



# Validated self-evaluation

**Argyll and Bute Educational Psychology  
Services**

January 2016

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## 1. What is validated self-evaluation in Educational Psychology Services?

Validated self-evaluation (VSE) is an evaluative activity which supports and challenges the work of Educational Psychology Services (EPS) by working collaboratively. It involves a partnership between the education authority, EPS and HM Inspectors, Education Scotland. In EPS the VSE focuses on two key themes.

- x Learning and Teaching.
- x Partnership Working.

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contributions made by EPS to raising attainment, addressing disadvantage and supporting and implementing, Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). Both themes also allow EPS to evidence the impact and outcomes of early intervention and prevention across the full range of their service delivery.

In addition to the core themes, services can choose an additional one to reflect their own context. An additional area may relate to the core themes or reflect other quality

work at different stages in the self-evaluation cycle. Their work on the Reading Initiative had undergone rigorous self-evaluation which had engaged a wide range of stakeholders and partners. The partnership theme was at an earlier stage of development and focused on the PATHS evidence based approach and the impact of multi-agency working linked to GIRFEC.

The high quality participation and engagement of the EPS and their ability to articulate their learning was a strength of this VSE process. The theme leads created a supportive ethos for partners who were empowered to open up and explore areas for improvement with confidence. The service benefited from the challenge provided by partners and the Education Scotland team and responded positively by reflecting deeply on their practice and the implications for future engagement. Theme leads and educational psychologists asked insightful questions, listened and responded respectfully to each other. They were flexible and resilient, coping well with challenges from stakeholders during the VSE, for example, by changing evaluation activities to take account of the cumulative evidence being gathered during the week. The VSE found that the EPS had a positive impact on the authority's strategic initiatives. The EPS reported positively about her role. It was agreed that the education authority and A&BCEPS now need to build on these developments and focus on those key areas where the EPS could have maximum impact strategically and operationally. This may require them to withdraw from some initiatives and hand over to partners once fully embedded. The A&BCEPS recognised that more opportunity for sampling a wider range of stakeholder views would have strengthened and enhanced their self-evaluation further. In particular, it would have been helpful to include harder to reach parents, people, speech and language therapists and stakeholders from across different geographical areas from within the authority. It was acknowledged that the scope of the VSE was already ambitious and lack of time during the week hindered more extensive stakeholder engagement. The Reading Initiative is a systemic piece of work with robust self-evaluation evidence. It was underpinned by strong research principles and evidence-based practice. Partners valued highly the research skills and knowledge that the EPS brought to the roll out of the Reading Initiative. In addition, they valued the support from the EPS in building school staff capacity



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**15 January 2016**

Further information about the EPS VSE reports and self-evaluation can be found on the  
V H U Y L F H ¶ at [www.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-  
psychology](http://www.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology)

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