

Analysis of the consultation on Monitoring Inspections

January 2017

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



CONSULTATION 2016: MONITORING INSPECTIONS

Introduction

From 24 October to 2 December 2016 the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) conducted a consultation and pilot of Monitoring Inspections. The aim of the Monitoring Inspection is to evaluate the extent to which the leadership and management of the organisation uses self-evaluation effectively to inform the school development planning process and to bring about improvement. The inspection will also formulate an evaluation of the standards achieved by the learners as a result of the impact of the actions taken and the provision for learning and teaching. Together these evaluations will help ETI prioritise the organisation for further inspection activity as part of its ongoing development of a risk-based approach to inspection.

The purpose of this publication is to provide you with information on the outcomes of the consultation.

The consultation method

There were 166 responses to the consultation with 128 of the responses from the primary school sector, 28 from the post-primary schools sector and a small number from pre-school, nursery units, special, EOTAS, further education and other industry organisations.

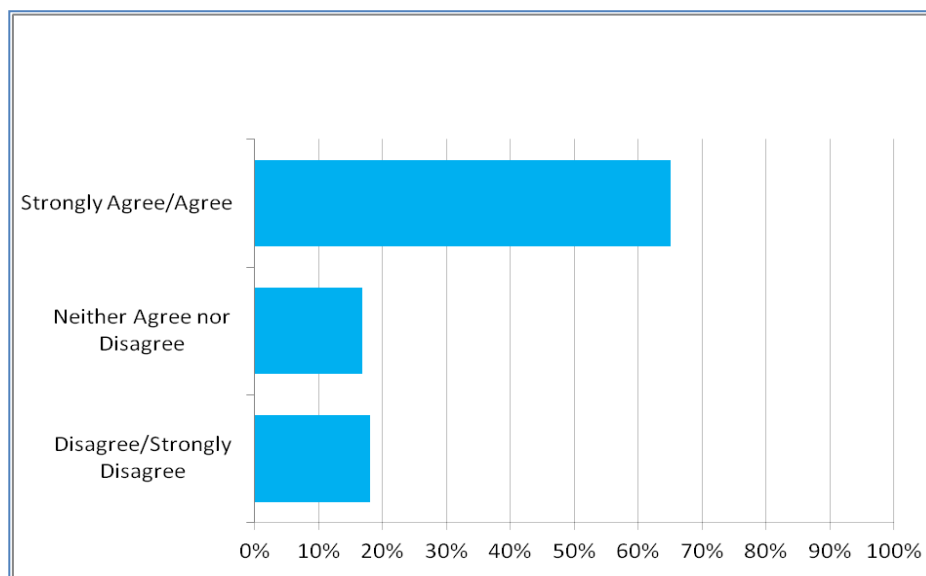
Of the respondents, 138 stated they were a principal/vice-principal/senior leader/manager, 16 stated they were a teacher/lecturer/tutor, and 5 stated they were a governor. Responses were also received from teacher/lecturer unions and professional associations and from managing/employing authorities.

Four primary schools and three post-primary schools took part in the pilot inspections in December 2016.

Consultation outcomes

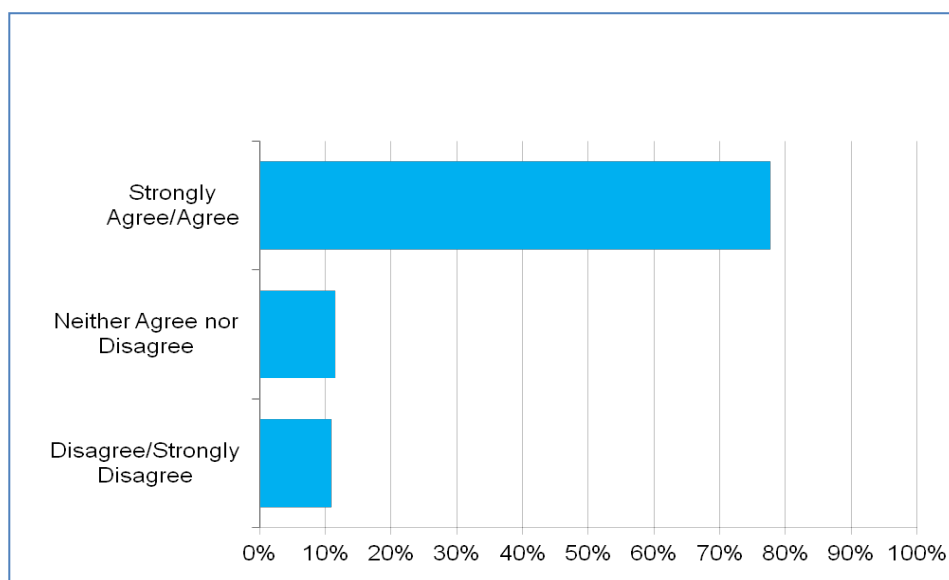
This section provides an overview of the responses to the consultation.

1. The Monitoring Inspection will enable an even more proportionate approach to inspections by ETI?



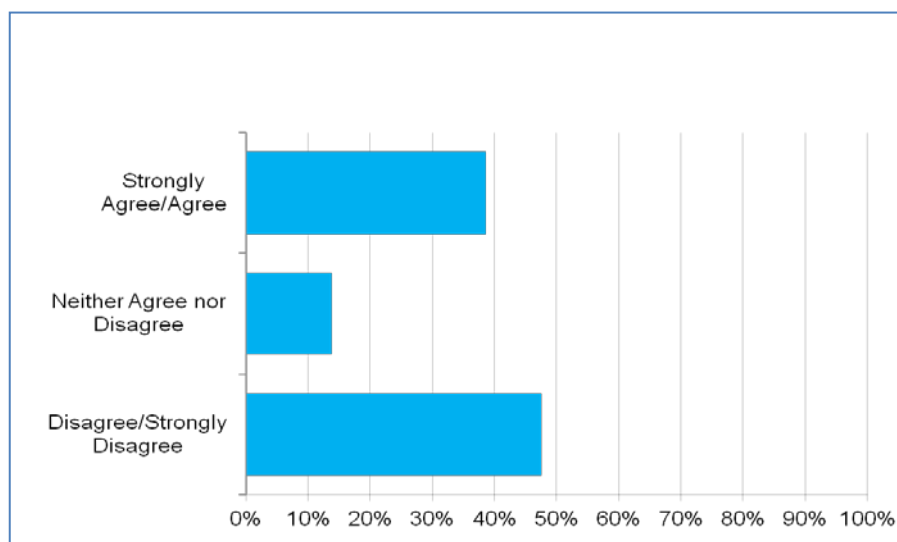
In written comments, support was expressed for shorter and more frequent inspections with a reduced notice and a focus on improvement.

2. The foci of the Monitoring Inspection are appropriate.



The use of the School Development Plan as the core document for a Monitoring Inspection was seen as appropriate.

3. ETI stress that schools/organisations should not spend time preparing for inspection. The focus at all times should be on monitoring and improving standards for learners. Therefore 48 hours notice is adequate for a Monitoring Inspection.

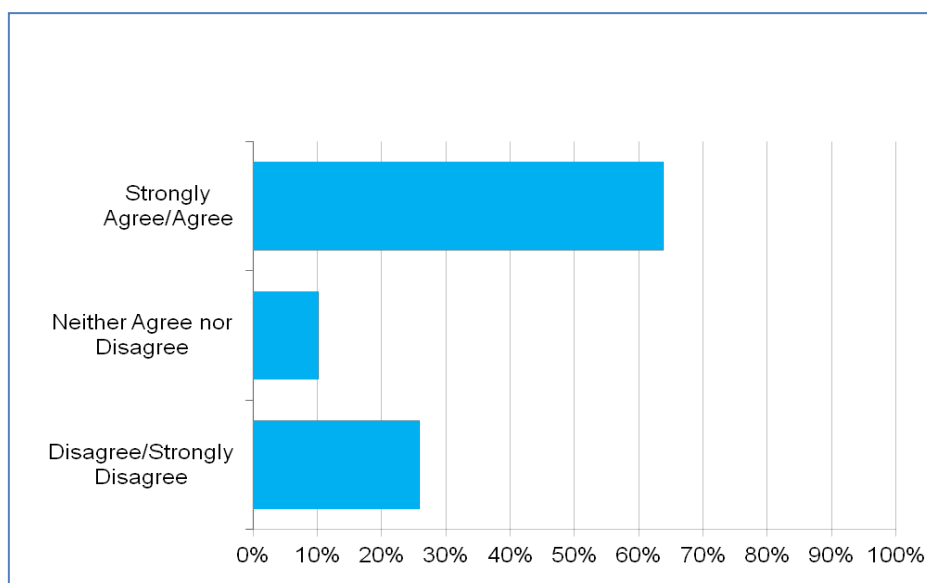


Positive comments from respondents included agreement that inspections should be short notice and schools should have all of the required information to hand provided that it is clear what documentation is required for Monitoring Inspections. Comments also included that some schools put an inordinate amount of preparation into inspections, which can be detrimental to the health and well-being of staff and that schools should not spend time preparing for inspection. For that reason short notice was preferred.

The main concerns centered on time for schools to prepare documentation for inspection. Respondents stated that inspectors will be in the school for a short period of time and will want to see particular documentation and evidence and that 48 hours notice will create pressure to collate such materials.

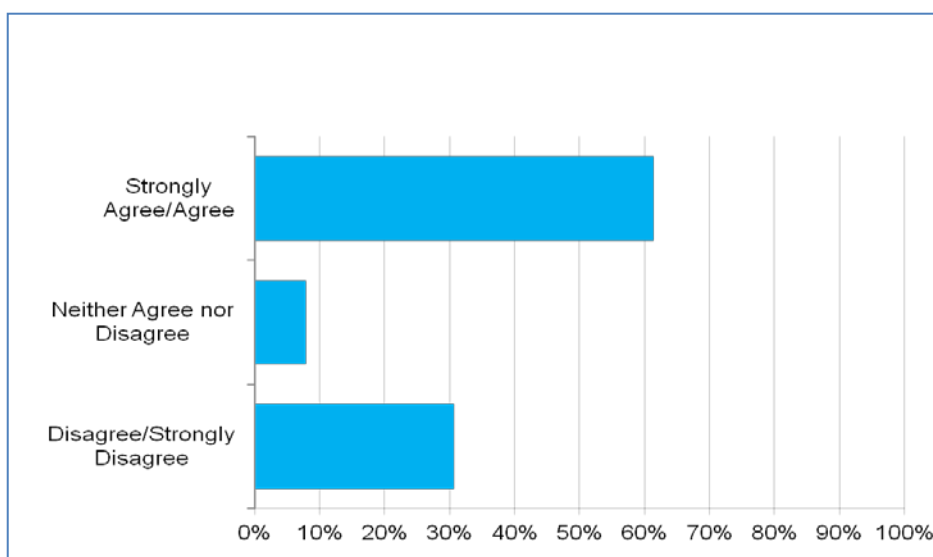
This result of the consultation in relation to this question is not unexpected; other feedback on shortened notice, such as inspection notification reducing from four weeks to two, has also shown around 50/50 for and against.

- 4. Monitoring Inspections should be carried out over a period of up to two days (normally by the District Inspector).**



Respondents stated a one day evidence base should suffice if the focus is sharp enough and that the District Inspector undertaking the Monitoring Inspection would build up the District Inspector's knowledge of the district. Other respondents stated a preference for an additional inspector.

- 5. The Monitoring Inspection should have a short published report indicating the outcome of the inspection to inform parents and stakeholders.**

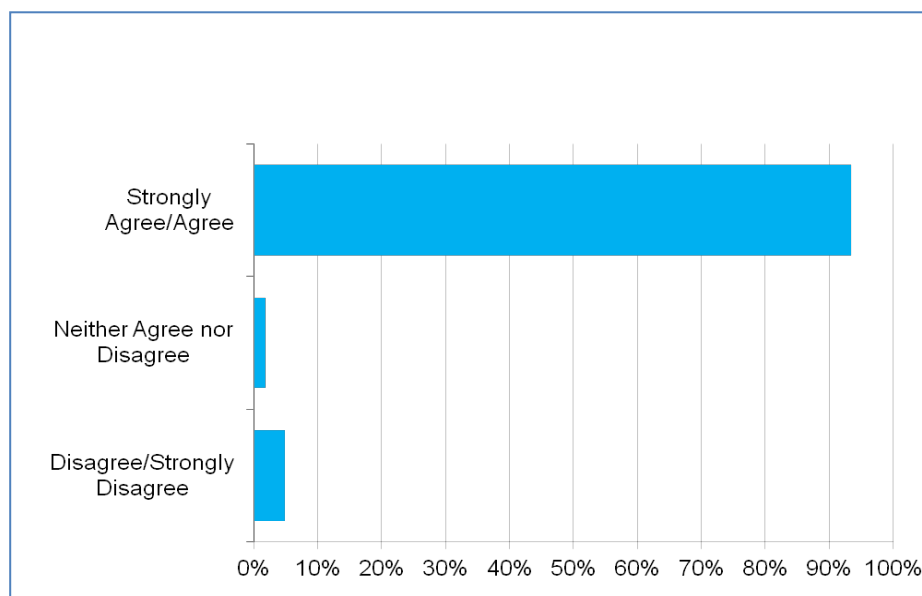


Some respondents commented that it is very difficult for parents to know how their child's school is operating and as parents and stakeholders have a key role to play in any consultative process, for example, with the School Development Plan and action planning, it is only fair that a report on behalf of ETI is shared with them.

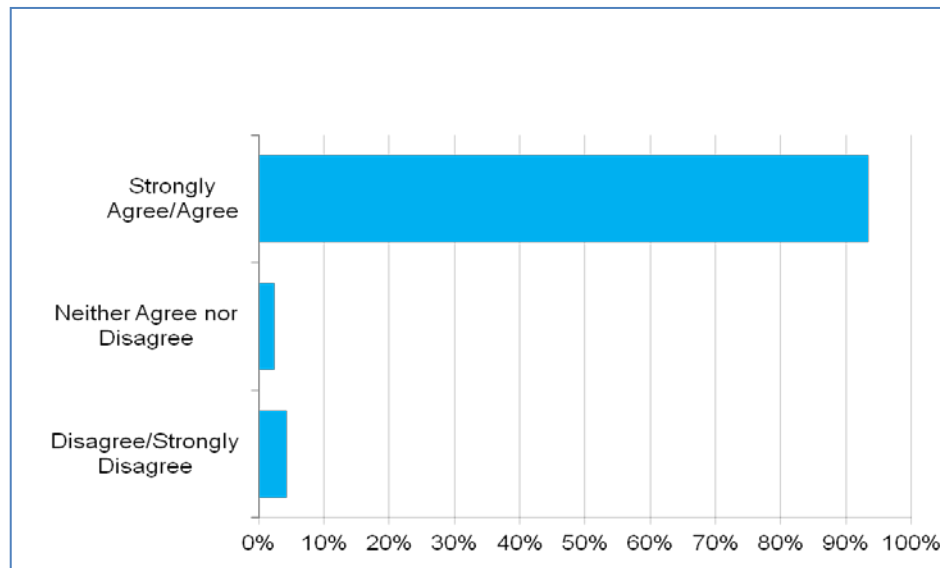
Other respondents commented that publication of an inspection report was not necessary and others would prefer a longer report.

6. It is appropriate that the lines of enquiry on the Monitoring Inspection should be around:

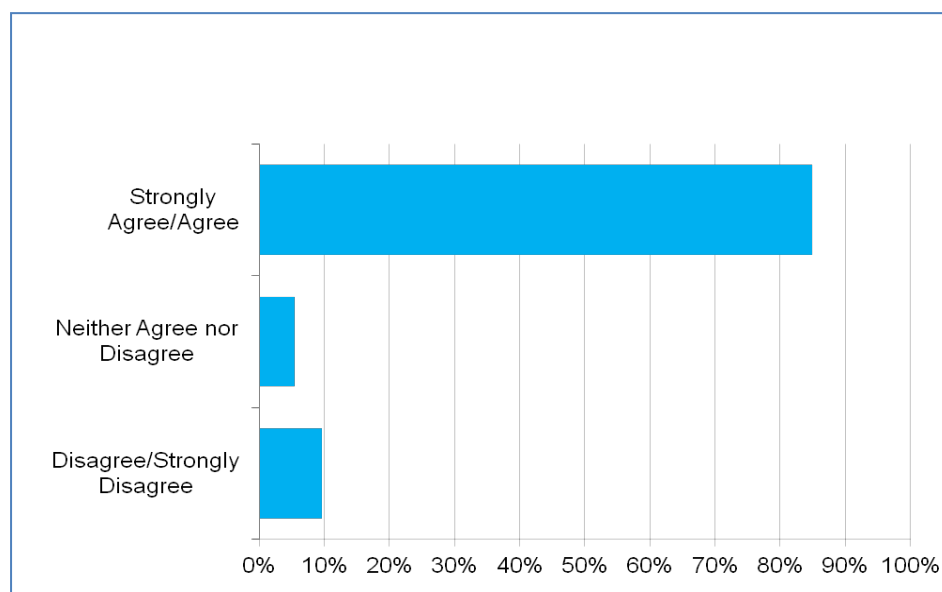
a) The quality of learning and teaching



b) Action to promote improvement

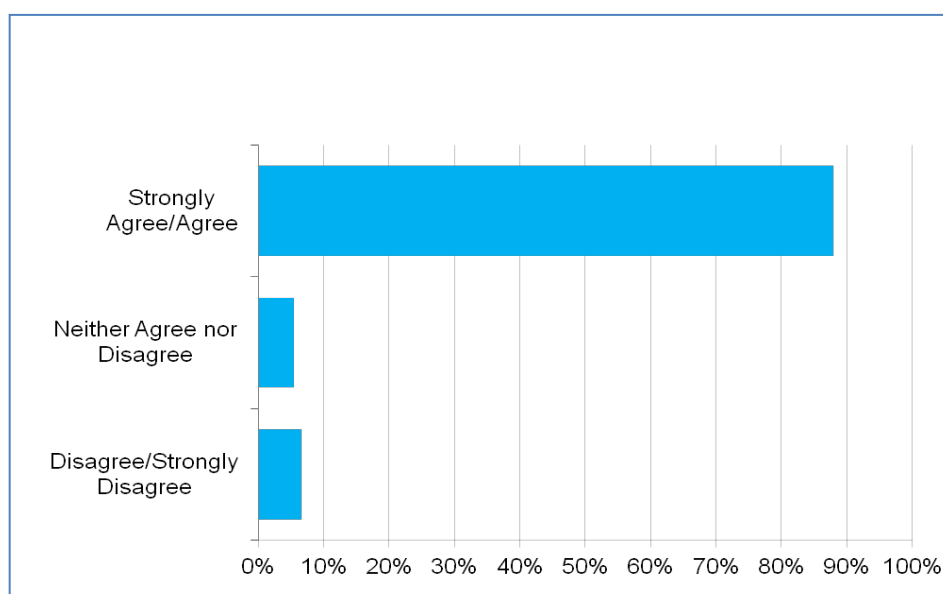


c) Standards, progress and achievement



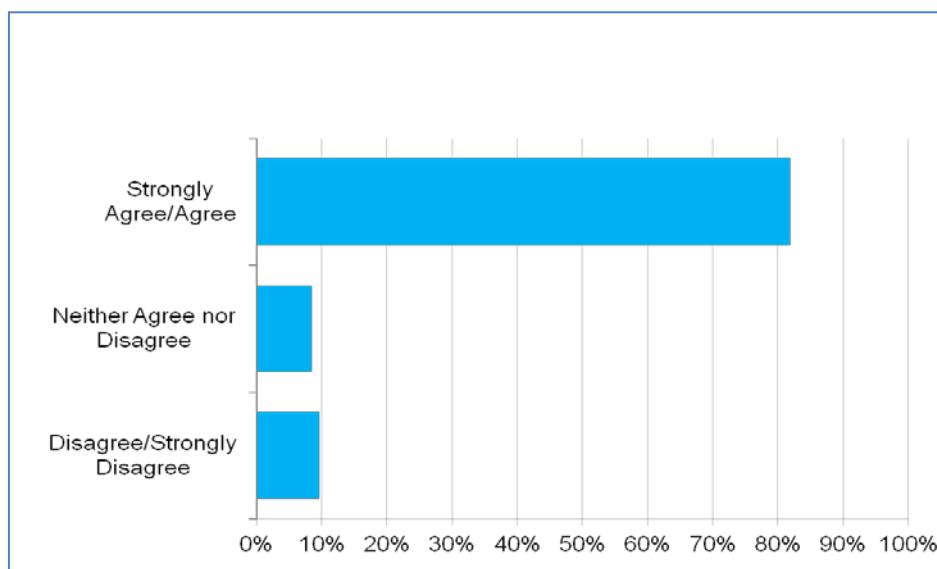
There was broad agreement from respondents regarding these statements. However, ETI will keep reinforcing the point that this is a risk assessment and not the full inspection of the school.

7. The outcome of the Monitoring Inspection should inform the next inspection activity.

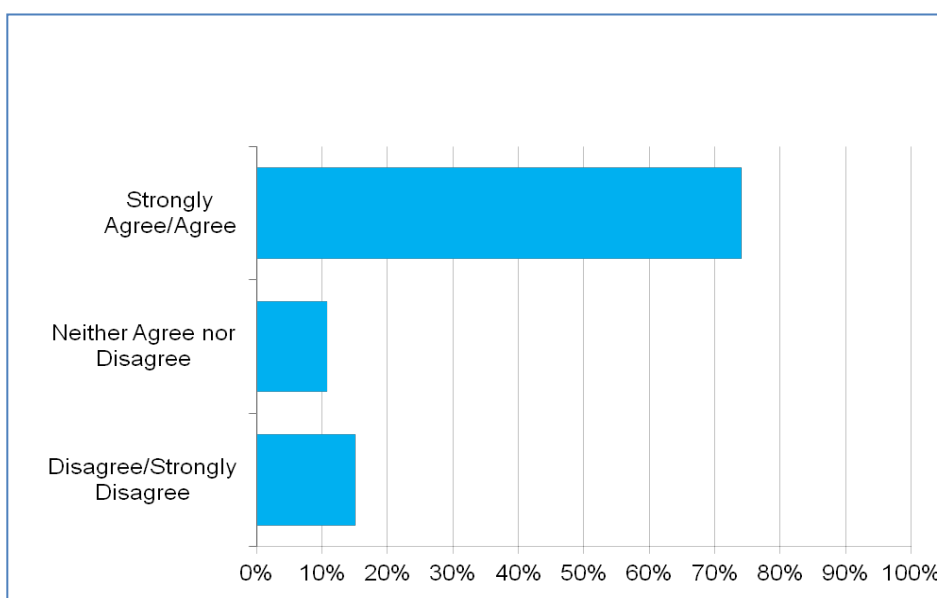


8. The conclusions associated with the Monitoring Inspection are appropriate:

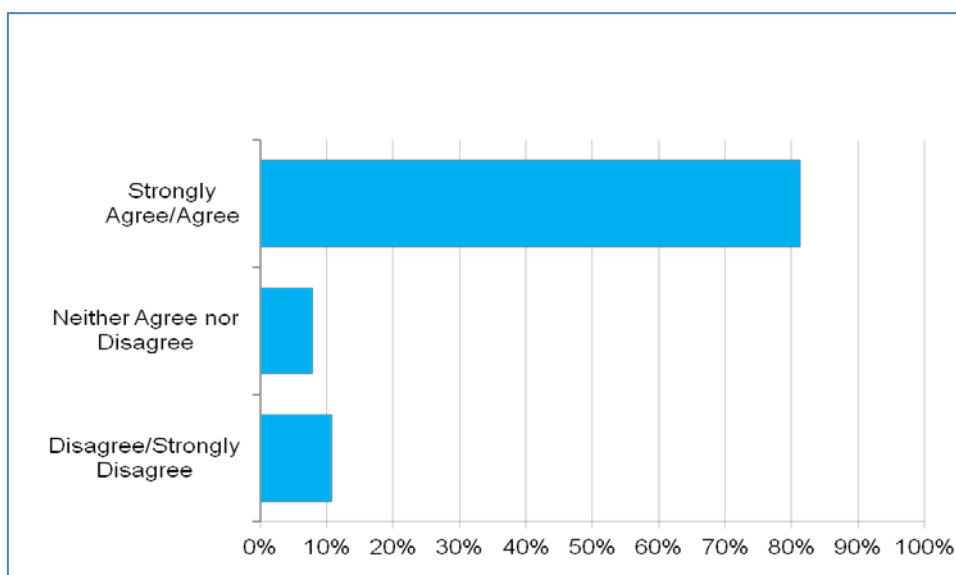
a) The school/organisation is identifying and bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of education.



b) The school/organisation has not been able to demonstrate sufficiently that it is bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of education.



c) The inspection has identified important areas for improvement particularly in... (including safeguarding if required).



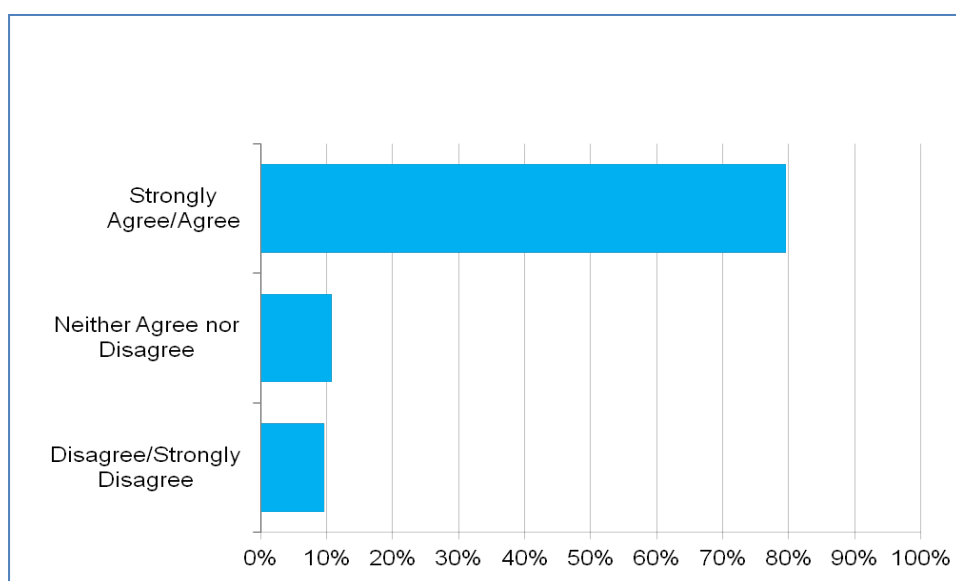
Based on the feedback during the consultation, the number of conclusions has been reduced to two. These are:

At the time of the inspection and for the line(s) of inquiry selected the school is identifying and bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of education. This will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

OR

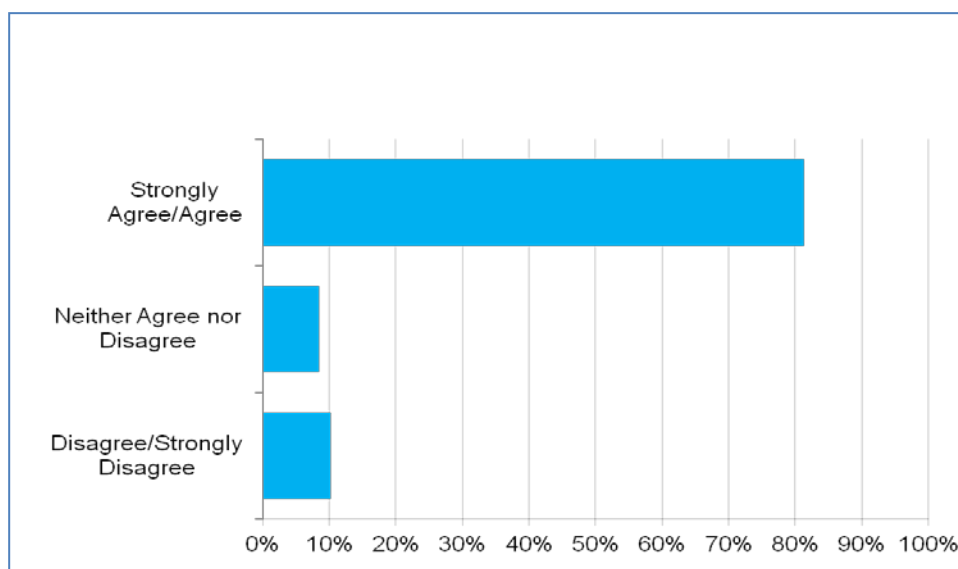
At the time of the inspection and for the line(s) of inquiry selected (an) area(s) for improvement (has) have been identified. This/These include(s) the need to: This will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

9. The organisation's completion of the safeguarding proforma is a suitable basis for the scrutiny of safeguarding during the inspection.



Some respondents commented that any safeguarding issues raised during a Monitoring Inspection should form the basis of a follow-up inspection that specifically looks at these arrangements within schools. The follow-up should be compulsory but it should depend on the severity of the schools failure to adhere to procedures.

- 10. Safeguarding issues that emerge during the course of the inspection may change the focus to that of safeguarding. In turn, this may trigger a six week follow-up visit for ETI to monitor and report on the school's progress towards addressing the safeguarding issues.**



Conclusion

Key stakeholders generally agree that inspections by ETI should be more proportionate to risk with more frequent, shorter inspection activities where that is appropriate.

The Monitoring Inspection will enable ETI to target its resources strategically where they are most needed and proportionate to the size of the organisation and risk. Greater autonomy will be given to the best organisations.

Therefore, having considered the responses to the consultation and the pilot inspections, the new Monitoring Inspection will be introduced from January 2017. Detailed guidance is available on ETI's website: <http://tinyurl.com/MIn-Guidance>.

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