

Development of Inspection Visits to Schools and Organisations

March 2023 update



Introduction

As part of its Empowering Improvement: Stepping Forward Together programme, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has undertaken wide-scale consultation and engagement with schools, other education and training providers, and a wide range of stakeholders, about the development of an inspection strategy.

Schools and organisations were invited to express an interest in becoming involved in this consultation which included an online consultation piece and over 30 focus group meetings. In turn, over 250 schools/organisations self-nominated for a visit from inspectors to try out some new inspection materials and processes, and to feed back on how inspections of the future might look.

Visits to schools/organisations

Between October and December 2022, ETI visited 101 of the self-nominating schools and organisations to trial, share and hear suggestions about new approaches to inspection.

Based upon ETI's "Stepping Up and Stepping Forward" publication, along with the consultation feedback from school/organisation leaders and other stakeholders, we have compiled five high-level questions and nine contributory areas for inspections in the future (see below).

The development of inspection visits focused on the five high-level questions and the contributory areas. The visits continue this term (January to April 2023.)

Phase	Number of Visits
Early Years	24
Primary	41
Post-primary	26
Special	5
EOTAS	5
TOTAL	101



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



We sincerely thank the schools/organisations who participated in these visits and used the opportunity to provide us with feedback regarding new approaches to inspection.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to visit all of the schools/organisations that self-nominated. Having assessed the feedback, the following key learning points have been noted and are informing the ongoing development of inspection work.

Key Development of Inspection Learning Points

- The context of the individual school/organisation should be firmly embedded in the inspection process.
- The 5 high-level questions will be central to the inspection (and report), with the school/organisation drawing evidence from the contributory areas.
- It is important that the school/organisation has the opportunity/time to set out its context, vision, priorities, successes and barriers/challenges as part of the inspection process.
- The indicators of effective and less effective practice across the contributory areas were very well-received by the participating schools/organisations.
- Language – a small number of terms used around the contributory areas need to be reviewed (but most schools/organisations did not raise the need for phase-specific versions).
- It is important that the contributory areas remain flexible and regularly updated (content and number).
- The system would benefit from a communication strategy with school/organisation leaders and teachers around the inspection process, underpinned by clear guidance and exemplification.
- There is strong potential for the contributory areas and associated indicators to be a creative, effective tool for self-evaluation and school/organisation improvement.
- ETI are now ready to progress to co-designed prototype inspections with self-nominating schools/organisations.

High-Level Questions - DRAFT

High-Level Questions



QUESTION 1

What is the school's/organisation's vision?



QUESTION 2

What are the ways the school/organisation is setting about achieving the vision, within its own context?



QUESTION 3

How is progress of the school/organisation monitored and reviewed, and how responsive is it to overcoming the main risk factors/barriers it faces?



QUESTION 4

How does the school/organisation identify, celebrate and embed success?



QUESTION 5

How is the school/organisation creating the right conditions for the growth and development of a community of learning?

Contributory Areas - DRAFT

