



RAISE: Evaluation handbook for schools

(Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education in Wales)



Information

Information document No: 016-07

Date of issue: September 2007

RAISE: Evaluation handbook for schools

- Audience** Practitioners, Local Education Authorities, Local Authorities; and all partners concerned with education, lifelong learning and skills.
- Overview** This handbook was developed by Arad Consulting, on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, to offer advice and guidance on ways to measure the effect of RAISE on pupils.
- Action required** No action required.
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Summary

RAISE is a Welsh Assembly Government programme aimed at raising attainment and individual standards of education in schools in Wales. The purpose of the RAISE funding is to provide targeted support for pupils who are disadvantaged and to overcome the link between disadvantage and low attainment.

The function of any on-going evaluation is to help project managers understand and learn from their projects' implementation, and to incorporate this understanding into their future work. In the context of RAISE, evaluation can also make a valuable contribution to the dissemination and wider take-up of successful practices. Therefore, any evidence you collect as part of your self-evaluation may also be of use to your colleagues, external evaluators and policy makers wishing to assess the success of the RAISE programmes.

Evaluation is not an exact science, and this guide does not attempt to lay down fixed rules for evaluating and reporting on RAISE. Instead, it offers recommendations and a range of appropriate evaluation tools and procedures that you can tailor to suit the needs of RAISE in your school. Whatever the current stage of your project and its evaluation, this guide will help you identify possible improvements to your evaluation procedures.

1 Introduction

RAISE is a Welsh Assembly Government programme aimed at raising attainment and individual standards of education in schools in Wales. The purpose of the RAISE funding is to provide targeted support for pupils who are disadvantaged and to overcome the link between disadvantage and low attainment.

The programme was announced in April 2006 and a total of £14.6 million has been distributed to schools under the RAISE programme in 2006-2007, with a similar amount being available in 2007-2008. Eligible schools across Wales have been funded to undertake a wide variety of different projects and as such this evaluation handbook provides suggestions on ways to self-evaluate the projects. It is not prescriptive - you will be in the best position to judge what is working in your school. However, it is recommended that in all instances:

- 1) you establish how you will evaluate the success of RAISE in your school;
- 2) that this evaluation takes the form of regular monitoring and reviewing;
- 3) you incorporate a range of types of evidence into your self-evaluation.

1.1 Purpose of this handbook

You are best placed to make judgements about what works, and evaluating RAISE, within your schools. This handbook describes ways of measuring the effect of RAISE on pupils within your school.

1.2 What do we mean by evaluation?

Evaluation is the analysis of a project or programme to assess how successful or otherwise it has been, and what lessons can be learnt for the future.

You will probably already be observing the progress of RAISE, discussing achievements and problems with colleagues, seeking to adapt the running of the project, embedding good practice as well as planning for future projects. If so, you are already evaluating the success of the programme in your school. The next step is to undertake more formal process of evaluation, and to improve the effectiveness of this existing observation and reflection by:

- gathering and recording relevant information in a systematic way;
- analysing that information;
- making the results of the analysis available to managers and colleagues in an appropriate form.

1.3 Why evaluate?

The function of any on-going evaluation is to help project managers understand and learn from their projects' implementation, and to incorporate this understanding into their future work.

The ultimate aim of any evaluation is to improve the quality of the RAISE projects, and to enhance the value and benefit of the projects to pupils. In the context of RAISE, evaluation can also make a valuable contribution to the dissemination and wider take-up of successful practices. Therefore, any evidence you collect as part of your self-evaluation may also be of use to your colleagues, external evaluators and policy makers wishing to assess the success of the RAISE programmes.

Note: Self-evaluation vs External evaluation

It is important to distinguish between **evaluating your own projects** (self-evaluation), which is the subject of this handbook, and **external evaluation**.

This document focuses mainly on the process of **evaluating your own RAISE project(s) and activities**. However, the **RAISE programme as a whole** across Wales will also be subject to an external evaluation and some schools may be contacted by evaluators to provide information to inform that review.

Lessons learnt from the external evaluation will focus on programme wide issues which will not necessarily relate directly to what is happening in your specific project(s). Lessons learnt in external evaluation are also likely to be too general and occur too late in the programme to be of use to you in understanding what works in your own RAISE project. As such it is important that evaluations are conducted on both of these levels.

You should not avoid undertaking individual project self-evaluations merely because programme level external evaluations are also being undertaken.

Evaluation is not an exact science, and this guide does not attempt to lay down fixed rules for evaluating and reporting on RAISE. Instead, it offers recommendations and a range of appropriate evaluation tools and procedures that you can tailor to suit the needs of RAISE in your school.

Whatever the current stage of your project and its evaluation, this guide will help you identify possible improvements to your evaluation procedures. In the next section, we run through evaluation step by step and give examples of the range of evidence that you could use.

2 The Evaluation Process Step-by-Step

The guide goes through the evaluation process step by step:

Step	Completed?
Step 1: Identifying the Issue	✓
Step 2: Clarifying what we want to achieve and identifying appropriate indicators	✓
Step 3: Collecting self-evaluation information	✓
Step 4: Interpreting the data and drawing conclusions	✓

2.1 Step 1: Identifying the Issue

2.1.1 When to identify the issues?

Identifying the issues to be addressed by the RAISE projects and setting appropriate objectives are important stages of the project planning process.

As the RAISE projects are already underway, decisions on what you want the project to achieve, and any associated targets will already have been established and noted in the project plans.

Nevertheless, it is important to review regularly the process of setting objectives. This will give you an opportunity to reassess your priorities, to examine progress, to check that the project is aligned to the overall aim and to help you better understand and articulate the goals of the project.

Task:

Have a look under the columns entitled 'Baselines, Outcomes and Progress Measures' in the original RAISE project plans.

- Are they still relevant?
- How is the project progressing against those stated outcomes and targets?

Definition: Objective

Objectives are the things you want the project to achieve. They may be statements about what RAISE targeted pupils are expected to be able to do, to understand or to have learned by being part of the project, or the desired change in their behaviour.

Clear objectives need to be set in order to:

- provide a clear direction for the project upon which a robust work plan can be developed;
- summarise the project's purpose, in order to stimulate interest and support among other individuals and partners;
- demonstrate understanding of and linkages with the objectives of RAISE as a whole;
- identify what you will need to monitor and evaluate.

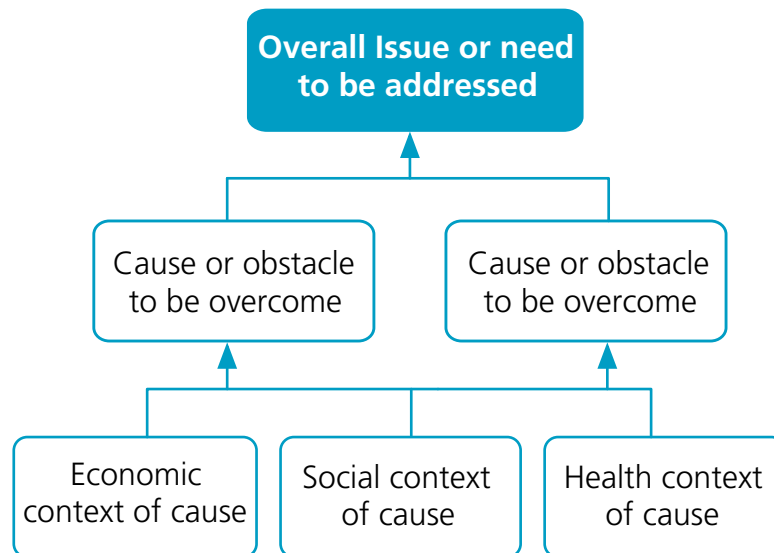
2.1.2 How to develop clear objectives?

The process of establishing clear objectives is broken down to two main activities.

Set an overall objective: Each project should identify an overall objective that outlines the purpose of the project as a whole. This should be related to the RAISE objective of targeting the links between disadvantage and educational achievement amongst pupils but should also be tailored to the RAISE project(s) in your school.

Set component objectives: Each project should then identify a small number of distinct goals, or 'component objectives'. These should relate to factors that influence the overall objective and focus on the needs of the pupils. Examples could be increased motivation in class; increased self-esteem or improved attainment in school-based tests.

In order to identify these overall and component objectives, it may be helpful to begin by identifying and clarifying the issues or needs that the project is seeking to address. That should provide a clear picture of the successful outcomes that you might expect. One way of doing this is to develop a 'family tree' style diagram similar to that shown below. This figure illustrates a way in which factors and causes relating to the main issue or need which you want to address can be mapped from the initial cause to the eventual effect, while identifying other potential barriers and causes along the way.

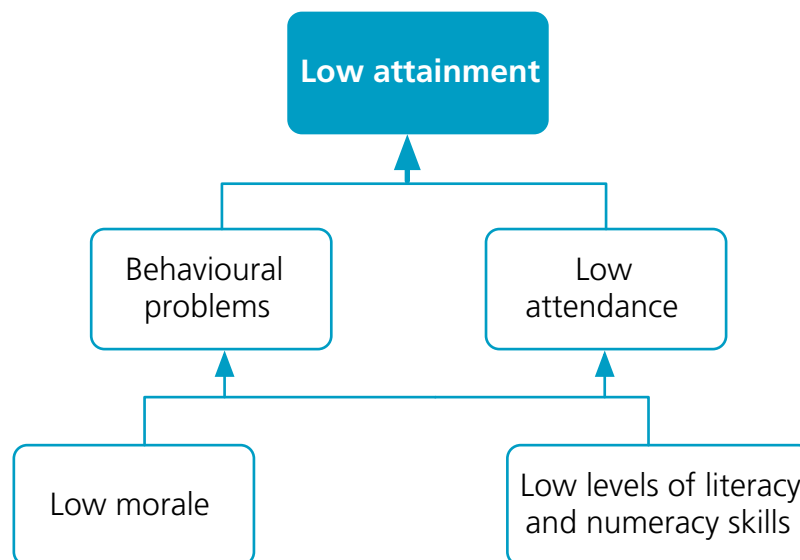


Tip 1 - You may not always be able to address everything you hope to achieve through RAISE. So, you may need to prioritise the areas to which you assign objectives.

This diagram is presented here as a generic illustration. Your map diagram may be very different and contain many more, fewer or different categories. Mapping the issues or needs in this way clarifies the areas that need to be targeted to address the overall need.

It is important to try and contain as much relevant detail as possible that clearly identify cause and effect areas that relate directly to the main need or problem to be addressed. Mapping a route to the key needs to be addressed in this way enables you as RAISE coordinator to then assign specific project objectives to each specific cause identified.

Having mapped out the issues you will then need to identify and agree what would be regarded as successful outcomes in terms of addressing them. Identifying what success would look like should lead to the development of clear objectives. The family tree diagram can then be reproduced with the agreed project objectives included in each box instead of, or alongside, the needs and causes identified.



This will help you establish a clear basis upon which the project can be planned and evaluated. Furthermore it will offer clarity in terms of the links between component and primary objectives and illustrate how the component objectives contribute to the overall objective. The diagram overleaf offers a simple demonstration of the process in action.

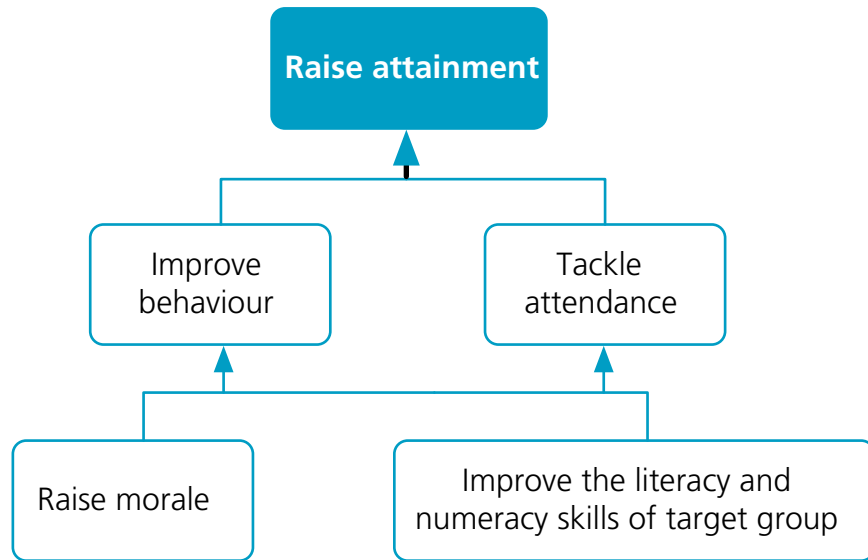
The diagram above offers a simple example of a cause and effect map outlining issues influencing pupils' performance. In this fictional case, research and previous experience in the school may have shown two main causes of the behavioural problems and low attendance - low morale and low skills. This combination has created an environment that encourages poor attendance and poor behaviour.

Having undertaken this exercise we can now set our objectives by deciding what outcomes relating to the issues would be regarded as successful.

First of all we will set our primary or overall objective, which in this case will be to improve the attainment of pupils. Secondly we will set our component objectives which in this example will be to improve behaviour and to increase attendance. Other component objectives in this example are to increase the pupils' morale and increase literacy and numeracy levels.

These can now be included in our diagram:

Tip 2 - To avoid confusion, it is sometimes necessary to state clearly what the project will not attempt to do, as well as what it will do.



This diagram merely outlines the broader component objectives that address the issues and needs originally identified. In practice the diagram would also include more detailed objectives, such as which skills would be improved and how. However, the process involved would largely mirror those undertaken above.

You may wish to develop these objectives through discussions with other members of staff as well as some pupils, if appropriate. Here are some questions to guide that discussion.

Discussion question	Discussed with Colleagues?	Answers
<p>1. What will the project attempt to achieve? (i.e. what are our objectives?)</p> <p>What will success look like? You may wish to consider the answer to these questions in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits to individual pupils; • benefits to the targeted pupils as a whole; • broader benefits relating possibly to longer-term impacts at a whole school level. 	✓	
<p>2. How do these objectives address the problems or needs of the pupils that you have identified?</p>	✓	
<p>3. Are our objectives consistent with other initiatives in the school and with the overall RAISE aim of targeting the links between disadvantage and educational achievement amongst pupils?</p>	✓	
<p>4. Are the objectives clear?</p> <p>Are they closely linked to each other and do they reinforce each other?</p>	✓	

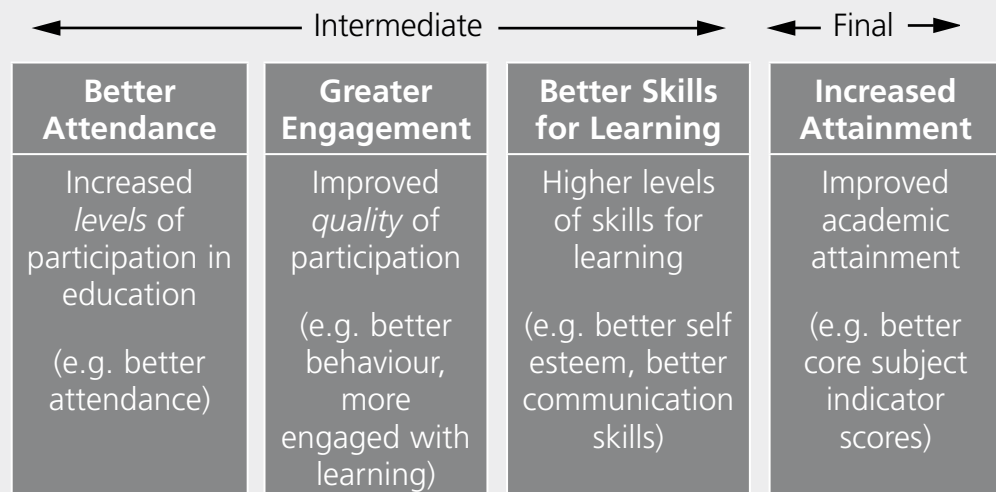
Discussion question	Discussed with Colleagues?	Answers
<p>5. Are there possible tensions between the objectives developed?</p> <p>If so how can we adjust the project objectives to make them clearer and complementary to each other?</p>	✓	
<p>6. Are our objectives realistic?</p> <p>Is it likely that the school will have the capacity to achieve the project's objectives in the timescale envisaged?</p>	✓	
<p>7. How do the objectives relate to whole school development priorities?</p>	✓	
<p>8. Are our objectives challenging enough?</p> <p>Could the project achieve more than these objectives suggest?</p>	✓	
<p>9. Could pursuing these objectives produce other 'spin-off' effects - positive or negative?</p> <p>What are these likely to be?</p>	✓	

More information on judging the success of your RAISE project

The ultimate aim of RAISE is to increase attainment levels. However, your project is likely to have more immediate shorter-term objectives that will, eventually, influence attainment levels. Therefore, it may be useful to consider a staged approach to setting objectives. This should help you consider the links between immediate objectives, such as improved attendance, and the final aim of improving attainment.

Figure 1 is an example that builds on a framework of intermediate and final outcomes:

Figure 1- Spectrum of improved standards outcomes for RAISE



Understanding the links between your RAISE project(s), and the ultimate aim of the RAISE programme, should help you place your objectives (such as increasing attendance or improved behaviour) in the context of the programme's wider aim (improving attainment).

These steps outline the immediate and longer term objectives of the project, which in turn form the basis of the appropriate performance indicators (defined in the next section) that should be developed. For example, if one of the objectives identified is to increase the level of engagement between the pupil(s) in question and the teacher, then the performance indicator that should be developed would simply be 'change in the level of pupil engagement'. The level of engagement should therefore be assessed at the start of the project, recorded throughout, and the progress assessed at the end.

Definition of Indicators:

An indicator provides a measure of something. 'Pupils showing improvements in numeracy' is a measure of working towards raising attainment.

Tip 3 - It is important to assess whether information relating to your selected indicators can be collected in the same way at two different occasions. If not, your choice of indicators may need to be revised or alternative methods of collection developed.

2.2 Step 2: Clarifying what you want to achieve: identifying appropriate indicators

By now, you will have a map of issues and objectives. This is your list of what you want to achieve through the RAISE project(s). The performance indicators that you choose will need to measure the objectives you have set.

Once project objectives have been set, you can establish appropriate indicators that will enable you to record progress and offer appropriate ways of measuring the success of your project.

2.2.1 Why establish performance indicators?

Performance indicators provide us with:

- the necessary tools for on-going project self-evaluation;
- a better understanding of the project processes as well as project outcomes;
- a means of measuring project success that takes appropriate account of the needs and aspirations of pupils;
- a better understanding of 'soft'¹ project achievements;
- clear criteria for measuring the project's success.

There is such diversity in the approaches that schools have taken in using RAISE funding that devising Wales-wide indicators is impossible, so this guide cannot prescribe a menu of indicators suitable for all. However, it is nevertheless essential that you rigorously and systematically evaluate how RAISE is working in your school. Developing indicators will help you in shaping your evaluation.

2.2.2 What are indicators?

Indicators are measures that can be used to determine the success and wider validity of a project, in terms of its approach and what it achieves. They enable us to make judgements on the basis of information that 'indicates' the results of the project.

¹ Soft project outcomes are related to behaviour, attitudes and experiences. An example is the improved motivation or confidence of pupils.

Tip 4 - Always try to apply indicators against all objectives, even if the indicators do not always appear to be obvious or robust. Remember that the evaluation itself aims to be useful and informative. If the information collected can be interpreted sensibly and logically in a way that will inform your understanding of how well the project is performing, that information serves a purpose. It is better to have indicators that are not robust than having no indicators at all and leaving you to rely on guess work or hunches to evaluate your project.

2.2.3 How to set indicators?

Consider what other people such as inspectors or external evaluators, colleagues and parents are most likely to ask about the RAISE project and what it is setting out to achieve (its objectives). Having done this you should ask what evidence will be needed in order to answer these questions and how such evidence can be collected and presented. The answers will form the basis of the indicators that you will develop.

Having set your performance indicators, you will need to consider how to collect information and evidence relating to them. The way information can be collected should also be considered when choosing your performance indicators. It is important that you choose performance indicators that you can realistically record. If you cannot collect appropriate information relating to your indicators, then you will have to choose alternative indicators.

For example, where you want to measure change, it is important that you develop performance indicators that can test conditions before and after, using the same test method. An example might be measuring changes in self confidence. You would need to ask the same questions or carry out the same type of observation exercise before (or at the earliest possible stage during) and after the RAISE project.

2.2.4 Challenges in setting indicators

Other aspects that you will need to take into consideration:

Do we have the time, skills and other resources necessary to gather, record, analyse and report on all the performance indicators we have specified? ✓

Do we have the skills and experience and tools necessary to carry out all the information gathering procedures relating to our choice of indicators? ✓
(Some techniques, such as group observation, and face to face interviewing require specialist skills; some commercial tools carry a cost.)

Do we all share a common understanding of each of the performance indicators to be employed in our project evaluation? ✓

Is it clear precisely what is to be measured or counted? ✓

2.2.5 Setting Indicators in Practice - Possible Indicators for RAISE projects

Depending on the focus of your project, different types of indicators will be suitable and useful. The following is a short list of possible performance indicators that could be considered for evaluating the success of RAISE over time in your school.

Main Focus of RAISE Project	Example Indicator(s)	Notes
Numeracy & Literacy	More pupils attain appropriate levels in maths or reading and writing as a result of a RAISE intervention	Many RAISE projects focus on improving basic skills. Key stage results could be used where appropriate for a small cohort of pupils. Measurements against the indicator could also allow comparison between RAISE and non-RAISE pupils to be undertaken, similarly a comparison between pupils or groups of pupils and previous school years could also be undertaken.
Attendance & Engagement	<p>Pupils who have been part of a RAISE intervention show an improvement in attendance.</p> <p>Pupils who have been part of a RAISE intervention are less frequently permanently excluded from school.</p>	<p>For many projects, improving pupil participation will be a measure of success in itself. Attendance rates are easily collected and, compared with other indicators, there is no lag between the intervention and its measurement. Baseline information on attendance for pupils should also be available, therefore overcoming the issue of collecting data from before the RAISE initiative began.</p> <p>As with attendance, exclusions will also be helpful in providing a measure of improvement in pupil participation, engagement and behaviour.</p>

Main Focus of RAISE Project	Example Indicator(s)	Notes
Enrichment and Wider Curriculum	Pupils who have been part of a RAISE intervention showing evidence of increased participation in class and extra-curricular activities.	Where the RAISE project is focussed on developing soft skills rather than attainment directly, care needs to be taken to ensure that the indicators can enable you to capture softer or more subtle changes in pupils. Indicators could be based on regular recorded tutor observations, progress against a set of particular criteria or a structured self assessment/facilitated questionnaire completed by the pupil or teacher. There are numerous examples of tools developed commercially, many of which are already used by schools, as well as tools developed in-house by schools to monitor progress (see next section).
Nurture Groups	Pupils who have been part of a RAISE intervention show evidence of increased confidence and self esteem.	As above, indicators could be based upon tutor observations or any one of a number of tools that have been developed (see next section).
Transition	Pupils who have been part of a RAISE intervention show evidence of increased confidence and self esteem.	As above, indicators could be based upon tutor observations or any one of a number of tools that have been developed (see next section).

Main Focus of RAISE Project	Example Indicator(s)	Notes
Family Links/ Home to School	There is a stronger partnership between staff and parents/carers.	Where relevant, indicators could be directed towards the effect of RAISE outside the school. This could include demonstrable changes in the involvement of parents, community groups or other links with the community.
Behaviour Support	Pupils who have been part of a RAISE intervention are less frequently permanently excluded from school.	Monitoring changes in the numbers of exclusions could be helpful in providing a measure of improvement in pupil participation, engagement and behaviour.

Tip 5 -

If evaluation procedures seem unreasonably difficult, you may be less likely to apply them. If necessary, revise or shorten your list of performance indicators, prioritising the ones that will provide the most meaningful information to ensure that you maintain enthusiasm.

The examples listed above offer only a snapshot of the range of performance indicators that could be developed at project level. Your indicators will depend on the nature of the activities supported by your RAISE project. The important factors are that **the indicators reflect the main objectives** of the project and information and that **data relating to them can be collected**.

Having undertaken the process outlined above it may be useful to record your objectives and associated performance indicators in a table similar to the one outlined overleaf. This will provide a clear basis upon which the data collection and interpretation processes can be undertaken.

Objective or Performance Indicator	Data Elements	Data Source(s)	Collection Method	Who?	Key dates
Describe your objective and area to be investigated together with any performance indicators.	List the range of evidence you will use here.	List the possible sources for that data here e.g. Fischer Family Trust data, Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) scores, observations.	List the method or methods to be used to collect this data.	Person to collect data.	Key mile-stones.

2.3 Step 3: Collecting self-evaluation information

The previous section outlined issues for consideration in developing appropriate performance indicators. This section explains how to collect evidence against those indicators for your evaluation.

It is likely that you will collect both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data is new information that you will collect on RAISE (e.g. ad hoc tests, questionnaires and observations); whilst secondary data is existing data that has already been collected such as school assessment results or prior attainment.

In deciding the best sources for information, you will need to answer the following questions:

Discussion question	Discussed with Colleagues?	Answers
What source is likely to provide the most accurate information?	✓	
How accurate do you need the information to be?	✓	
What source is the least costly or time consuming?	✓	
Does the school already collect and record suitable data that could be used?	✓	

Discussion question	Discussed with Colleagues?	Answers
Will collecting information from a particular source pose an excessive burden on anybody?	✓	
Do you have access to the sources? (For example some documents could be restricted or confidential.)	✓	
Do you have the skills to access the sources? (For example, particular target groups may need interviewers with specialist skills.)	✓	
What data might also be useful for other requirements? (For example Estyn inspection, Welsh Assembly Government reviews.)	✓	

The main types of data collection methods and instruments you are likely to use are:

Tip 6 - You may not wish to evaluate every aspect of the project. This may sound obvious but collecting too much of the wrong information is one of the most common evaluation mistakes!

- pupil test results and other assessment data
- pupils' prior attainment
- school monitoring and tracking data
- discipline and exclusions data
- classroom observations
- action research
- attendance records
- pupil questionnaires
- face-to-face interviews with pupils or focus group interviews (either structured or semi-structured)
- observation forms or checklists to be used to assess pupils' behaviour, attitude or confidence
- other observation techniques such as videos or audio documentation.

This is not a definitive list, nor is any one method more suitable than another. Given the range of RAISE projects a range of evaluation tools may be suitable. Use whatever tools suit your school's circumstances.

2.3.1 Capturing evidence of soft outcomes

Some evidence of outcomes can be easily collected and measured, like test results or attendance figures. However, the outcomes from your RAISE project can include any recorded evidence of a change in behaviour that can be attributed to RAISE. This means that 'softer' outcomes such as improved confidence, behaviour or self-esteem should also be considered as valuable measures of impact. However, measuring soft outcomes often requires more detailed and resource intensive processes than more traditional hard measures of output or process.

2.3.2 Evaluation Process: Tools you may wish to use

This section outlines some of the tools that attempt to capture evidence of soft outcomes amongst children and young people. Some of these have been developed commercially, whilst others have been developed by various public bodies. **This handbook does not attempt to endorse or evaluate the effectiveness of any of the models, merely to give a flavour of some of the types of tools currently in use in Wales and beyond.** Furthermore, this list is not exhaustive and there are a number of other relevant approaches and documents that are not mentioned here.

Your school may already be using (or be familiar with) some of these tools or you may be using similar methods to collect evidence of success. Alternatively, you may have developed more appropriate methods in-house that are tailored to your school and RAISE project's needs. The selection of tools described below is not prescriptive - your choice of tool should fit the objectives or indicators you have set yourself.

It is also important to consider that there is unlikely to be one approach that will suit all of the RAISE projects. You may be aware of other schools that are already using one of these tools or have developed their own methods of measuring outcomes. This does not mean that their approach will suit your needs.

"Outcomes such as improved self esteem, and a greater involvement of young people as active citizens, can be key indicators of success"

Welsh Assembly Government
'Extending Entitlement' guidance document

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

The Australian Early Development Index is a facilitated tool that has been adapted from a Canadian EDI model developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University, Ontario. The AEDI is described as 'a community measure of young children's development, based on the scores from a teacher-completed checklist consisting of over 100 questions'². The AEDI measures progress across five domains that reflect different aspects of children's development. These are:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive skills
- Communication skills and general knowledge

In Australia, the tool is used to establish a baseline measure for children in their first year of school. Teachers complete a checklist of questions under each domain based on observations of the child. Examples of the type of questions assessed are given below:

Physical health and wellbeing

- Gross and fine motor skills
- Holding a pencil
- Running in the playground
- Motor coordination
- Adequate energy levels for classroom activities
- Independence in looking after own needs
- Daily living skills

Social competence

- Curiosity about the world
- Eagerness to try new experiences
- Knowledge of standards and acceptable behaviour in a public place
- Ability to control own behaviour

- Appropriate respect for adult authority
- Cooperation with others
- Following rules
- Ability to play and work with other children

Emotional maturity

- Ability to reflect before acting
- Balance between being too fearful and too impulsive
- Ability to deal with feelings at an age-appropriate level
- Empathetic response to other people's feelings

Language and cognitive skills

- Reading awareness
- Age-appropriate reading and writing skills
- Age-appropriate numeracy skills
- Board games
- Ability to understand similarities and differences
- Ability to recite back specific pieces of information from memory

Communication skills and general knowledge

- Skills to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways
- Symbolic use of language
- Story telling
- Age-appropriate knowledge about life and the world around.

The AEDI notes that it cannot be used as a tool to 'reflect the performance of the school or the quality of teaching', but that it can be used to 'provide a baseline for measuring change in children's development over time'.

Cognitive Abilities Test 3 (CAT3)

Cognitive Abilities Testing is a computer-based assessment tool developed by NFER-Nelson³ to test and understand reasoning abilities, pupil potential and learning styles amongst pupils

³ See <http://www.nfer-nelson.co.uk/education/resources/cat3/cat3.asp>

aged 7 to 17. CAT3 is the latest version of the test and can be used to assess reasoning abilities in three areas or 'batteries', namely:

- **Verbal Reasoning**

This tests children's abilities to use verbal concepts. This includes vocabulary, sentence completion, verbal classification and verbal analogies. This test is good at measuring and predicting educational progress.

- **Quantitative Reasoning**

This tests children's abilities in number relations, number series and equation building. Quantitative reasoning, together with verbal reasoning, make up what many call "academic ability".

- **Non-verbal Reasoning**

This tests the ability of children to manipulate relationships expressed in neither words nor numbers. Non-verbal reasoning measures ability that is less a result of formal school education. A child scoring high in this test, but low in verbal and quantitative reasoning is probably under-achieving in the school environment.

NFER-Nelson note that some two thirds of schools in the UK already use the tool whilst some of the schools who have submitted proposals for RAISE projects have noted that they will use CAT scores to assess the effect of their projects. It is likely, therefore, that some schools will be able to use CAT tests to provide baseline information on soft skills for some of the project's targeted pupils.

Yellis, MidYIS and PIPS family of monitoring systems

These tests from the Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre at Durham University, form a baseline for value added measures. The Yellis Questionnaire (**Y**Ear **11** Information **S**ystem), for example, covers many areas including attitudes to school, particular lessons and homework, quality of school life, feeling of fear in school, home background and support for education from parents/guardians, career plans and aspirations for the future. It is a comprehensive monitoring system and the tests are designed to measure, as far as possible, ability and aptitude for learning rather than achievement.

The Rickter Scale

The Rickter Scale is an assessment and evaluation tool that can be used by practitioners before, during and after an intervention to measure distance travelled and soft outcomes achieved by pupils, for example, through training or education. The tool uses a sliding scale whereby practitioners and clients work together to assess the client's progress across a number of areas/questions. The Rickter Scale is commonly used by youth workers to assess distance travelled with young people (see www.rickterscale.com). Proponents of the Rickter Scale cite its advantages as being that it:

- is easy to administer
- instantly engages the client
- helps to overcome communication barriers
- produces quality information in a short period of time
- produces a profile that is immediately available for action planning
- offers standardisation
- provides adaptable initial assessment, monitoring and evaluation information
- helps identify appropriate support
- adapts to different client groups or needs.

The tool can be used to cover a number of areas (frames of reference) which include 'boards' for: Life, School, Drugs/alcohol, Preparation for work; Independent living, Community safety; Personal/social development; Emotional competence. Questions included in the school board are outlined below.

School Board

- 1. School**
How happy are you at school?
- 2. Bullying**
How much are you affected by any bullying at school?
- 3. Relationships**
How happy are you with your relationships at school?
This can be any relationship that comes to mind.
- 4. Home**
How happy are you at home?
- 5. Teachers**
How well do you think you get on with the teachers at school?
- 6. Stress**
How stressed are you at this time in your life?
- 7. Confidence**
How confident are you about your future?
- 8. Health**
How happy are you with the state of your health?
- 9. Alcohol/Drugs**
How much is alcohol or drugs a part of your life?
This can be anything that you think are drugs such as medication or cigarettes.
- 10. Happiness**
How happy are you at this time in your life?

The Rickter Scale is commonly used in Wales by youth workers and organisations such as Careers Wales, although they have also developed their own soft skills assessment tool (with the support of Rickter Scale) which is described below.

Careers Wales' Impact! Tool

Careers Wales has developed a soft skills assessment tool to measure the outcomes achieved by young people participating in the Youth Gateway programme. The Youth Gateway has been in operation since 1999 and tends to focus on supporting disadvantaged young people aged between 16 and 25 (although mainly those aged 16-18) who have no qualifications, or perhaps did not attend school. Often these young people have multiple

barriers to re-engagement such as drug problems, offending behaviour or special educational needs. Careers Wales had traditionally measured the performance of the Youth Gateway (and other programmes) by measuring outputs (e.g. number of beneficiaries, number of interventions meetings, the destination of the young person at the end of the programme) but they realised that they needed to assess soft skills and distance travelled in order to capture more fully the effects of the programme.

Careers Wales decided to develop an appropriate tool for assessing the success of the Youth Gateway. As the majority of the 6 Careers Wales companies were familiar with the Rickter Scale, the company was commissioned to develop the 'Impact!' tool. The Rickter Scale 'board' outlined above was not considered to be the most appropriate methodology as Careers Wales wanted young people to self-assess the impact of the Youth Gateway with minimal help from a facilitator. The 'Impact!' tool is essentially a very brief survey to measure distance travelled by the young person and the success of Youth Gateway. Young People are surveyed at the beginning of their contact with Youth Gateway, in the middle and at the end of their Youth Gateway (usually after 4/5 months, but sometimes up to 10 months), when they are either in an outcome (e.g. job or training) with which they are happy or when they may not be in an outcome but are happy that they have developed their skills sufficiently to seek an outcome themselves.


The Impact! Tool gives young people 11 statements to score from 1 to 5 in terms of how strongly they agree with them. Young people fill in paper copies of the 'Impact!' tool without prompting from their personal advisor, unless they need an explanation of a term. A copy of the 'Impact!' tool is shown below.

Name:
 Ref No:
 Date of Birth: M / F


Post 16

IMPACT!


Where are you now?



	0	1	2	3	4	5			
	No, not at all		Maybe		Yes, definitely				
				→					
					In the beginning	In the middle	At the end		
1	I'm clear about what sort of job I want						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I'm confident about my future						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I feel I've got the skills to get a job						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I'm comfortable working with other people						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I feel motivated to see things through						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I've got control of my emotions and feelings						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I am able to cope with any problems in my life						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I have the support I need						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I am confident about going into new situations						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I have plenty of choices in my life						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	I'm finding Youth Gateway helpful						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



YOUTH GATEWAY



Tools developed in-house

Not all projects lend themselves to using these commercial tools, nor is that necessary. A list of common evaluation tools that you could use is provided below along with a brief description.

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires and surveys	When you need information quickly and/or easily from a large group of pupils in a non-threatening manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can be completed anonymously. - inexpensive to administer. - easy to compare and analyse. - can capture large sample and get lots of data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - might not provide careful feedback. - difficult to design. - impersonal. - surveys may need sampling expert. - do not give full story.

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Interviews	When you want to understand fully someone's impressions or experiences or learn more about their answers to questionnaires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can cover full range and depth of information. - develops relationship with client. - can be flexible, depending on pupil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time consuming. - can be hard to analyse and compare. - can be costly. - interviewer can bias pupil's responses.
Documentation review	When you want an impression of how a project operates without interrupting the project. (Could include review of prior attainment, attendance records, assessment results.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides comprehensive and historical information. - doesn't interrupt project or client's routine in project. - information already exists. - few biases about information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - often time consuming. - the available information is likely to be incomplete. - need to be quite clear about what you are looking for. - it is not a flexible means of gathering data; data restricted to what already exists.
Observation Diary	When you want to gather accurate information about how a project actually operates from day to day, particularly about the processes within it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - views on the operations of a project as they are actually occurring. - can adapt to events as they occur. - records observations as they happen which would otherwise be forgotten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can be difficult to interpret seen behaviour. - can be complex to categorise observations. - can influence behaviours of project participants.

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Focus groups	When you want to explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g. about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - get common impressions quickly and reliably. - can be an efficient way to gain a good range and depth of information in a short time. - can convey key information about projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can be hard to analyse responses. - need good facilitator. - finding the time in the school day to arrange the group.
Case studies	When you want to understand situations in depth or depict pupils' experiences in a project, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - depict fully pupils experience in project input, process and results. - powerful means to portray project to outsiders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually quite time-consuming to collect, organise and describe. - represent depth of information, rather than breadth.
Action Research <i>[A cycle of planning, teaching/acting; observing & reflecting that integrates action and research.]</i>	A method of incorporating self-evaluation into everyday RAISE activities rather than a tool in itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allows possible improvements to be spotted and implemented immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can be difficult to remove yourself from the action and be truly reflective.

2.4 Step 4: Interpreting the data and drawing conclusions

To make use of the data collected, it is important that you can now interpret the data effectively. This will enable you to make value judgments about how well the RAISE programme is performing.

This must be done carefully. This is the evaluation stage, which is most likely to be short-circuited or under valued, with the mistake often made of just recording evaluation results rather than translating these results into useful knowledge. This does not need to be a long, time consuming task. Many project coordinators and staff are daunted by this activity, believing incorrectly that they do not have the expertise to analyse the information. It may be useful to involve colleagues who are more experienced in making sense of data. However, it is important that you and any other members of the RAISE project team play an active part in the interpretation process, as this is the only way that you will learn the valuable lessons you need.

To interpret your data you will need to convert the information that you have collected around the performance indicators into useful and meaningful knowledge. There are five basic steps that you will need to take to translate the data in this way.

1. convert the raw data into collective data or overviews
2. check and analyse the data
3. interpret the data
4. draw your conclusions and lessons
5. report and share the results (and any success stories and good practice)

2.4.1 Converting raw data into collective data or overviews

This can be done by statistically summarising the numerical data collected. For example, if we analyse responses to opinions of other teachers relating to changes in pupil behaviour, we can summarise the raw data by reporting that x% believed there to be a significant improvement; x% improvement; x% no change and x% a decline etc. We could also summarise the data at this stage by outlining overall numbers, e.g. total number of pupils involved in the programme; current attainment; average attendance. These can then be presented alongside any targets set against these indicators.

It is likely that you will also have qualitative data, such as your observations or notes from discussion groups. These could be summarised by grouping or clustering responses or observations under themes or grouped as positive and negative responses. Refer back to the issues you identified in step 1 of this guide to help you group the qualitative data results.

As far as possible, this step should aim to provide summaries relating to outcomes and performance against targets, as well as other monitoring data.

2.4.2 Checking and Analysing the Data

Once you have summarised the data or grouped information under appropriate headings, it is important that you check and validate the information.

In particular, make a note of any issues that might influence the results, for example, what other projects were ongoing in the school or community and whether the information was collected mainly during a particularly high or low point of the project. If so, views, opinions and other data may be skewed to reflect these specific circumstances as opposed to the project as a whole. Look out also for any gaps in the data or any reasons for poor or good performance and any external factors that may have affected the results.

Such checks should be undertaken at all stages of the evaluation, although inevitably some issues will have slipped through the net at this stage. If your assessment of the data does reveal issues such as these, you will need to make sure that they are reflected in the interpretation. If you discover major flaws in the validity of the data at this stage, you may need to scrap that piece of evidence from the interpretation process.

2.4.3 Interpreting the data

Once you have summarised the data and checked its validity, you will be in a position to interpret the information that you have collected. To do this, you will need to:

- look for patterns and themes that emerge;
- offer explanations for them.

It is at this stage that you will need to look at the data collected and consider possible cause and effect relationships, e.g. there may have been a more marked change in behaviour towards the end of the project because more time was allocated to the pupil at this stage.

Tip 7 - It is important that you do not attempt to draw up conclusions too early at this stage. You must wait until you have drawn together and considered the whole range of possible interpretations and explanations. Failure to do so will result in your drawing blinkered conclusions that do not reflect all circumstances.

2.4.4 Drawing Conclusions

Finally, we need to draw some conclusions!

You are in the best position to decide what your data means. Each project will be very different with different objectives, different data and different results. However, the following ideas may get you started.

You can:

- describe what you did (or are doing), who did it, and the characteristics and number of participants;
- compare this information with your initial plan and determine whether there is a difference between objectives and actual implementation;
- summarise the evidence you have collected to show the benefit of RAISE on individual pupils or on the whole group;
- identify the reasons for differences between your planned objectives, planned activities and expected results with what you actually achieved;
- identify barriers encountered and factors that facilitated or helped;
- identify aspects of the project that required more attention;
- identify the things in the project that you should have given less attention or stopped.

Tip 8 - If the findings are not documented, the knowledge produced as a result of undertaking the evaluation will be locked in your head and key lessons will not be passed on to others. You may move on to another job and the knowledge will go with you. If there is clear documentation, then the knowledge can be passed on.

2.4.5 Report and share the results

Recording your findings will enable other individuals (such as colleagues within and outside your school or evaluators) to review your evaluation findings and learn from the experience of your project.

The purpose of the evaluation report will be:

- to document the project's experience and achievements, both for internal and for external audiences;
- to crystallise the lessons drawn from the experience;
- to create a platform for further development work;
- to support or extend dissemination of the project's approach, methods and tools.

The structure and actual content of the evaluation report will be up to you.

The Welsh Assembly Government does not require schools to follow any particular format in presenting their self-evaluation reports. However, it did offer the following template and guidance notes to Local Education Authorities for use in their schools, if required.

RAISE Termly Self-Evaluation Report

School name:	School number:	LEA	Term
Key achievements or features of progress	Significant inhibitors or frustrations	Relevant target or objective	
Case study (exemplifying either a positive or a challenging aspect of a RAISE initiative to date)			

RAISE Termly Self-Evaluation Report - Guidance Notes

Schools do not have to use this optional evaluation template. Your school will already have its own self-evaluation processes. So, it is wholly appropriate that you should integrate the evaluation of your RAISE activities into existing structures. We offer this template to indicate the sort of information that would be useful to us in evaluating the RAISE initiative nationally. However, we shall accept self-evaluation reports in whatever format is appropriate to your situation. You may or may not choose to use the template in writing the termly self-evaluation report that we require under the terms and conditions of the RAISE grant. Whether or not you use this template, you should submit your report to your local authority rather than directly to the Assembly.

We have designed the template for you to use electronically. The various boxes will expand to whatever size you require. You do not have to limit your comments to the space provided on a printed version of the template. However, neither do you have to produce a long detailed document.

The template has four rows for evaluative comments. That number is arbitrary. You may add, delete or ignore rows, as appropriate.

The main body of the template has three columns. In the first (left-hand) column, you should note the key successes that you and your pupils have achieved as a result of your RAISE activities. In the second (centre) column, you should note key issues that remain, despite any successes. You may indicate in this column things that are not working out as you had expected or factors that are preventing you from making the progress that you would wish. This column may serve as an agenda for future action. Both of these columns should contain mainly evaluative comment. You need only include descriptive material, insofar as it is necessary to make the evaluative comments meaningful.

The third (right-hand) column has two purposes. Firstly, it is to provide the context for the comments in the first two columns. Secondly, it is to encourage schools to keep in mind the objectives they set themselves in planning their RAISE activities. You may have set out some of those objectives as measurable, easily quantifiable, targets. However, your targets may equally relate to matters, such as increased engagement in learning or improved attitudes, that

Tip 9 -

It takes courage to describe your project's failures honestly. However, the key to successful projects lies in understanding these early difficulties and learning from them. Other practitioners will appreciate the opportunity to learn from your challenges!

may not lend themselves so readily to measurable performance indicators. You may record either type of target or objective in this column.

It may not be appropriate to include something in the Case Study section every term. However, we would encourage you to provide us with succinct accounts of work that you have done, where it illustrates the effectiveness of an approach that you have taken or where it highlights further issues and challenges that you need to address. This is the place to offer more descriptive accounts of what you are doing, if you feel that they are appropriate. However, the most valuable accounts will, also, include evaluative analysis of what you have been doing. This material will be valuable in alerting us to good practice and interesting developments.

This self-evaluation form is not mandatory and you may amend it to your own specific needs or use an alternative approach linked with the process of self-evaluation for other activities. You may wish to keep an on-going record of progress, or reflect at termly intervals. Although you only have to submit a self-evaluation report annually to your LEA, the terms and conditions of the grant require each report to have a termly dimension, tracing progress over time with RAISE initiatives.

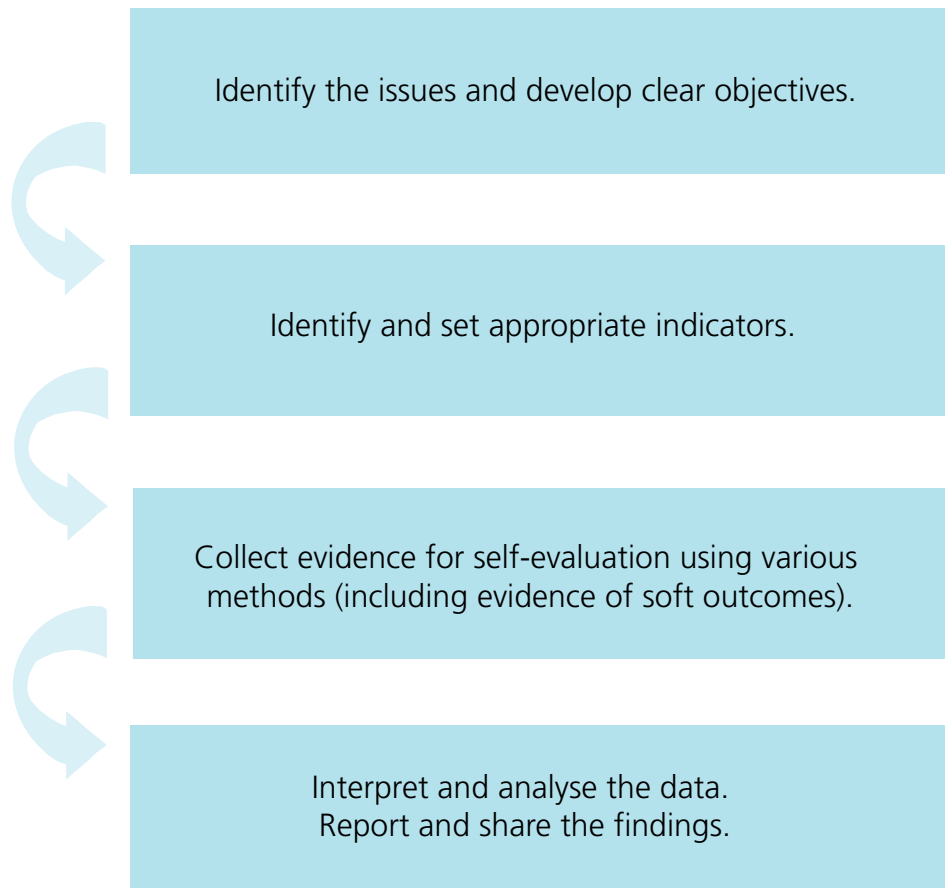
However you choose to record your findings, it is recommended that you do so in a way that they can be used by colleagues, should they require an overview of RAISE, and that the document enables you to easily draw out key points to be summarised in the yearly self-evaluation report.

2.5 Handbook Summary

This handbook has run through the steps you should take when evaluating the RAISE project(s) in your school. In the four steps it is recommended that you:

Tip 10 -

Remember that self-evaluation is part of a planning cycle. Your evaluation findings are likely to highlight remaining problems or unmet needs, and may suggest fruitful avenues for further work. Use the evaluation report as the starting-point for ongoing project planning and development.



However, the whole evaluation process will have little value if you do not act on the information that comes out of the analysis of data collected. Once you have your findings and conclusions, you need to learn from the overall process. Learning lessons for the future is the main purpose of undertaking any evaluation work, and by learning what works and what does not, you make effective decisions about how to improve the RAISE project.