



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Short Inspection
Primary
Information for the Teacher

SHORT INSPECTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

During the inspection, the inspection team will evaluate the following key areas of provision:

1. Ethos
2. Learning and Teaching
3. Leadership and Management

Evaluations will be based on direct observation on all aspects of the life and work of the school. A key consideration will be the extent and effectiveness of the processes used by the school to monitor and evaluate its provision. This will include, where appropriate, an evaluation of the school's own process of self-evaluation.

The purposes of the inspection:

- to assess and report on the wide range of provision which makes up the education and training provision within Northern Ireland;
- to inform DE of the quality of provision and as a result help to shape policy and development;
- to seek to promote the highest possible standards of learning and teaching throughout the education system in Northern Ireland;
- and, to assist the school in its work by identifying strengths and any areas for improvement, which will enhance the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching and contribute to the raising of the children's attainments.

Moreover, in this particular case, to provide information about the quality of education being offered to the children who attend this school.

What happens during the inspection?

We will look at 3 main aspects of the life and work of the school:

1. **ETHOS** - we evaluate:
 - the quality of the learning environment;
 - the quality of relationships and behaviour throughout the school;
 - the level of interest and motivation of the children.

2. **LEARNING AND TEACHING** - we:
 - look at individual teachers' planning;
 - look at whole-school planning and guidance as appropriate;
 - observe the children as they work at class activities;
 - talk with the children about their work;

- ❑ consider how the work addresses the needs and abilities of the children;
- ❑ look at samples of the children's previous and current work;
- ❑ make judgements about the quality and effectiveness of the learning and teaching;
- ❑ evaluate the standards being achieved;
- ❑ look at assessment data and Key Stage (KS) outcomes, including the marking of the children's work.

3. **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT** - we:

- ❑ assess the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management;
- ❑ talk with teachers about the organisation of teaching and learning;
- ❑ evaluate the school's monitoring and evaluation processes;
- ❑ look at the accommodation and resources;
- ❑ consider Health and Safety matters where appropriate.

GENERAL PRACTICALITIES

1. **PLANNING:** It will help us tremendously if any short-term planning notes used are available for us in the classrooms.
2. **CHILDREN WORKING:** We will observe children at work and may work with some groups in class. We will look at children's books and other relevant work across the curriculum. In addition, if there is some work from last year that you feel we should see, tell us about it and leave samples for us.
3. **CLASS VISITS:** Each teacher will be visited by a member of the inspection team over the two days. Our aim is to obtain a comprehensive overview of the work of the school. To facilitate flexibility in making the most effective use of our classroom visits, it will not be possible for us to provide timetables of our visits.
4. **TIMETABLE CHANGES:** We use your timetables to ensure that our classroom visits provide a good coverage of the areas under focus. We may suggest that you might consider moving a lesson, on a particular day, but in the meantime, and unless we ask you, please hold to the timetables which have been given to us. A timetable change will only happen with the full agreement of the teacher. If you wish to make any changes, please inform us through the Principal. Feel free to point us in the direction of any specific lesson that is particularly relevant to the areas under inspection.
5. **DOCUMENTATION:** We will look at the documentation currently in use and relevant to the inspection. The School Development Plan, school policies, schemes of work and any other relevant documentation should be made available to us.
6. **CO-ORDINATORS:** Time will be arranged to talk to the relevant co-ordinators about their duties and responsibilities. Issues such as staff development, resourcing, INSET, etc may be discussed. We are interested in the school's current working documents and curriculum development. We will indicate, to the Principal, the co-ordinators with whom we may wish to speak.

7. **INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN’S PROGRESS:** Standardised scores, benchmarking information, trends in end of key stage results, assessment folders and any other significant assessment data will contribute to our information base.
8. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:** Please provide details about current special needs arrangements, ie the educational plans which have been prepared, the tests used and the scores, evidence of performance and improvement, type of support offered and particular times of support.
9. **PASTORAL CARE ARRANGEMENTS:** All inspections look at the school’s arrangements for Child Protection and Pastoral Care particularly in relation to (DE) Circulars 1999/10 and 2003/13. The Department will collate the returns from the parental questionnaires. We will be available for a short time on the first day of the inspection to meet with any member of, for example, the Board of Governors, the staff or the parents. The findings of the Parent Questionnaires will be shared with the Principal and with the Chairperson of Governors. At some time during the first or second day, we will talk with a group of Year 6 children.
10. **FEEDBACK:** Given the reduced time in school and in teachers’ classrooms, there will be no formal individual feedback sessions for teachers. We will however, meet with the Principal at the end of the inspection to provide comment on the overall quality of learning and teaching in the school.
11. **RETURN OF MATERIALS:** Any materials, books or documents, which we borrow from the classroom, will be returned as soon as possible.
12. Finally, please make us aware of any special events which may be taking place during the inspection, which you feel, may affect your work or timetables. Also, please make us aware of any particular issue or event, which you feel, is affecting the school or any the staff at the time of the inspection.

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

ORAL REPORT BACK: At the end of the of the second day of the inspection, the Reporting Inspector, accompanied by a colleague, will provide an oral report back to, firstly to the Principal and to particular members of staff, and then to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and a representative of the Employing Authority. The Principal will also attend the second meeting. As only a brief statement of findings will be issued to the school, we would encourage those present at the report-back meetings to make a note of the general findings. On some occasions the report-back will be to the whole staff.

THE REPORT: The report will issue to the school. Copies will be forwarded to parents and will be accessible on the DE website.

FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES: Where the inspection identifies areas for improvement, the school is required to submit a written response to ETI. The response is to be made within four months of the inspection and should provide details of the school’s action-plan to address the issues identified in the inspection findings.

In order to assess the progress and the effectiveness of the implementation of the action plan, a Follow-Up Inspection (FUI) is normally carried out between 18 and 24 months after the initial inspection. Before a FUI, the school provides details of how it has begun to address the issues identified during the inspection. The District Inspector generally conducts a FUI at a time convenient to the school. The findings are reported orally to the Principal and the Chairperson of the Governors or a representative of the Employing Authority eg ELB or CCMS etc and a formal letter from the Chief Inspector will be issued to the school.

AND, FINALLY, SOME GENERAL ADVICE

- ❑ It is easier said than done, but try to remain calm during the inspection, especially on those occasions when an inspector will be in your room.
- ❑ Do not have the children 'hyped-up' - they normally like visitors. Inspectors are visitors too!
- ❑ Do not attempt radically new approaches solely for the inspection.
- ❑ We will be as unobtrusive as possible, we will make notes, observe, listen, talk to individuals or a group and join in, if appropriate. Our aim is to provide a comprehensive and accurate report on the work of the school.
- ❑ Everyone involved in the life of the school and the education of the children in it shares the same objective, and that is - to achieve the highest possible standards of care and education for the pupils.
- ❑ We are looking forward to spending time in the school and trust that the experience will be valuable for all concerned.

Some DE/ETI publications, which may be useful, include:

- Child Protection Circulars 1999/10 and 2003/13;
- Copies of recent Inspection Reports;
- Evaluating English;
- Evaluating Mathematics;
- Evaluating Schools;
- Primary Education (DVD);
- School Improvement Pack (SIP);
- The Inspection Process;
- The Reflective Practitioner; and,
- Together Towards Improvement.