date staff training in safeguarding
- That all staff have CRB checks along with personal disclosures where appropriate
- That your recruitment procedures meet safeguarding requirements regarding checks completed prior to the appointment being confirmed and taken up.
- You have a staff induction policy and its procedures are followed
- Managers have a level 3 training and at least half the staff have full and relevant level 2 qualifications
- There are sufficient staff with up to date paediatric first aid certificates
- You have a key person policy (see above)
- You have policies in place which include ones referring to health (including children who are unwell), administering medicines, for food and drink (healthy eating), accident and injury (and records), behaviour management (the Framework is a bit unclear – you must have a policy and someone in charge who ensures that other staff know and apply the policy – Framework para 3.50), health and safety policy, no smoking policy, appropriate insurances, risk assessments (see Ofsted ‘Requirements for risk assessments’ [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120334](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120334) - this is a useful document to have to show any inspector that you have read it!), SEN policy managed by a named SENCO, record keeping policy which should include reference to any records kept off-site with Ofsted’s approval, a written complaints procedure.
- Your prospectus or other documents given to parents provide the required information (Framework para 3.75).

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but focuses on major points. For each one, give the location of the relevant documentation. One good way of presenting the information is to have all policies in the order they appear in the Framework – beginning with a statement about your principles and then the seven areas of learning in the order they appear, followed by assessment, and then safeguarding and welfare – again in the order of that section’s paragraphs. Any documents (such as the first aid record book which will be out in the setting rather than tucked into a file) should have a note about them at the relevant place in the file(s). This makes the inspector’s job much easier and shows that you are well-organised and have followed the revised EYFS – another sign of good leadership and management!!

Ensure that it is clear how every policy is to be implemented (such as by identifying who is responsible and when it is to be reviewed).

- ✓ Self evaluation which sets the setting’s priorities and targets for improvement. For most settings this means a Development Plan outlining



what you want to achieve under headings such as ‘curriculum’, ‘premises’, ‘staff development’, ‘resources’, ‘outdoor provision’ and so on. There should be an identified member of staff responsible for each heading with an approximate date by which either the task will be completed or reviewed. The outcome should be recorded, even if it is apparently negative (e.g. not achieved as sufficient funds were not available, postponed until next year’). Ideally the staff should be aware of this document and share it. Where appropriate, parental and other involvement should be noted (e.g. healthy eating, dress for outings or outdoor play). Indicate how parents, carers and other people can have an input into the policies (e.g. by making the policies available or by local authority staff being able to comment on them).

- ✓ Performance management: there should be evidence of staff appraisals, whether as regular (fortnightly, half termly?) review sessions with the manager, or as at least annual appraisals. Either approach should be recorded (ideally with both parties signing the notes and having copies). How do you deal with poor performance (even if your example is historical). If you have no poor performance then indicate how your monitoring system would deal this should it occur – could include probationary periods.
- ✓ In-service records should be noted on your SEF – either say where the record is kept or provide a list in your SEF of training over the last two or three years giving staff names and the courses attended. Make sure that child protection training is fully listed – best done on a separate list as well as under individual staff’s training lists. Are you able to say what the impact of this training has been?
- ✓ Also indicate how priorities for staff training are arrived at – they should be determined by the needs of the setting in the context of the staff’s own perceptions of their needs.
- ✓ How do you work with students, trainees or newly qualified staff?
- ✓ Partnerships with parents: you have commented on this previously, so give a link back to that section, but add any details which you did not provide before – including how you formally report to parents (which may have figured under ‘summative assessments’ previously) as well as how this and contacts with other providers, schools and agencies helps you to identify individual children’s needs and help you to support them to make progress.
- ✓ Partnerships with external agencies: you should have mentioned school which the children move on to, note the link here to the earlier SEF section. Partnerships with other providers, such as where children attend a different setting for other parts of the week, or go to wrap around care. Also your work with specialist agencies or people – like ed psychs, therapists and local authority advisers and other staff. You should put these links in the context of how they help you to meet the individual children’s needs – such as by recommending particular ways of dealing with behaviour issues, and also how you have been pro-active in helping the parents get this support (shows positive leadership!).

### **Your priorities for improvement (SEF page 13)**

As previously, make notes as you complete the previous section and then record in priority order the points. Make sure that you have some which can be achieved fairly quickly and some longer term ones – aim for a manageable balance.

**Then grade your practice**, using the evaluation schedule pages 14 and 15.

### **Section 6. The overall quality and standards of the early years provision.**

The SEF form refers to the:

Guidance page 10

Evaluation schedule pages 15-16

You will note that the Evaluation schedule refers to the bullet points (para 29 p.15). These are termed the ‘three key judgements’ by Ofsted. This section (‘overall quality’) is termed the ‘overall judgement’ and seeks to summarise what has gone before in your SEF. Obviously you should not repeat the whole of what you have said previously but you should try to summarise it under the heads of the five bullet points on page 10 of the SEF Guidance.

One way of doing this is to use headings such as ‘strengths’ and ‘areas for development’ (which should appear in your development planning or as part of your MEAB accreditation action plan) for each of the five bullet points. Make sure that anything you say in this section is also mentioned in previous section(s).