



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Arrangements for inspections in non-maintained nursery settings

September 2010



The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities;
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community learning;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies; and
- ▲ offender learning.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Introduction

This guidance explains the arrangements for inspections in non-maintained nursery settings. The guidance sets out expectations of providers, explains the notification and requirements for inspection and the role of self-evaluation, and provides information about inspection that settings need to be aware of before, during and after inspections.

Expectations of providers

To make inspection constructive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and settings establish and maintain a professional working environment based on mutual courtesy, respect and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold Estyn's Code of Conduct (see the Inspection Guidance at www.estyn.gov.uk), but we also expect settings to:

- be courteous and professional;
- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors;
- enable inspectors to conduct their inspection in an open and honest way;
- enable inspectors to evaluate the setting objectively against the Common Inspection Framework;
- provide evidence that will enable inspectors to report honestly, fairly and reliably;
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector or the inspection team;
- recognise that inspectors need to observe practice and talk to staff, children and other stakeholders without being accompanied by a manager or senior leader;
- work with inspectors to minimise disruption and stress throughout the inspection; and
- have arrangements to ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises.

Notification of inspection

You will receive about four working weeks' written notice of inspection. Shortly after this notification, the inspectorate will contact you by telephone to set up the arrangements. The contact will usually be made by one of Estyn's inspection co-ordinators or reporting inspector.

You should expect to:

- receive information about the inspection and be ready to discuss an outline programme for the inspection;
- receive instructions about how to use the Virtual Inspection Room, in particular how to upload documents, and where to access guidance and training videos about the Virtual Inspection Room;
- discuss the information required before the inspection and agree the arrangements for sending it in electronic form if possible;
- provide information about any issues or risks the inspector should be aware of and provide a general health and safety briefing for the inspector at the start of the inspection;
- agree arrangements for listening to children;
- agree arrangements for completing parent/carer questionnaires;
- agree arrangements for talking to parents;
- arrange the availability of supporting evidence, including evidence of children's learning;
- ensure that there are agreed procedures for addressing any concerns or complaints that might arise during the course of the inspection;
- arrange for a member of the management committee or the proprietor and a local authority representative to meet the inspector during the inspection period;
- organise any domestic arrangements such as a base for the inspector and parking;
- set up the arrangements for feeding back the inspection findings to leaders, managers and a local authority representative;
- agree the arrangements for completing post-inspection questionnaires; and
- agree when you will receive confirmation of the arrangements in writing.

The inspectorate will ask you to upload the following information to the appropriate Virtual Inspection Room at www.vir.estyn.gov.uk ten working days before the inspection:

- key background information on the setting, for example the background and circumstances of the children and any significant changes since the last inspection (leader's information form);
- a copy of the setting's most recent self-evaluation update report and improvement plan; and
- details of the setting's plan of activities for the period of the inspection, including a list of members of staff and their main responsibilities.

The role of self-evaluation

The starting point for inspections is the setting's evaluation of its own performance, supported by relevant information. The reporting inspector will use the self-evaluation report and other information to identify hypotheses and lines of inquiry. The report will help the inspector in choosing evidence to sample in order to verify the accuracy of the setting's judgements.

Estyn has published a template for self-evaluation. This template follows the format of the Common Inspection Framework. The template is available at www.estyn.gov.uk.

A good self-evaluation report should:

- be evaluative and concise;
- make clear judgements on each quality indicator in the Common Inspection Framework;
- cross-reference to sources of supporting evidence, using hyperlinks where appropriate;
- provide information and comment on children's progress since entering the setting;
- comment on any improvements in children's standards as a result of self-evaluation;
- identify areas for improvement as well as strengths;
- refer to sector-leading practice where appropriate; and
- link clearly to an improvement plan and targets.

Self-evaluation reports should be succinct and normally be no more than a few pages long. Settings should make evaluative comments and ensure that their judgements match the evidence they make available to the reporting inspector. There is no need to create hyperlinks to any supporting evidence in the self-evaluation report. The self-evaluation report should include references to supporting evidence that the reporting inspector can then consider in the setting during the inspection.

The following table is an example of an extract from a typical self-evaluation report.

Key Question 3 - How good are leadership and management?		
Evaluation		Evidence
3.1.1 Strategic direction and the impact of leadership	The outcomes from auditing learning, teaching and provision are used well to inform our setting improvement plan (SIP). The SIP also includes any relevant local and national initiatives. For instance, we are very involved with the local authority's healthy eating initiative and have included this in our SIP for the last two years. All staff and the management committee agree the SIP and it is discussed with the local authority advisory teacher. Responsibilities are clearly identified on the SIP and progress is evaluated regularly, systematically and thoroughly, during the year.	SIPs – current and previous Management Committee meeting minutes Staff meeting Minutes Self-evaluation file

If settings choose not to use the template provided by Estyn, they should make certain that the self-evaluation report focuses on standards, the quality of provision and the quality of leadership. The report should take account of the features of a good self-evaluation report identified above.

Where the setting does not complete a self-evaluation report, the reporting inspector will ask for copies of recent improvement plans and evaluations and will contact the setting to discuss what it considers are its strengths and areas for development in order to formulate lines of inquiry.

Before inspection

You should inform other partners and stakeholders about the inspection. The reporting inspector will provide information about the procedures for gaining the views of children and stakeholders.

You should familiarise yourself with the Virtual Inspection Room (VIR) for the inspection. There are guides and training videos available to help you to use the VIR and Estyn's inspection co-ordinator, or the reporting inspector where it is a contracted out inspection, can provide further help, if required.

You will need to inform parents/carers about the dates of the inspection and arrange for a few parents/carers to meet the reporting inspector. You will also receive information about how parents can complete and return online or hard copies of the questionnaire, if required. The inspectorate will collate and analyse the results of the questionnaires.

You should be aware of the main sources of evidence that the reporting inspector will use during inspection. Details of these are included in Annex 2 of the guidance for the inspection of non-maintained settings.

You should arrange to provide samples of children's learning when inspectors are in the setting. These samples should demonstrate the early development of children's communication, numeracy and information and technology (ICT) skills across the areas of learning. Inspectors will particularly focus on the development of early literacy skills, such as mark-making. If the inspection is to take place early in the academic year, you will need to make certain that inspectors can scrutinise samples of children's learning from the previous year.

You should be ready for inspectors to request evidence that you have referred to in your self-evaluation report. It will be helpful if you have this evidence readily available for scrutiny.

A checklist of things to do before the inspection

- 1 Inform staff about the inspection process so that they understand what will happen.
- 2 Ensure availability of the evidence base that is referred to in the self-evaluation report.
- 3 Inform parents/carers about the arrangements for the meeting with the reporting inspector.
- 4 Send out the parent/carer questionnaires.
- 5 Inform other partners and stakeholders about the date of the inspection so that they can provide their views for inspectors.

- 6 Arrange for the chair of the management committee or the proprietor to meet inspectors during the inspection week.
- 7 After discussion about requirements with the reporting inspector, arrange the samples of children's learning to be scrutinised from the current and, if appropriate, previous year.
- 8 Arrange for inspectors to receive lists of children based on various categories as requested, such as those with additional learning needs, disadvantaged pupils, Welsh speakers and more able and talented pupils.
- 9 Arrange for the reporting inspector to receive agreed planning information.
- 10 Have available the results of any on-entry assessments or initial screening tests of children.
- 11 Arrange for the inspector to receive a health and safety briefing at the start of the pre-inspection team meeting on the first day of inspection or by telephone before the inspection if the teaching commitments of staff do not allow for a meeting at the beginning of the inspection.
- 12 Agree and organise domestic arrangements for inspectors.

During the inspection

Inspectors will hold a meeting with the setting leader as soon as is practicably possible at the start of the inspection. If it is impossible to do this then the reporting inspector will arrange a telephone interview a day or so before the inspection. It may be useful for the leader to give a brief outline of the work of the setting at the start of this meeting or during the telephone interview. At the meeting, or telephone interview, the setting should provide a health and safety briefing for the reporting inspector. The reporting inspector will discuss the school's self-evaluation report, the pre-inspection commentary (PIC) prepared by the reporting inspector and the lines of enquiry identified within it. During this first meeting or telephone interview, the reporting inspector will normally need to agree interviews with the chair of the management committee or the proprietor and possibly staff.

On the first morning of the inspection the reporting inspector will:

- meet briefly with the setting staff to introduce himself/herself;
- plan sessions to be observed during the inspection;
- meet informally with parents;
- begin the scrutiny of evidence; and
- observe sessions.

During the rest of the inspection, the reporting inspector will spend his/her time:

- observing sessions;
- listening to learners;
- talking to practitioners; and
- scrutinising other evidence.

You should facilitate the arrangements for inspectors to gather evidence to support judgements, as described above. The purpose of observing sessions is mainly to check or validate the setting's own overall judgements on standards and the quality of teaching. Inspection teams will normally spend up to 70% of their time observing children undertaking learning activities and observing teaching: Inspectors will aim to see enough sessions to come to an overall judgement on standards in sessions and the quality of teaching and provision. It is important for settings to appreciate that the new style of inspections will not always lead to a comprehensive view of teaching in a single session, as the observation may have a specific purpose in following a line of inquiry.

As far as practicable, staff can expect to have some brief professional dialogue with the inspector at the end of an observed session. It may be necessary, in some cases, to have a fuller discussion later. Settings should be aware that inspectors are not judging individual practitioners. At this stage, inspectors' observations might be interim judgements on one or more aspects of the Common Inspection Framework. Any judgements may be amended, on reflection, after scrutiny of children's learning or talking to children, or as the result of moderation. Inspectors will normally spend no less than 30 minutes observing a learning activity.

You should facilitate the arrangements agreed for inspectors' meetings with members of staff. The lines of inquiry will determine which members of staff the inspection team will need to interview.

You should have ready a range of evidence, such as the results of any on-entry assessments or initial screening tests, or samples of children's learning that have been requested by the reporting inspector.

You should facilitate the arrangements agreed for inspectors' discussion with children. You should be aware that these discussions provide an opportunity to explore children's knowledge and understanding of their learning, how well they feel they are being supported, and the extent to which the setting contributes to their wellbeing.

The team will also consider stakeholders' views on the setting and test out the validity of those views with staff and children during the inspection in order to inform judgements.

The reporting inspector will meet with the setting leader to clarify inspection issues and discuss emerging findings throughout the inspection.

Inspectors will provide oral feedback to leaders and managers at the end of the on-site part of the inspection. A representative from the local authority should be invited to attend the meeting. At this meeting, senior staff will have an opportunity to assimilate the judgements, discuss issues and clarify factual matters with inspectors. Settings should note that inspection judgements are not negotiable.

It is important that you raise any concerns about an inspection with the reporting inspector during the inspection. Every effort should be made by the inspector and the setting to resolve issues informally. In the event that disagreements remain, then the setting should write to the inspectorate's Feedback and Complaints Manager, or the contractor if their concerns relate to the contracted-out inspection of a school, asking for their complaint to be considered further. A leaflet explaining the inspectorate's feedback and complaints procedure is available from the inspectorate's website www.estyn.gov.uk.

After the inspection

Inspection reports will cover all key questions, quality indicators and aspects of the Common Inspection Framework although some aspects will have been investigated in more depth than others.

You will have an opportunity to communicate your response to the inspection through the Post-Inspection Questionnaire (PIQ) that will be available to you in the Virtual Inspection Room. You can submit part 1 of the PIQ after the inspection week and part 2 after the publication of the report. You complete and submit the PIQ electronically through the VIR. Estyn analyses carefully the outcomes of PIQs as part of its quality assurance processes.

The inspection co-ordinator, or reporting inspector if a contracted out inspection, will send the setting a late draft report to check the factual accuracy of the content. The setting has two working days in which to consider the draft report. The reporting inspector will take account of comments offered and correct factual errors. Staff should be aware that all the judgements that are reported during an inspection are provisional and confidential until the report is published.

The recommendations arising from the inspection should give the setting a clear and specific indication of the areas for improvement that it will need to address. You should amend the setting's improvement plan to take account of these recommendations.

Follow-up activity

During all inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the setting needs any follow-up activity.

There are four types of follow-up activity:

- 1 Excellent practice case study
- 2 Local authority monitoring
- 3 Estyn monitoring
- 4 Focused improvement

The first follow-up activity involves action by the setting to produce an 'excellent practice' case study for dissemination by Estyn. The subsequent three types of follow-up activity involve increasing levels of intervention in proportion to need. The second follow-up activity involves a report to Estyn from the relevant local authority. The last two follow-up activities involve visits from Estyn inspectors. The third category requires a visit from Estyn inspectors about a year after the publication of the setting's inspection report. The fourth category applies if settings are causing concern and require termly monitoring by Estyn.