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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Guidance for the Inspection of Local Authority Education Services in Wales from April 2006 to March 2010

February 2008



**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**



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 (LAs);
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ LAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of The Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this guidance

- 1 This guidance is aimed at Estyn inspectors and other members of Estyn local authority education service (LAES) inspection teams. It describes how to undertake an inspection of local authority education services in Wales.
- 2 Like the authorities we are inspecting, we have to deliver continuous improvement. Estyn is committed to refining, reviewing and improving the methodology to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Inspectors have a key role in this development. If something does not work, or something works better, please inform a member of the Youth and Local Authority Services team to feed it into the continuous improvement of the inspection methodology.
- 3 Estyn is introducing its revised inspection framework for undertaking local authority education service inspections under section 38 of the Education Act 1997 and section 51 of the Children Act 2004 from April 2006. As part of this new approach, Estyn will agree with each council a programme for the inspection of all or most of the local authority's education functions over a period of six years commencing in April 2006. It is for the local authority to decide on the overall shape of its inspection programme across the whole of the cycle and then to agree this programme with Estyn. HMCI retains the right, where circumstances justify it, to make changes to the inspection programme.

How to use the guidance

- 4 The inspection methodology consists of two elements. Firstly it explains how you should work when undertaking an inspection. Secondly, it identifies information that you should refer to when undertaking an inspection – 'what you need to know'.
- 5 After describing the principles underlying inspection, the sections roughly follow the progress of an inspection.

Terminology

- 6 It is important to understand the precise meaning of the terms most commonly used to refer to those who discharge the education functions of a local authority, and to use the appropriate terminology when writing inspection reports. Inspectors need to be aware that 'the Council' and 'the Authority' are synonymous. In fact, 'the Council' and 'the Authority' are also 'the Local Education Authority (LEA)'. However, the term 'LEA' is more exclusive than the other two, as it is used only when talking about the education functions of the Council or Authority. 'The LEA' is **not** the same thing as 'the education department'. The last-named term should be avoided as far as possible, as it excludes members and officers who are outside the department itself, but who nevertheless may have considerable influence on its work. The term 'local authority' is preferable in most cases as it captures the increasingly corporate approach to education and reflects the approach of the Children and Young Peoples' Plan which all authorities must have in place by September 2008.

The background and statutory basis for inspection

- 7 Inspections of local education authorities are carried out under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 which provides that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI) 'may, and, if requested to do so by the Secretary of State, shall, arrange for any local authority to be inspected'. Such an inspection 'shall consist of a review of the way in which the authority are performing any function...which relates to the provision of education for (a) persons of compulsory school age (whether at school or otherwise) or (b) for persons of any age above or below that age who are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority'. Other aspects of local authority provision are subject to inspection under a range of legislation, including the Learning and Skills Act 2000. The inspection of other aspects of local authority work will be amended to take account of the commencement of the Children Act 2004.
- 8 The Children Act 2004 (2004 Act) introduces a duty on local authorities and their partners to co-operate to improve the well-being of children.
- 9 As far as local education authorities are concerned Estyn is given the powers to review the LEA's functions relating to Section 51 of the Act, namely in co-operating to improve well-being and producing children and young people's plans where these functions relate to education, training or youth support services.
- 10 Section 51 of The Children Act 2004 (2004 Act) changes the Education Act 1997 so that... 'An inspection of a local education authority in Wales under this section shall consist of a review of the way in which the authority are performing:
 - (a) any function conferred on them in their capacity as a local education authority; and
 - (b) the functions conferred on them under sections 25 and 26 so far as relating to education, training or youth support services (within the meaning of section 123 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000).'
- 11 From its initiation in 2001, Estyn's approach to inspecting local authority services under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 has placed considerable emphasis on co-operation and collaboration with the providers of those services, the local education authorities.
- 12 Local education authority inspections will be conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training (HMI) in Wales. In response to the Children Act 2004 requiring inspectorates to work more closely together, HMI may be joined by inspectors from Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW) and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW). HMI may also be joined on inspections by additional inspectors (AI) authorised under paragraph 2 of Schedule 1 of the School Inspections Act 1996. HMCI may, under Section 41 of the Education Act 1997, as amended by the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, request the Wales Audit Office to assist with any inspection under Section 38. HMCI and the Wales Audit Office have agreed that:
 - the Wales Audit Office will contribute to those inspections of local authorities in which their expertise will add to the rigour and effectiveness of the inspection;

- the Wales Audit Office will contribute to the regular collection and analysis of local authority performance data; and
- as partners in the inspection of local authorities, the Wales Audit Office and Estyn may use local authority inspection reports to produce other reports, surveys and studies.

- 13 In April 2002 the Welsh Assembly Government introduced guidance to local authorities in Wales under the Local Government Act 1999. This guidance introduced the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI). Circular 28/2005 updates this guidance and sets out the role of the WPI as the framework for improving local public services in Wales. The WPI guidance supersedes the previous guidance on Best Value. It enables Estyn to build on and develop further the collaborative approach established under the previous system. The introduction of the WPI requires a different and more flexible approach from local authorities and from those who inspect, audit and regulate them. Under the WPI, regulation will become increasingly proportionate to risk as the results of the joint risk assessment are acted upon.
- 14 Estyn is a member of the Wales Improvement Board and its Inspection Sub-group, which includes representatives from all the inspectorates with responsibility for inspecting authorities in Wales. Estyn has agreed with the Wales Improvement Board that all inspections of local education authorities will comply with Wales Programme for Improvement requirements. Inspections conducted under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 and Children Act 2004 will conform with the inspection methodology of the Wales Programme for Improvement, as agreed by the Wales Improvement Board sub-group on inspection.

CONDUCTING INSPECTIONS

2 The principles of inspection

Principles of inspection

- 15 The primary functions of inspection are to act as a catalyst for improvement and provide assurance to Ministers and the public about the standard of local authority services.
- 16 The nature and range of improvements that result from local authorities' self-evaluations of their functions and services vary widely, reflecting the diversity of local political agendas, authorities and the communities that they serve. The best authorities will have clear aspirations for the way in which they wish their community and local services to improve, and will have demonstrated the leadership and capacity required to achieve these improvements. Local people will support authorities' plans for improvement and the way that services are provided. Where government has set clear standards or duties, they will be addressed in local strategies.
- 17 The principles of local authority inspection are to:
 - ensure that inspection is of high quality and responsive to the needs of all service users;
 - fully involve local authorities in the inspection process by inviting the local authority to nominate a member of staff (the nominee) to work with the inspection team;
 - relate inspection to the Wales Programme of Improvement, the local authority's self-evaluation and a regulatory plan which is both proportionate to risk and manageable;
 - wherever possible, incorporate an element of peer evaluation in the inspection process;
 - keep to a minimum any requirements for documentation and preparation, and seek to co-ordinate inspection activity with other regulators and inspectorates;
 - consult and agree on a suitable programme of inspection;
 - apply the principle of equality for both Welsh and English to all our inspection work, providing bilingual services whenever they are appropriate; and
 - use the framework fairly and consistently across all local authorities.

Inspection arrangements

- 18 In recent years, there have been a number of important developments in the work of local authorities and in the way inspections are conducted. Estyn introduced a common inspection framework (CIF) for most of the providers of education and training in Wales from September 2004. From April 2006, we have incorporated into the inspection of local authorities a number of important features of the inspection arrangements associated with the use of the CIF in other sectors. These features include:
 - strong focus on the local authority's own self-evaluation;
 - the inclusion of a nominee on each inspection team;

- peer evaluation;
 - differentiated inspections based on the risk posed by the local authority; and
 - the inclusion of a response from the local authority as part of the report.
- 19 We aim to make local authority inspections more flexible than they are at present. We take more account of local authorities' planning processes when scheduling inspections. By making inspections more flexible and responsive, we relate more effectively to the authority's planning processes and systems. The inspection programme links more closely with the work carried out under the Wales Programme for Improvement. This takes account of the outcomes of authorities' own assessment processes and the annual joint risk assessment which is agreed by the authority and its regulators and inspectors.
- 20 In negotiation with Estyn, local authorities have chosen either to have a single inspection of the whole range of their work, or else to have separate inspections of one or more individual major fields of responsibility. The individual fields are:
- support for school improvement;
 - additional learning needs (ALN);
 - access;
 - promoting social inclusion and the wellbeing of learners;
 - support services for schools and other services not included elsewhere; and
 - strategic management.
- 21 The second cycle of local authority education service inspections was due to run from April 2006 to March 2012. However, as a result of review after the first 18 months, the current cycle will be terminated in March 2010. This will bring the local authority inspection in line with the other inspection cycles operated by Estyn. This change will still allow for all areas of the local authority's activity will be inspected. The cycle allows for differentiated amounts of time for each inspection to reflect risk and the range of inspection work to be carried out.
- 22 The extent of inspection will reflect the quality of performance by the local authority. Estyn resources will concentrate on areas of greatest risk. A risk assessment determines the allocation of inspector days. The risk assessment will relate closely to Wales Programme for Improvement.
- 23 The outcomes of self-evaluation reviews will often pose difficult questions to local politicians. An authority changing its political system will find that inspection helps it to provide an effective internal challenge. Every inspection report will offer practical recommendations for improvement. These will be based on Estyn's knowledge of best practice. Authorities value this aspect of inspection.
- 24 Inspections will identify and promote good practice. Every inspection will look for examples of good practice and innovation, and for creative ways to overcome barriers and resistance to change or make better use of resources. Estyn will work closely with other organisations such as the Wales Audit Office, Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW) that are involved in supporting improvement, in order to ensure that the collection and dissemination of best practice are well co-ordinated.

Evidence

- 25 As always, our judgements need to be based on evidence. Without clear and impartial evidence, stakeholders will be less willing to accept the judgements and recommendations we make, and more likely to feel that they have been unfairly treated.
- 26 Quantitative data and standardised measurement, although helpful as 'indicators of performance', are not enough on their own. Inspection uses a range of well-designed 'reality checks' to provide other sources of evidence about the reliability of an authority's self-evaluation and to support and illustrate conclusions.
- 27 Local authority self-evaluations may include the results of the Wales Audit Office and Estyn web-based schools' perception survey that was established in Wales in July 2003. Estyn will, wherever possible, include relevant analyses of the results of the perception survey as part of the evidence base for the inspection.

Scale of the inspection

- 28 The inspection of local authority education services will be more streamlined than those in the previous inspection cycle. This is part of Estyn's commitment to reducing still further any burden that might be associated with inspection.
- 29 For each local authority, there are three dimensions that are fixed in relation to the inspection programme:
- the scope of the inspection, that is, the range of services being inspected – by 2010 all fields of major responsibility will have been inspected in all local authorities;
 - the timing of inspections; and
 - the scale of the inspection based on risk.
- 30 For the first dimension, inspections will be described as:
- **Full inspection** – the inspection of all major fields of responsibility in a single inspection or the inspection of all remaining fields not already inspected during the period April 2006 to March 2008.
- 31 For the second dimension, Estyn will determine the timing of an inspection and Estyn will confirm or amend as necessary in consultation with other regulators if appropriate.
- 32 For the third dimension, inspections will be described in accordance with the terms used in the Wales Audit Office Summary Risk Assessment Template (RAT), that is:
- high risk;
 - medium risk; or
 - low risk.
- 33 The scale of inspections is based on the risk assessment that has taken account of the local authority's self-evaluation, performance in previous inspections and a number of key performance indicators.

- 34 The risk assessment in 2005 was used to help local authorities in plan their approach to the inspection programme for the period 2006-2010. The risk assessment was used to determine the intensity of an inspection and the amount of time allocated to any Section 38 inspection that was agreed for 2006-2007. However Estyn will review the level of risk annually and, if necessary, adjust the timing and intensity of an inspection in the light of any significant changes in circumstances.
- 35 Annex 6 explains, in greater detail, how the shape of Estyn's local authority inspections from April 2006 took account of risk.
- 36 HMCI will retain the right, where circumstances justify it, to determine the type of inspection to be carried out in any local authority, even if this differs from the type of inspection that would normally result from the risk assessment.
- 37 The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning may, at any point, request HMCI to arrange the inspection of any local authority under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. Such an inspection may require Estyn to vary any arrangements previously made in agreement with the local authority, in particular those relating to the timing and focus of the inspection.

3 Who will carry out the inspection?

Team composition

- 38 Estyn will decide the composition of each inspection team in consultation with the Wales Audit Office. The size and specialist knowledge of the inspection team reflects as closely as possible the nature of the service being inspected.
- 39 Estyn may, if appropriate, work with other inspectorates to ensure that the team has the appropriate experience and knowledge in the aspects of the service being inspected.
- 40 Throughout this document, the term 'inspectors' refers to any persons who are engaged and deployed by Estyn as members of its local authority inspection teams.
- 41 A reporting inspector (RI) will lead the inspection team. Usually this will be the Regional Team Inspector (RTI) or a member of the Multi-disciplinary Regional Team (MRT) for the region in which the authority lies.
- 42 The inspection schedule is notified to all authorities for the remainder of the inspection cycle to March 2010. Therefore as RI, you will know:
- what fields of responsibility you will inspect each year in your local authority;
 - the risk allocated to the inspection;
 - who is on the inspection team;
 - the dates set aside for each inspection; and
 - any special factors you need to take into account during the inspection.
- 43 Local authority inspections are supported by an inspector from the Wales Audit Office staff or by a specialist education inspector from the Audit Commission in England, working on behalf of Wales Audit Office. In some inspections, the team may be supported by an inspector from other inspectorates such as the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW).

Peer assessors

- 44 Estyn aims to develop the use of peer assessors as additional inspectors. A peer assessor is either an elected member or a senior officer in a local authority in Wales. Peer assessors will bring the perspective of current working practices in a local authority. Peer assessors will have been nominated by the authorities at which they work. The peer assessor will need to meet certain criteria and complete a training programme. In addition, the peer assessor will need to have successfully cleared an enhanced criminal record board (CRB) check within the last three years.
- 45 The peer assessor is a full member of the team but will undertake only those duties that can be completed during the onsite period of the inspection. Peer assessors, the local authority and Estyn will be required to sign a memorandum of understanding that sets out the terms and conditions under which they will work as

additional inspectors. The memorandum will include terms and conditions governing their conduct in relation to the inspection before, during and after the on-site period. This development will be kept under review and may be subject to change during the inspection cycle.

46 The peer assessor should:

- have a working knowledge of the Framework for the Inspection of Local Authority Education Services and the relevant Guidance for the Inspection of Local Authority Education Services in Wales from April 2006;
- have an understanding of the local authority's self-evaluation report and any associated plan;
- liaise with the reporting inspector about administrative aspects of the inspection such as documentation and meetings;
- complete inspection documentation, including evidence sheets;
- contribute to meetings of the inspection team;
- contribute to corporate judgements;
- where possible, attend any meeting held during the inspection week at which feedback is given to the local authority; and
- respect the confidentiality of all information received during the course of the inspection.

47 Further guidance on the role of the peer assessor is set out in Annex 4, which also includes the Memorandum of Understanding. The RI and peer assessor will need to be familiar with Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that the relationship between the inspectors and the peer assessor works well.

Nominees

48 Inspections will provide an opportunity to involve local authorities actively in the inspection process by enabling an officer from the authority to work with the inspection team – the nominee. This will ensure greater involvement by the authority and strengthen the partnership between the inspection team and authority staff. It will also enable authorities to gain a better insight into the inspection process as well as provide valuable opportunities for professional development. The scope of the nominee's role will be negotiated and agreed by the authority and Estyn. The local authority, the nominee and Estyn will be required to sign a statement of agreement that specifies the roles and tasks of the nominee. It is not a requirement that the authority should put forward a nominee.

49 The nominee should:

- ensure that inspectors are fully informed about the context of the local authority's work;
- liaise with the reporting inspector about administrative aspects of the inspection;
- take part in team meetings;
- respond to team requests for additional information;
- help resolve any problems that arise;
- be involved in collecting evidence, where appropriate and agreed;
- hear emerging findings; and
- respect the confidentiality of the inspection process.

- 50 Further guidance on the role of the nominee, the protocol for working with the nominee and a copy of the statement of agreement are in Annex 3. The RI and Nominee will need to be familiar with these documents to ensure that the relationship between the inspectors and the nominee works smoothly. The RI will have time in his/her work programme to meet and brief the nominee prior to the inspection.

Involvement of the Relationship Manager

- 51 Estyn may involve the Wales Audit Office Relationship Manager (RM) for the local authority in the work of the inspection team to provide detailed knowledge of those corporate and service issues that are relevant to the scope of the inspection. In cases where the relationship manager is unavailable, the key contact will be able to provide the necessary information.
- 52 It is worthwhile contacting the relationship manager by telephone during one of the preparation days or at a brief meeting during the on-site inspection period to gain his/her latest intelligence on the performance of the authority and any factors that might influence its prospects for improvement. In the first cycle of local authority inspections, the Wales Audit Office member of the team often contacted the relationship manager. In this new cycle, it will be helpful if the RI is involved in this discussion with the WAO inspector and the WAO relationship manager.

4 How will inspectors behave?

Conduct of inspectors

- 53 The code sets out principles that will govern the conduct of inspectors. Inspectors will maintain the highest standards in relation to all who are involved in the process before, during and after the inspection.
- 54 You should uphold the highest possible standards in your work. The LAES Inspection Framework requires you to adhere to a code of conduct designed to secure the co-operation and confidence of those being inspected.

You will carry out your work with integrity, courtesy and due sensitivity

- 55 In doing so, you should:
- carry out inspections effectively and efficiently;
 - be fully prepared;
 - treat all staff with courtesy, respect and sensitivity;
 - minimise disruption and stress; and
 - ensure positive working relations throughout the inspection.

You will evaluate the work of the local authority objectively

- 56 In doing so, you should:
- carry out your work with independence and objectivity;
 - undertake inspections without bias or preconceptions;
 - keep demands for information and other material to a realistic minimum;
 - collect sound evidence from a range of sources and weigh it carefully; and
 - evaluate against the criteria in the LAES Inspection Framework and the guidance provided here.

You will report honestly, fairly and impartially

- 57 In doing so, you should:
- be impartial and be seen to be impartial;
 - report your findings without fear or favour, identifying and reporting both good features and shortcomings;
 - identify and report difficult issues that need resolution so that the authority can improve;
 - make sure the published report is a fair and just representation of the work of the authority; and
 - make sure that oral feedback is consistent with the final written report.

You will communicate clearly and openly

58 In doing so, you should:

- be open and transparent in your dealings with those involved in the inspection;
- keep senior officers of the authority informed of emerging issues and findings;
- make sure that communication is effective throughout the inspection particularly during oral feedback; and
- make sure that complex information and judgements are as clear and accessible as possible.

You will act in the best interests of the safety and well-being of learners

59 In doing so, you should:

- do nothing that might cause a learner, an officer or a member of the authority to experience distress or anxiety;
- do nothing that calls into question your relationship with an officer, member, service user or stakeholder of the authority;
- report any concerns about the safety or well-being of a pupil or student to the appropriate authority; and
- refrain from intervening personally if you observe bad behaviour, unless someone's safety or welfare is in danger.

You will respect the confidentiality of all information received during the course of the inspection

60 In doing so, you will:

- ensure the confidentiality of all information received during the inspection;
- make sure that the findings of the inspection are confidential to the team and the authority until the final report is published; and
- not seek or try to obtain confidential staff appraisal information.

61 Inspections may include visits to schools and other settings where the impact of the local authority's work may be evident. The inspections may involve the evaluation of services that are provided on behalf of the local authority by private contractors or partner voluntary organisations. When visiting schools and other settings, inspectors will act in the best interests of all learners. All members of the inspection team will have successfully cleared an enhanced criminal record board (CRB) check within the last three years.

62 Individuals, schools and other settings will not normally be named in the published report, unless they are particularly relevant to the outcomes of the inspection such as a newly-built school, a special school meeting the specific needs of learners or a pupil referral unit. The inspection team will discuss schools or other settings with local authority officer and members, especially in inspection of the school improvement function. However, if any serious concerns emerge about the standards of achievement or quality of education, pupils' safety, wellbeing or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the management of the school or setting, or

its financial regulation and probity, inspectors will discuss the issues arising with the headteacher and governing body and notify HMCI, the local authority and, where appropriate, the Health and Safety Executive or the external auditor. Inspectors will notify the headteacher immediately of any matters that seriously affect the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils.

Confidentiality

- 63 When visiting schools or other settings, inspectors will not discuss with the staff any conclusions or judgements reached about the local authority's work.
- 64 Inspectors will show due sensitivity throughout the inspection to the fact that local authority and school personnel have a job to do and are subject to demands other than inspection.

Child protection

- 65 If a member of the inspection team is aware of, or is alerted, directly or indirectly, to an allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, the inspector must take action in accordance with Estyn's child protection policy and procedures.
- 66 In the case of a multi-disciplinary inspection taking place where Estyn is the lead inspectorate, the reporting inspector will provide all team members with a copy of Estyn's child protection policy and procedures as part of their initial briefing before they join the team. Inspectors from other inspectorates are expected to work within these procedures.
- 67 In the case of one of Estyn's inspectors working as part of a multi-agency team, where Estyn is not the lead inspectorate, Estyn's inspector will follow the child protection procedures of the lead inspectorate unless to do so would cause a delay in referral to social services and/or the police and place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of further harm.

Disclosure of information

- 68 Estyn is committed to making its business as open as possible. It responds to any requests for information made by the public unless there are clear legal reasons for not doing so or it can clearly be shown that it is not in the public interest. Individuals already have the statutory right of access to their personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal data includes any expression of opinion about an individual and any indication of the intentions of any person in respect of the individual. As far as inspections are concerned, this means that information about an officer or member of the authority is personal data even before his or her identity is established because it is likely that the inspection will produce other identifying information.
- 69 From January 2005, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 extends the right to allow access to all types of information held, whether personal or non-personal, by public authorities. Anyone, wherever in the world, can exercise their right to access

information held by public authorities. The Act applies to public authorities and those providing services to them. The basic requirement under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is for the right of access to recorded information held by public authorities. This gives 'retrospective effect' and Estyn will have to make available information it is holding, not necessarily information created after the bringing into force of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. As the original material obtained during inspection is the property of Estyn, it will deal with any requests under the Acts and decide what information should be disclosed. Subject to the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Estyn must inform any person who makes a request for information whether the information is held, and if so, must supply that information.

- 70 You should be aware that requests for disclosure of information under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000 may be made for details contained in inspection evidence, letters and e-mails. Any comment you make may become open to wider scrutiny if someone requests access to that information. You must therefore ensure that all information is documented in an objective manner and that all comments can be supported should they need to be disclosed.

5 The inspection process – an overview

Eight stages of an LAES inspection

- 71 Most local authority inspection has eight stages spanning a period of about 12 weeks, shown in the table below. The rest of this guide describes these phases in turn.
- 72 Further information about these stages is also provided in the Estyn Framework for inspection: 'Local Authority Education Services in Wales: A Framework for inspection under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 and Section 51 of the Children Act 2004'.

	Stage	The inspection team	The local authority
PRE-INSPECTION	1 Review of documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinises self evaluation/review documents, action plans, risk assessments and other relevant information • Gains a better understanding of the context of the authority • Requests any additional evidence 	
	2 Review performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulates hypotheses in relation to the key questions • RI contacts the Relationship Manager to discuss the authority's performance • Plans interviews and other inspection activities to test the hypotheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides additional information as necessary
	3 Brief the nominee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the local authority nominee to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inspection schedule; ○ role; and ○ responsibilities 	
	4 Team meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meets on site to share hypotheses in relation to the key questions • Plans interviews and other inspection activities to test the hypotheses • RI to make sure that all team members have a copy of Estyn's Child protection policy 	
	5 Brief the authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the local authority to discuss initial impressions and planned activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions the initial impressions and planned activity • Arranges interviews, visits as necessary, meetings and oral feedback • Briefs staff and members who are present at the meeting

INSPECTION	6 Carry out on-site inspection activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews key personnel and members • Holds meetings with stakeholders • Visits schools and/or other settings if necessary • Reviews regularly whether sufficient evidence has been gathered • Provides regular feedback to a senior officer nominated by the local authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives and responds to regular feedback from inspectors
	7 Present oral feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents oral feedback to the authority and receives and responds to its initial reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and seeks clarification as necessary • Provides any additional evidence to support any challenges made
POST-INSPECTION	8 Produce report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces a draft report and invites the authority to confirm its factual accuracy • Publishes a bilingual final report • Presents an oral report to Council, or a designated group of members and officers, after the publication of the report, at the Council's request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides comments on the accuracy of the draft report • Ensures that elected members understand that the feedback to Council on the published report is not an opportunity to challenge the findings or judgments of the inspection

73 During **stages 1 and 2**, inspectors will review a range of information. Much of this will already have been collected and be held by Estyn and/or the Wales Audit Office. Most of the remainder will consist of existing local authority documents. It should not normally be necessary for the local authority to produce documentation specifically for the inspection. The type of information likely to be most useful includes:

- documents relating to the service and any self-evaluation and/or risk assessment that the local authority has carried out;
- performance against national indicators, benchmark information and core data sets, using for example, National Assembly for Wales Statistical briefing papers;
- the results of consultation with service users and other stakeholders, using the Wales Audit Office and Estyn Schools' Perception Survey and any other surveys conducted by the authority;
- the authority's main strategic plans relevant to the focus of the inspection, such as the community plan, corporate plan, education strategic plan, asset management plan;
- annual reports, accounts and Wales Audit Office management letters to members;
- the local authority's improvement plan, the auditor's report on the plan and other relevant plans relating to WPI;
- corporate guidance on self-evaluation and improvement;
- previous Estyn inspection reports and reports from other inspectorates and regulators; and
- reports of any external evaluations commissioned by the authority.

- 74 During **stages 1 and 2**, it is important to gather information about the authority from the range of sources listed above so that inspectors build up a picture of the work of the authority. It is particularly important that inspectors consider previous Estyn inspection reports on the local authority and relevant reports on Adult Community-based Learning, Youth Support Services, Youth Offending Team and area inspection.
- 75 Regional Team Inspectors will have time on the work programme each year prior to the annual risk assessment meeting between the local authority and the regulators. This time is to be used to build up a background profile on the performance of the authority using regular meetings with the chief education officer (CEO) and other senior staff, and other sources of information. This information will serve as preparation for the next local authority inspection. It will also enable the Regional Team Inspector to consider the profile of grades for the authority that is building up throughout the six-year inspection cycle.
- 76 During **stages 1 and 2**, the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI) joint risk assessment and any self-evaluation that the local authority has carried out will be the main sources of evidence which the inspection team will use to form its initial impressions. Where team members have preparation time before the inspection, RI will require them to record pre-inspection evaluations on an 'inspection issues summary sheet' and an 'inspection good features and shortcomings sheet' which will then be collated into one document by the RI and distributed to the team.
- 77 At **stage 3**, RI will provide a briefing session for the nominee from the authority. The RI will spend time discussing the inspection schedule, the role and the responsibilities of the nominee. A pack of training materials will be provided for the RI to undertake this task. (See paragraphs 48-50 and Annex 3 for more information on the role of the nominee.)
- 78 On most inspections, there will be a pre-inspection team meeting (**stage 4**). This will last for up to a day and a half. During this meeting, inspectors will use their pre-inspection commentaries to formulate hypotheses about the quality of the local authority's provision and performance, and identify what further information it needs to make the judgements. Inspectors will plan carefully how to test their hypotheses and how best to collect the additional information. They will identify interviewees and plan a range of inspection activities (for example, meetings with focus groups and individuals, and visits to schools and/or other settings) which will enable them to gather evidence, test hypotheses and make judgements as efficiently as possible. The team will also schedule time for meetings to analyse and reflect on the evidence gathered and to deal with any new issues which may emerge. In low-risk single or low-risk combined field inspections there is no pre-inspection team meeting. Instead, on the first morning or period of the inspection, RI will brief the team about the pre-inspection hypotheses and how they are to be tested, and how the team will analyse and reflect on the evidence.
- 79 On most inspections, the pre-inspection briefing meeting with the authority (**stage 5**) will follow the pre-inspection team meeting. The purpose of stage 5 is for the inspection team to explain to the local authority its initial impressions and its plans, and for the local authority to offer additional evidence as necessary. The local

authority will find out who will be required for interview during stage 6. Inspectors will also discuss with the local authority the schools and other settings which they plan to visit. There may be occasions, however, when they will not specify in advance the nature or location of an inspection activity.

- 80 In all inspections, **stage 6** will be concerned with carrying out the on-site inspection activities. Schools are the clients for some local authority services. In other cases, the local authority provides a service for individual pupils and their parents. In either case, inspectors will want to look at the service from the user's perspective. Stage 6 provides an opportunity for the team to test its hypotheses by making 'reality checks'. These will involve direct evaluation – by looking at the impact of school improvement initiatives in schools, for example, or by discussing aspects of the local authority's provision with those who deliver and use its services. Stage 6 also provides an opportunity for the team to interview local authority staff and elected members to gather more evidence and information.
- 81 Evidence of the quality, effectiveness and improvement prospects of local authority provision will derive from the nature, scope, and use by schools and other client groups, of data, information and services provided by or on behalf of the local authority. Inspectors will gather evidence by, for example:
- examining plans and policies;
 - examining the sufficiency, adequacy and use of resources;
 - analysing performance indicators and performance management systems;
 - analysing outcomes for individual learners;
 - evaluating the effectiveness and impact of challenge and support for schools, training and advice for staff;
 - discussing the quality of services and partnership working with local learners, teachers, headteachers and governors; and
 - assessing the quality of links with support services.
- 82 High-risk and medium-risk full inspections will be conducted over a period of up to three weeks, with two periods of on-site inspection. In week one, the first period of on-site inspection will take five days in both high-risk and medium-risk inspections. In week two, the inspection team will focus in a depth on issues that have been identified in the first week. The second period will take five days.
- 83 **Stage 7**, the 'oral feedback', is the first of two formal opportunities for the team to report back to the authority. The inspectors will have already given informal feedback as the inspection has progressed, but the oral feedback is the first time that the team will tell the local authority how well it has done in relation to each of the key judgements, and to support the judgements with the evidence. Senior managers and elected members should attend this meeting. The oral feedback meeting will be conducted in such a way as to encourage reaction from the authority. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the team to share its judgements at this stage and explain how these have been reached. The inspection team will welcome responses from the authority, including comment on the findings and confirmation of factual accuracy, where relevant. The team will consider any further evidence that the authority may wish to offer in response to the findings presented at the oral feedback. Any additional evidence should be submitted to the inspection team as soon as

possible, and not more than five working days after the oral feedback. In high-risk and medium-risk full inspections, the formal oral feedback will take place at the end of the second week of on-site inspection. The RI will, as in all inspections, provide informal feedback as the inspection progresses and make sure that the authority is clear about the provisional findings at the end of the first period of on-site inspection.

- 84 After considering any further evidence submitted by the local authority, Estyn will produce the draft report (**stage 8**). The local authority will receive a late draft report, either electronically or in hard copy, to help with the checking of factual accuracy. The local authority is also invited at this stage to submit a written response to the inspection findings for inclusion in the report. The response will be published by agreement with the reporting inspector. If the content of the provider response fits better in Estyn's Post Inspection Questionnaire (PIQ), then the RI will edit the provider response as appropriate. The local authority has five working days in which to consider the draft report and to produce its response. Estyn will produce the final report.
- 85 Section 39 of the Education Act 1997 enables HMCI to arrange for any report on a local authority to be published in such a manner as he considers appropriate. Estyn will send copies of the final report to the National Assembly for Wales and to the chief education officer of the local authority, the elected member with main responsibility for education and the chief executive of the Unitary Authority.
- 86 Estyn will also send a copy of the report to the Wales Audit Office. Where inspectors from one or more other inspectorates have joined the team for a local authority inspection, Estyn will send a copy of the report to the inspectorate(s) concerned. Both Estyn and the Wales Audit Office may make the report available on the Internet after it has been published.
- 87 Under Section 39 of the Education Act, 1997, and related Regulations, local authorities must prepare and publish an action plan within 70 days of receipt of the inspection report from Estyn, or within 80 days if the plan is produced bilingually. Work Matters note 138/2007 sets out Estyn's procedures for responding to action plans produced by local authorities following inspections of local authority education services.
- 88 While all inspections of local authority education services and functions will conform to the general guidance provided in this document, the inspection strategy and process will need to take account of the particular field(s) of responsibility being inspected. Inspection methodology may also need to be adjusted in the light of experience in the course of the inspection cycle.

6 The inspection process – setting up the inspection

Start of the inspection

- 89 This section describes how to obtain preliminary information about the area being inspected, and how to set up your files.
- 90 Below is a checklist of administrative actions you need to take in setting up the inspection:

What	Who	Reference
Contact the local authority to confirm the scope, type and dates of the inspection	Reporting Inspector	Para 92
Identify requested documents (the documents that you will ask the authority for)	Inspection team through the Reporting Inspector	Para 94

Initial contact with the local authority

- 91 Inspections are programmed, in advance, for the whole cycle through to 31 March 2010 so they should know when to expect you. Your first contact will therefore be to:
- confirm once again the field(s) of responsibility and dates of the inspection (including the planned dates of key events such as the briefing meeting and the oral feedback);
 - tell them who the team will be, including a description of role of the peer assessor, if relevant;
 - invite them to put forward a nominee; and
 - ask the authority to provide information and resources.
- 92 You may find it helpful to contact the local authority as soon as possible. Local authorities have said they appreciate plenty of notice to assemble documentation.
- 93 You should ask:
- for documents needed for the first stage of the inspection (understanding the context). See paragraphs 107-110 for more information;
 - for the name of a nominee for the duration of the inspection, if the local authority wishes to have one. You should invite the local authority to select a member of staff to work with the team as nominee. See paragraphs 48-50 and Annex 3 for more information on the role of the nominee;
 - for the name of a counterpart officer to work with, if the local authority declines the invitation to select a nominee. The counterpart must be senior enough to convey complex issues around the local authority as you feed back your findings during the inspection, and to help you identify who to see. The counterpart also pulls together information and individuals, arranges meetings and visits, and generally smoothes the inspectors' path. You should emphasise that this role is

quite demanding in terms of time before, during and after inspection. This role is crucial to the smooth running of an inspection. However, you need to consider whether the counterpart should manage all contact with the local authority and its stakeholders or whether you need to conduct some reality checks independently;

- whether the local authority want Estyn to arrange translation facilities for the briefing meeting and oral feedback meetings. The inspections of local authorities will comply with Estyn's Welsh Language Scheme. You will need to alert the MHMI for Youth and Local Authority Services and book translation in advance through OPPC division in Anchor Court; and
- for administrative help – for example in:
 - 1 booking rooms for interviews and focus group meetings;
 - 2 providing access to a photocopier and photocopy paper;
 - 3 providing access to printing facilities;
 - 4 supplying refreshments such as tea and coffee;
 - 5 catering arrangements; and
 - 6 car parking spaces.

94 Sometimes the nominee or counterpart delegates jobs such as arranging meetings to a member of administrative staff in the local authority.

95 It is essential at this stage to make sure that, on the dates set aside for (a) the briefing meeting with the authority and (b) the oral feedback meeting, key elected members and corporate managers are present. In some inspections all this activity takes place within the 'inspection week'. These should include the chief executive, the chief education officer and cabinet member or other councillor(s) with lead responsibility for the services reviewed. If this is not possible, then they should be asked to nominate someone to represent them.

96 You will also need working space at the local authority's premises. You should ask for:

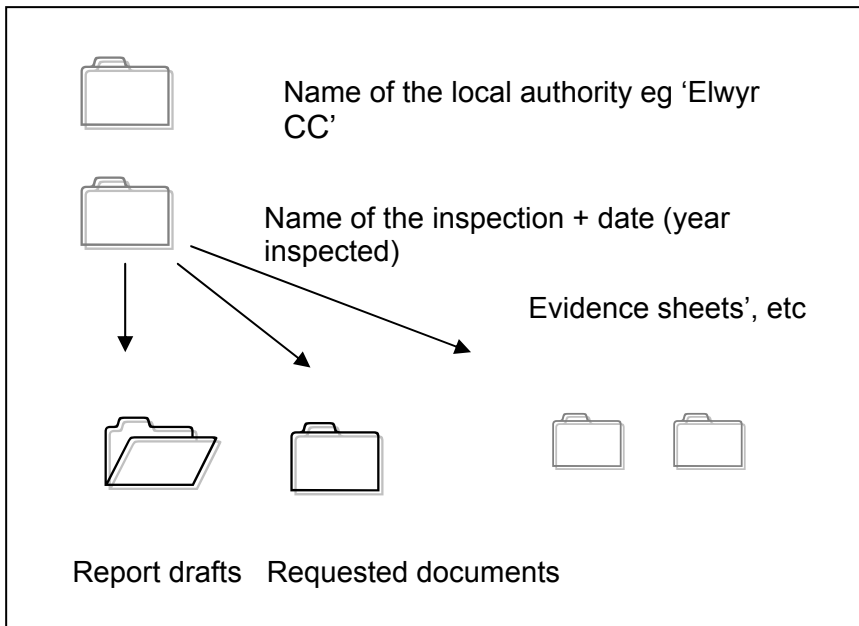
- an adequately sized room that can be used as a base room by the inspection team;
- electrical power points or multiple electrical socket adaptors for team laptops, data projector etc.
- access to a telephone;
- ideally, access to a telephone point which is capable of dial-up access for laptops with modems (analogue);
- ideally, access to computing facilities, so that you can access on-line council documents, council minutes etc;
- a lockable cupboard or filing cabinet, to keep working papers and documents, especially those containing personal information;
- rooms to interview people in addition to the team base room; and
- a data projector and screen for the briefing meeting and oral feedback meeting (If this is a problem for the authority, book a data projector from ICT support in Estyn. Remember to do this well in advance of the dates for which it is needed).

- 97 At this early stage, it is worthwhile indicating to the local authority which officer and stakeholders you will wish to interview during the on-site part of the inspection. Many of the senior officers, such as the chief executive, have very busy diaries and they appreciate notice well in advance of a date for an interview.
- 98 The list of possible interviews below is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive, but indicates the core people whom you should interview. The list will need to be adapted for officers at service level depending on the focus of the inspection. For example, you should ask to interview:
- Chief Executive;
 - Director of Education;
 - Director of Finance;
 - Director of Social Services;
 - Lead elected member for Education;
 - Chair of Education Scrutiny;
 - Focus group of scrutiny members (representative of political parties);
 - Focus group of members who do not sit on Cabinet, Scrutiny or committee; and
 - Head/s of Service/s.
- 99 You may also, depending on the focus of the inspection, wish to interview:
- Focus group of primary headteachers;
 - Focus group of secondary headteachers;
 - Focus group of special school headteachers;
 - Focus group of school governors;
 - Focus group of partners (for example CYPP, EYDCP, Police, Health Trust etc);
 - Focus group of parents; and
 - Focus group of learners (usually part of a visit to a school or college).

Setting up inspection files

At the start of the inspection, you should set up an electronic inspection file in which you will keep key documents relating to the inspection.
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- 100 Electronic filing – You should keep issues sheets and other inspection forms, together with electronic documents you received from the authority, in a series of electronic local authority folders in a file for your local authority which is available on the O:drive under O:\Local Authority & Youth Services\Local Authority Education Services\Local Authority inspection cycle April 2006 to March 2012\Helpful Local Authority inspection documents\Forms and templates
- 101 The electronic filing structure should follow a similar format to that shown in the following diagram.

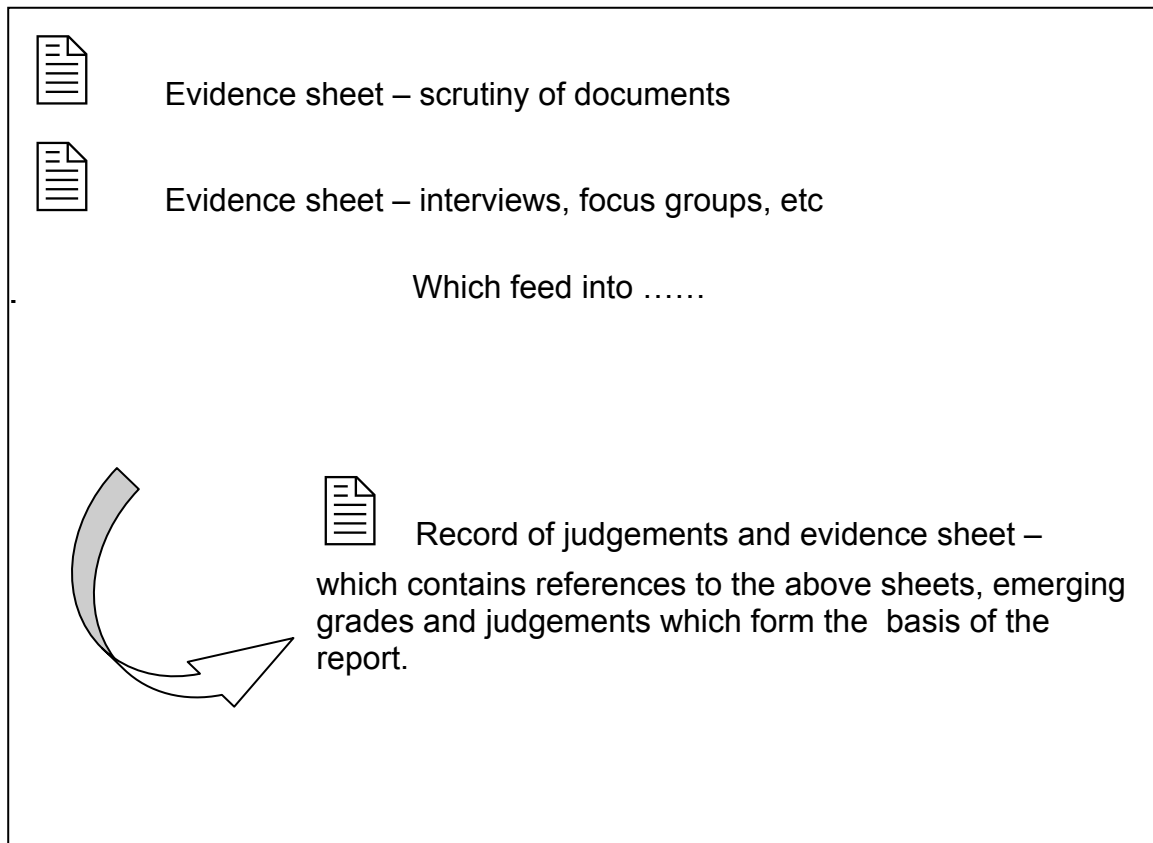


- 102 Hardcopy filing – You need to follow Estyn’s agreed procedures for keeping inspection documents (ie hard copies) following a local authority inspection. These documents are to be kept in the Registry at Anchor Court for a period of twelve months following the date of publication of the report. This will allow us to gain access to evidence as necessary in the event of a re-inspection or challenge to the findings after the report has been published. At the end of the twelve-month period, the documents will be destroyed. Ask a member of the registry team at Anchor Court to set up a registered file under the title of the local authority inspection and to store the documents you hand over to them in the local authority section of the registry under the sub category LAES inspection.
- 103 Many authorities may provide electronic versions of documents provided by e-mail or on a CD-ROM. You should transfer these documents and others received in an electronic form into the relevant local authority files on the O: drive.

Inspection forms

- 104 There are templates available for forms that you might find helpful throughout the inspection. These templates are available on the O:Drive under O:\Local Authority & Youth Services\Local Authority Education Services\Local Authority inspection cycle April 2006 to March 2012\Helpful Local Authority inspection documents\Forms and templates.

105 The forms available are summarised in the diagram below:



106 Guidance on how to use the 'Evidence sheets' and the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' is provided in paragraphs 133-146, 151-157, and 184-187.

Obtaining information

107 To acquire an understanding of how well the local authority is serving its community and service users you will need to consider local priorities and needs, and the local context. The inspection team will review a range of information, most of it in the form of documents – plans, reports, and reviews – produced by the authority itself. See paragraphs 73 and 129-131. As well as reading documents, you may wish to talk to independent experts or auditors, or obtain information from sources other than those listed below. It is important that you are clear why it is you are asking for the information you have requested.

108 Documents can come from four types of source:

- **Source 1 – information acquired centrally** – e.g. by Estyn, the Wales Audit Office and the Welsh Assembly Government. Information included on this system, such as Improvement Plans, previous inspection reports and post-inspection action plans, will be of the type usually required for use by several different inspection teams. Also, the relationship manager provides us with copies of the Relationship Manager's Annual Letter (RMAL). The Regional Team Inspector will already have copies of the Single Education Plan (from 2006) and the Children and Young People's Plan (from 2008), as well as other

relevant documents. In addition, the Regional Team Inspector will have copies of the Children and Young People's Framework Strategy and the plan to deliver the Young People's Partnership arrangements. **You need to be careful not to ask for information from local authorities before checking that it is not already available from another source.**

- **Source 2 – a specific data request to the local authority.** This is a letter or e-mail asking the local authority to send information to the team before the start of the inspection.
- **Source 3 – material generated, collected or collated by the Estyn Youth and Local Authority Services team.** This includes analysis of examination reports and National Curriculum assessments, school inspection data, and other local authority related data obtained from NAW. This material will normally be accessible on the O:drive.
- **Source 4 – information available from the Regional Team Inspector.** This includes accumulated knowledge about the local authority as well as paper documents that are as easily retained and filed locally as in any other form.

109 Documents can be on paper or, increasingly, electronic. A typical inspection might generate about 20kg of documents, so it pays to opt for electronic formats where possible. Either way, you should log all documents as they arrive. The 'Requested documents log' acts both as a checklist and as a record of what has been requested and received. Fill it in as you decide what documents are needed, and deposit it in the 'Requested documents' folder in your electronic inspection file. Other people providing you with information will then know where to file it.

110 You can request information above and beyond that noted in the log, but bear in mind that any request that is open-ended can give local authorities the opportunity to swamp the inspection team with information, much of which may be of little use. The key message is – **don't ask for what you would like – ask for what you need!**

7 Inspection process – deploying the team

This section describes how to deploy the inspectors on the team.

Team deployment

- 111 Experience from the first cycle of local authority inspections has shown that the most effective way of deploying inspectors is usually to delegate responsibility for a key question to each inspector. An inspection team can consist of between two and six inspectors from Estyn and one inspector from the Wales Audit Office. The number of Estyn inspectors depends on the number of fields being inspected and the risk attached to them. The team may also include a peer assessor and a nominee. In addition, some inspections may have an inspector from one of the other inspectorates such as the CSSIW or HIW. The nominee does not have responsibility for judgements or writing. Therefore, each inspector can take lead responsibility for a key question. The RI should delegate the questions according to the experience and expertise of the team inspector.
- 112 Taking lead responsibility for a key question means collating and coordinating the emerging issues, good features and shortcomings that team inspectors record on their evidence sheets, leading discussion on the key question in team meetings and writing a draft section on the key question for the report.
- 113 In addition, the RI may consider giving lead responsibility to team inspectors for specific fields of responsibility. The RI should delegate the services or areas according to the experience and expertise of the team inspector. However, at all times the RI should retain a full and effective overview of the inspection and should ensure that the inspection does not become fragmented.

The role of the reporting inspector

- 114 The RI has overall responsibility for the inspection from setting up and organising the inspection, maintaining an overview of emerging outcomes, helping the team reach consensus judgements, ensuring that the local authority receives appropriate feedback, writing and editing the report, and monitoring the implementation of the action plan. It is very important that the RI takes responsibility for writing a draft section on one of the key questions so that he/she is intimately immersed in the emerging issues.
- 115 Taking lead responsibility for a service or field involves:
- collating and coordinating the emerging issues, good features and shortcomings that team inspectors record on their evidence sheets;
 - feeding information about the performance of the service into the discussion on each key question in team meetings; and
 - commenting on the messages about the service or field in the text on each key question in the report.
- 116 Whether team inspectors have lead responsibility for a key question, a field or both, they should evaluate how well the local authority performs against the LAES inspection criteria. To make this task easier, the inspection criteria are set out under the four key questions in Annex 1 of this guidance document.

8 The inspection process – before the inspection

Overview

- 117 The pattern of the inspection will vary according to the field(s) being inspected and the risk attached to the inspection.
- 118 The risk allocated to each inspection will be described in accordance with the terms used in the Summary Risk Assessment Template:
- high risk;
 - medium risk; or
 - low risk.

Low risk

- The low-risk full inspection will require the local authority to provide pre-inspection information. There will be a pre-inspection team meeting and a briefing meeting where initial findings and inspection issues are discussed in advance of the inspection. All on-site activities will be completed within a five-day period.

Medium risk

- The medium-risk full inspection will require the local authority to provide pre-inspection information. There will be a pre-inspection team meeting and a briefing meeting where initial findings and inspection issues are discussed in advance of the inspection. There will be two periods of on-site inspection, which may follow directly on from one another. The first period is of five days duration and the second period, when specific issues are followed up, will occupy five days. Informal feedback will be provided towards the end of the first on-site inspection period and formal feedback will be provided at the end of the second on-site inspection period.

High risk

- The high-risk full inspection is similar to the medium-risk full inspection, but it involves more preparation time for the inspection team and each of the two on-site inspection periods will be of five days duration. Informal feedback will be provided towards the end of the first on-site inspection period and formal feedback will be provided at the end of the second on-site inspection period.

119 In summary, the different types of inspection can be shown in the following table:

Different types of inspection

	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk
Full inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-inspection information • Pre-inspection team meeting • Pre-inspection briefing meeting for authority • Two five-day periods of inspection • Report produced after the inspection weeks • Minimum of six HMI or additional inspectors (AI), WAO inspector and peer assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-inspection information • Pre-inspection team meeting • Pre-inspection briefing meeting for authority • Two five-day periods of inspection • Report produced after the inspection weeks • Minimum of five HMI or additional inspectors (AI), WAO inspector and peer assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-inspection information • Pre-inspection team meeting • Pre-inspection briefing meeting for authority • A five-day period of inspection • Report produced at the end of the five-day inspection period • Minimum of five HMI or additional inspectors (AI), WAO inspector and peer assessor

Preparing for the briefing meeting

120 This section describes how to obtain a clear understanding of the context of the local authority and the fields of responsibility being inspected and to form initial views on each of the key inspection questions.

121 Following the pre-inspection team meeting, there will be a formal briefing meeting with the local authority to discuss initial impressions and plan the inspection activity.

122 This is a crucial part in the inspection process, because it sets the tone, scope and nature of all inspection activity that follows. If this is successfully executed, it is likely that the on-site inspection activity will run smoothly and deliver sound judgements that are well evidenced. A lack of focus and clarity at this stage could lead to inefficiency in gathering evidence and, even worse, conclusions that are incomplete or possibly even invalid.

123 On the basis of these early hypotheses you will be in a position to decide what on-site reality checks and inspector activity are needed to provide enough evidence to answer the four key questions. The reality checks and inspector activities may vary depending on the different types of inspection.

124 The final outcome of this preparation activity will be:

- completed 'Evidence sheets for scrutiny of documents';
- a part-completed 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet'; and
- an inspection timetable for interviews, focus group meetings and visits.

125 There are six steps in this phase.

- Where applicable, prepare for the pre-inspection team meeting. This is usually on the day before and the morning of the briefing meeting with the local authority.
- Identify the key issues, emerging good features and shortcomings for the inspection, using the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet'.
- Identify where you need additional evidence or information in order to answer the four key questions.
- Develop reality checks and inspection activity to provide you with the additional evidence you need in the time available.
- Prepare your inspection timetable.
- Have your inspection timetable, summary issues sheet and emerging good features/shortcomings sheet ready for the pre-inspection inspection team meeting, where applicable, and for any additional scrutiny that may take place as part of Estyn/WAO quality assurance procedures.

Preparing as an inspection team

- 126 You have to get through a large amount of business before the pre-inspection team meeting or the team meeting held on the first morning of some inspections. This means it is important to prepare effectively. Decide which documents need to be read by the whole inspection team, and which you can split between you. Don't try to read everything. The delegation of documents will follow the way you delegated key questions and/or fields or service areas to members of the inspection team. This will vary depending on the nature of the inspection. However, as RI you will need to gain an overview of the whole inspection and you should at least skim-read all the documents so that you can gain this overview.
- 127 If the local authority has provided documentation on a CD-ROM, you have two options. Ask the ICT team at Anchor Court to make a copy of the CD-ROM for each inspector in the team. All team members will then have access to all documentation if they need to refer to it. Alternatively, you can copy the contents of the CD-ROM onto the LAES inspection folder on the O: Drive. You will need to create a new folder or folders titled 'inspection evidence documents' so that you can keep the local authority's documents together and point inspectors to their location.
- 128 If the local authority has provided electronic documentation by email, you have three options. You might forward the email attachments to each inspector in the team or print out the attachments and distribute hardcopies. Alternatively, you can copy the email attachments onto the LAES inspection folder on the O: Drive. You will need to create a new folder or folders titled 'inspection evidence documents' so that you can keep the local authority's documents together and point inspectors to their location. All team members will then have access to all documentation if they need to refer to it.
- 129 There are key documents that all team members should familiarise themselves with. Some team members may need to read in greater depth if they have a lead responsibility that is a major theme of the document. The list of documents below is not intended to be exhaustive but indicates the core documents that the team should

scrutinise. (See paragraph 108 for source of key documents). The list will need to be adapted depending on the focus of the inspection. Experience from the first cycle of inspections shows that the best route through the documents is to prioritise your reading as follows:

- local authority's self-evaluation and/or risk assessment document;
- reports of any external evaluations commissioned by the local authority;
- previous Estyn inspection reports and reports from other inspectorates and regulators relevant to the focus of the inspection;
- community strategy for the local authority;
- corporate plan;
- local authority's improvement plan;
- Wales Audit Office Relationship Manager's Annual Letter;
- Wales Audit Office auditor's report on the local authority's improvement plan;
- other relevant plans related to Wales Programme for Improvement;
- SEP from 2006 and CYPP from 2008 (and/or their successor documents –);
- Wales Audit Office and Estyn Schools' Perception Survey for the current year or the latest available year;
- local authority asset management plan;
- National Assembly for Wales Statistical briefing papers (on the internet) that deal with the performance of the local authority against national indicators and benchmark information;
- corporate guidance on self-evaluation and improvement;
- service level business plans; and
- any performance reviews that the local authority has carried out on its services.

130 Read with a purpose. You are looking for information and evidence that help you form an impression against the four key questions, and the criteria for judgement. Note down relevant information and evidence, and key issues that strike you as you are reading – make sure you reference them so that when you come to the team meeting you can easily find them again. Doing this will save you lots of time at the team meeting. Use the 'Evidence sheets' to record these issues under the appropriate key question.

131 When you have read the relevant documents check back against the key questions and criteria for judgement – are there any obvious gaps? Use the 'requested documents' log to guide you about what additional information might be useful to get hold of before you go on site.

Scoping the inspection

132 The fields of responsibility for inspections in the remainder of the inspection cycle from April 2008 to March 2010 have been notified to each local authority. However, you may find that a local authority's self-evaluation does not cover all of the agreed area. If it does not, you may need to inspect the 'missing' aspects in greater depth than would otherwise be necessary. Experience of inspections in the first cycle of local authority inspections suggests that:

- It is a good idea to do some thinking around the subject before plunging into the documents. You may be able to offer a fresh perspective on the topic if you can suspend assumptions for a while.
- In particular, question the way the local authority has defined the boundaries of its self-evaluation and why it seems to have divided its responsibilities in the way it has.

Documenting your initial impressions

- 133 It is essential that your inspection team discusses initial thoughts, and tests and consolidates them against the four key inspection questions. For most inspections, this is done at the team meeting before the briefing meeting with the local authority.
- 134 To clarify your views and ideas, share the issues recorded on the 'Evidence sheets' completed by each inspector. Before the team meeting, it might be helpful to copy and paste the contents from each 'Evidence sheet' into one single 'Record of judgements and evidence'. This will identify common issues, emerging good features, shortcomings, grades and judgements.
- 135 You should review the completeness of your impressions against each of the key inspection questions to ensure that you have formed an initial view (even if the view is that we don't yet know) on each key question. The 'Record of judgements and evidence' should be used for this purpose.
- 136 It is often easy to get hung up on what is wrong and forget to flag up potential good practice for further consideration and testing. You should remember to record the good things as well as the bad.
- 137 To help you, use the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet'. You should record all emerging issues and judgements on this sheet. It will provide an ongoing record of all inspection issues raised and addressed.
- 138 When writing up the salient issues and emerging judgments on the 'Evidence sheet', you need to be rigorous and full. Abstract sentences are insufficient. The reader should be able to fully appreciate the point you are trying to make, without having to refer to supporting documents. This is important, because sometimes it is only when you come to write an issue down in full that the wider implications of the point emerge. In this way, you can be confident that you will not suddenly discover important issues late in the process (i.e. when you come to write the report!). A key principle underlying the entire inspection approach is that the final report gets written as you go along. You should get into the habit of writing your emerging judgments 'right first time'. Therefore the last section of the 'Evidence sheet' is very important. The writing should be evaluative and succinct.
- 139 The emerging judgements in the 'Evidence sheet' must be accompanied by an emerging grade.
- 140 The RI should transfer the emerging judgments, emerging grades, initials of the inspector and the reference from each 'Evidence sheet' onto the 'Record of judgements and evidence'. This is very helpful for the briefing meeting with the local authority, during feedback meetings throughout the 'on-site' inspection week and during the oral feedback at the end of the inspection.

- 141 The 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' will form the basis of the writing on the four key questions and will inform the findings section of the final report.
- 142 The 'Record of judgments and evidence sheet' can be used at team meetings during the inspection week as a focus for discussion on each key question. It helps identify emerging good features and shortcomings under each of the four key questions. It also helps identify areas where the evidence base appears thin and the team may need to collect extra evidence during the 'on-site' week. Throughout the week, the emerging judgements may be amended, discarded or added to depending on the evidence that emerges each day.
- 143 The 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' will inform the PowerPoint presentation at the oral feedback. The grades on the sheet will enable the team to pinpoint areas that have good features or shortcomings. These can be re-cast into the bullet points for the PowerPoint presentation. It is important that you keep the first version of the 'Evidence sheets' and the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' so that an audit trail can be maintained in the event of a challenge.

Relating the issues to the key questions

- 144 It is critical that you start making the links between the issues you are raising, the key inspection questions and the guidance information. The use of the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' will help you place emerging issues and judgements under the four key questions. This will help to develop the impressions you have formed and help to focus your attention. You also need to remember that you will not have the time when you are on site to look at everything. You must be ruthless and drop issues that will impact only marginally on the final judgements.
- 145 You will also have to consider carefully which of the key inspection questions are affected by the hypotheses you have raised. Some of the hypotheses you raise may impact on more than one of the key inspection questions, so this is an important consideration at this time. For example, an issue relating to weak leadership of a service could impact on your judgement of the effectiveness of the service and its leadership as well as the prospects of improvement for the authority. You therefore need to link each issue recorded on the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' to one or more of the four key questions. There is column on the left hand side of the sheet for you to note the question number.
- 146 You do this on the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet'. You will thus be able to see which of the issues you have raised impact on which questions. You will also be able to spot inter-relationships between issues and judgements, which may lead to the re-writing or streamlining of issues and judgements. This process also reveals where there are gaps. It allows you to begin to plan your inspection in earnest.

Additional evidence and information

- 147 Some early impressions will be clearer than others, some will be little more than hunches, others will be more rigorously-defined hypotheses. You need to decide whether or not you have enough evidence to support your early judgement or whether additional on-site inspection activity is required.

- 148 When deciding whether further investigation is warranted, you have to handle carefully the underlying tension between wanting to collect too much evidence and the failure to collect enough. Likewise, you have to resist the temptation to jump to conclusions. It could be that there are a number of different explanations for the issue or point of concern – you should therefore be prepared to be proved wrong as more evidence emerges. You should not be afraid to contact the local authority to ask questions and begin the process of probing and discovery, as long as you are mindful of the need to avoid over-burdening local authority staff. Contact by phone or e-mail may well help prevent you going up a 'blind alley' and will help refine the hypotheses and hence target more effectively your inspection resources.
- 149 Following the team meeting that takes place either before the inspection or on the morning of the inspection, you should now be in a position to plan the on-site activity required to gather the additional evidence required to develop, refute or confirm all of the issues you have identified.
- 150 The templates for the 'Evidence sheet - Documents', 'Evidence sheet - Interviews' and 'Record of judgements and evidence' follow on the next three pages.

Estyn Inspection of Local Education Authority Education Services in Wales

Evidence sheet – documents and other activities

Elwyr local authority - School improvement service - January 2008

Inspector name	File	Date	Document/ Policy / Activity	Type of Activity
A.N. Inspector	<i>Doc ANI 1</i>		<i>Document title</i>	<i>Reading</i>
<i>Purpose/ Focus</i>				
Responses/ Salient Features				
Key question	Grade [1 to 4]	Judgement (File reference:)		
Key question	Grade [1 to 4]	Judgement (File reference:)		
Further action/ emerging recommendation – <i>Who? What? When? Priority?</i>				

Key questions:

- 1 How effective is the authority's strategic planning?
- 2 How effective are the services and how does performance compare?
- 3 How effective are leadership and strategic management?
- 4 How well do leaders and managers, at all levels, monitor, evaluate and improve services?

Estyn Inspection of Local Education Authority Education Services in Wales

Evidence sheet – interviews

Elwyr local authority – School improvement service – January 2008

Inspector name	File	Date	Interview Document/ Activity	Type of Activity
A.N. Inspector	Int ANI 1		Name of interviewee	Interview
<i>Purpose/ Focus</i>				
<i>Responses/ Salient Features</i>				
Key question	Grade [1 to 4]	Judgement (File reference:)		
Key question	Grade [1 to 4]	Judgement (File reference:)		
<i>Further action/ emerging recommendation –</i>				
<i>Who? What? When? Priority?</i>				

Key questions:

- 1 How effective is the authority's strategic planning?
- 2 How effective are the services and how does performance compare?
- 3 How effective are leadership and strategic management?
- 4 How well do leaders and managers, at all levels, monitor, evaluate and improve services?

**Record of judgements and evidence for inspection of Elwyr local authority
School Improvement service**

Reporting Inspector: A.N. Inspector

Question	Judgement	Grade	Insp	File ref
1				
1				
1				
1				
2				
2				
2				
2				
3				
3				
3				
3				
4				
4				
4				
4				

Designing reality checks

- 151 Having completed an initial analysis of the local authority’s performance against the four key questions, you now have to decide what reality checks will provide the evidence needed as efficiently as possible. You can note the inspection activity you need in the ‘What additional evidence is needed?’ section of the ‘Evidence sheet’.
- 152 Reality checks consist of a set of activities that together provide evidence to help you reach conclusions in framing your judgements. The strength of reality checks is the way in which the cumulative set of activities brings together sometimes unrelated information in a structured way.
- 153 The reality checks:
- test whether the local authority is doing what it actually says it is doing;
 - gain evidence to prove or disprove the initial impressions formulated before the on-site inspection stage; and
 - gather enough evidence and information to answer the four key questions and support the overall judgements.
- 154 Reality checks are generally focused upon the outcomes of a service and how well the service meets the needs of its users, and help the inspectors see what is actually happening within a service. They can help us find out whether the user’s experience of the local authority matches the local authority’s intentions.

- 155 It is essential that you select and tailor the reality checks appropriately to the issues and hypotheses that you have identified. These should be guided by what you have written in the 'Further action/emerging recommendation – Who? What? When? Priority?' box at the end of the 'Evidence sheet'. All the reality checks should emerge or develop from what the team has identified on the 'Evidence sheets', otherwise there is a danger that the team might look for other evidence that is not germane to the issues and hypotheses that have been identified. A good reality check allows inspectors to gather evidence that enables them to answer a large number of questions at the same time. It may help them to work back from the outputs of a service into the organisation to diagnose why a service does (or does not) perform. Alternatively, the reality check can be used to work through a system to demonstrate the impact of a particular decision-making process at the point of service delivery.
- 156 You need to ensure that all your inspection issues are sufficiently addressed by your planned inspection activity and that the inspection activity is included on the inspection timetable.
- 157 Often you will be carrying out a number of interviews that support a large number of your inspection issues. It is often helpful for pairs of inspectors to interview a senior officer or member in order to minimise demands on his/her time. Where this happens, each inspector in turn will be able to engage directly with the officer or member while the other inspection takes notes. (See page 35 for a template.) It is essential to create a summary agenda for each interview to make sure you focus on what is relevant, and make sure that no crucial questions are left out when conducting an interview. You should derive this agenda from the 'Evidence sheets' and in particular from the 'Further action/emerging recommendation – Who? What? When? Priority?' box. For example, the further action to 'interview head of service' may form part of the reality check to test strategic leadership and performance management, and the agenda will need to reflect all of these themes.

Planning your time on site

- 158 When you have summarised your inspection activities and estimated how long they will take, you will be able to prepare the inspection plan timetable. You should be in regular contact with the nominee or the authority counterpart at this stage to ensure that key local authority staff will be available when the inspection team need to see them.
- 159 In low-risk combined field or low-risk single field inspections, where there is no pre-inspection briefing meeting with the local authority, you should use the meeting about the inspection arrangements to indicate a possible range of people you are likely to want to interview. You can then finalise these arrangements on the first day of the on-site period of the inspection.
- 160 In all other types of inspection, where there is a pre-inspection meeting with the local authority, the timetable at this stage is indicative because you will have to juggle timings to fit the availability of key people for interviews etc. (See paragraph 98 for suggested interviewees). The fine-tuning of the inspection timetable is best done at the end of the briefing meeting when you can speak to the nominee or counterpart directly. Alternatively, this can happen later, as long as the timetable is finalised in good time before the on-site inspection period.

- 161 Two inspectors should attend the key interviews, which are likely to yield evidence across a range of issues. Experience from the first cycle has shown that it is helpful if one inspector leads the interview while the second inspector takes a record of the interview. This should be using the template provided on page 35. If a laptop is used, it is polite to ask the interviewee/s if they have any objections to a colleague typing notes throughout the interview. If there is an objection, notes should be handwritten instead and then transcribed into the 'Evidence sheet – Interview'.
- 162 The notes you provide of reality checks and interviews in the inspection plan should include the approximate time each should take. Key interviews will need to be planned well in advance to allow for diary commitments of local authority officers.
- 163 The RI will maintain a log of interviews and meetings held during the inspection week. A template for the interview log can be found at page 47. At the end of each day, the log should be updated with a note of the name/s of interviewees and the duration of their interview. The same procedure should be used if a focus group is interviewed or if a school is visited. At the end of the inspection the log of inspection activity should be filed in the local authority inspection electronic file or printed out for lodging with the registered file.
- 164 A key issue for your inspection timetable is to allow plenty of uncommitted time to let you prepare for and digest what you find from reality checks. On most inspections, it is helpful if interviews, focus group meetings and visits can be planned for the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the week on-site. In high-risk and medium-risk full inspections, these could continue on to the Thursday of the first week of the on-site inspection. In the low-risk combined field and low-risk single field inspections, these should take place on the Tuesday or Wednesday. This allows time in the remaining days to arrange follow-up interviews or visits should you need to. You should also follow a similar pattern in the second period of on-site inspection for high-risk and medium-risk full inspections. In these inspections, you should arrange for the reality checks to take place as early as possible in the inspection week to allow enough time for further meetings and for the team to discuss the evidence and reach evaluations.
- 165 It is crucial to plan a team meeting, at the end of each day. In addition, you need to plan a team meeting of at least half a day towards the end of your time on site, and a further one on the morning of the final day, for the team to prepare the outline oral feedback.

Briefing and feeding back initial impressions to the local authority – the briefing meeting

- 166 The briefing meeting that takes place before the inspection for most inspections and on the first morning of the inspection for some low-risk inspections aims to:
- ensure that key officers and relevant elected members in the local authority are clear about the process of inspection;
 - inform key officers in the local authority about the scope of the inspection, the main impressions and hypotheses that you have formed and the reality checks that you have planned to undertake; and

- give the local authority the opportunity to challenge you at this early stage and in the process help ensure that you are not planning to run up a blind alley.
- 167 You should ask the nominee or the local authority counterpart to ensure that the right people attend this meeting (see paragraphs 79 and 98). The agenda should include:
- the context of inspection;
 - the process of inspection;
 - the initial impressions formed by the team to date and hypotheses that you wish to test out throughout the inspection; and
 - a brief indication of the team's plans for the on-site inspection.
- 168 At the end of the briefing meeting, it is helpful to discuss the following matters with the nominee or nominated contact:
- the detailed inspection timetable requested by the team;
 - other on-site needs for inspection;
 - establishing how the Director of Education wishes to have daily feedback during the on-site inspection period; and
 - confirming arrangements for the oral feedback at the end of the on-site inspection period.
- 169 You need to be very clear, both during any initial meeting with the local authority and at the briefing meeting itself, that the local authority has obligations to you as inspectors and vice versa. For example, you might emphasise the need to keep appointments and that the local authority, where possible, should make sure that staff and other interviewees make themselves available at the agreed times and locations during the period of inspection. You should also take the opportunity to explain how the team will be deployed in relation to the services reviewed. While, in general, inspection activities will be planned and agreed with the local authority at this stage, some additional inspection activities may be arranged at short notice after the briefing meeting or during the week on-site.
- 170 You should check that the local authority has told all staff connected with the field being inspected about the inspection. You also need to check with the local authority whether there are any areas of sensitivity, e.g. staff being disciplined or under threat of redundancy. However, beware of being steered away from what may be a difficult situation for the local authority.
- 171 For some reality checks, you may decide not to specify the site or location that you will be visiting. This is because, given this information, some local authorities may temporarily change service levels to create a more positive impression.
- 172 You will present your initial impressions and hypotheses against the four key questions. You will explain to the local authority how you will work, and discuss practical arrangements for the inspection.
- 173 You are aiming for a dialogue with the local authority: on the one hand imparting your key points of focus and intended reality checks; on the other, looking for feedback from the local authority on the scope and depth of what is intended. If there are any

problems it is better that they are raised now rather than later. The meeting might be one, two or three hours in duration – in other words, just as long as needed.

Practical tips

- 174 The more open you are about your initial impressions at this stage, the less likely it is that the local authority will turn round later in the inspection and challenge what you are doing.
- 175 The RI should lead the briefing meeting and ask members of the team to answer specific questions on the areas for which they had responsibility. This will not only portray teamwork and professionalism, but it will also show an understanding of the local authority on the part of the whole team.
- 176 You will not have much time allocated to preparation – using a PowerPoint presentation based on bullet points makes very efficient use of your time and ensures there is a shared understanding amongst the team of the key issues. On low-risk combined field and low-risk single field inspections, it is unlikely that you will have enough time to prepare a PowerPoint presentation.
- 177 Where appropriate, share a hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation with the local authority through the nominee or authority counterpart. You should leave the local authority with a hard copy at the end of the briefing meeting or offer to email a copy of the PowerPoint file to the nominee or authority counterpart.
- 178 Filling in the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' pays dividends on-site. The more completely you record your initial impressions and judgements, the easier it will be later to prepare your oral feedback and the final report.
- 179 Prepared agendas or aides-memoire for your key interviews are essential to help make sure you focus on your key inspection issues.
- 180 It is crucial to programme a team meeting, at the end of each day. You will also need to reserve time for the team to prepare the formal oral feedback. This team meeting will normally happen, at the very latest, on the morning of the final day of the on-site inspection period, with the oral feedback timetabled for the afternoon. However, if time permits such a meeting to begin well in advance of the final day such as the Thursday morning or afternoon, so much the better. In high-risk and medium-risk full inspections where there are two periods of on-site inspection, you will need to arrange such meetings towards the end of the second on-site period. However, as you will need to provide the authority with an informal feedback at the end of the first on-site period of the inspection, you will need to use some time on the Friday morning for the team to agree these provisional findings.

9 The inspection process – reality checks on site

- 181 The purpose of this stage of the inspection is to gather enough evidence and information to allow you to answer the four key inspection questions and sustain their overall judgements. You do this by carrying out a selection of reality checks.
- 182 This is the most visible part of the inspection to people at the authority and any other stakeholders who may be involved. Schools are the clients for some local authority services, whereas in other cases, the local authority provides a service for individual pupils and their parents. In either case, inspectors will want to look at the service from the user's perspective. These activities will include discussing aspects of the local authority's provision with those who use its services.
- 183 There are two steps which should be carried out each day until you are ready to prepare your oral feedback:
- carry out reality checks and record findings; and
 - review findings and make and record concluding judgements.

Carrying out reality checks and recording findings

- 184 During the day you will be undertaking and making notes of reality checks as set out in the inspection timetable.
- 185 It is very important to capture your findings on an 'Evidence sheet'. You may be firming up some of your initial impressions and hypotheses, as well as adding new issues that emerge as a result of the reality checks.
- 186 It is important that you make a record of interviews, scrutiny of documents etc. This should be done using the 'Evidence sheet' template (see pages 34 and 35). Handwritten notes should be typed up onto the 'Evidence sheet' as soon as possible after the inspection activity, whether it is scrutiny of documents or an interview. You do not need to bother writing up your notes anywhere else. **Make sure that you keep all written notes and jottings as part of the evidence that has to be added to the inspection file at the end of the inspection.** Remember that the 'Evidence sheets', 'Record of judgements and evidence' and any contributory handwritten notes may be produced as evidence if there is an appeal against the findings of the inspection, or a judicial review.
- 187 The advantage of keeping notes of salient evidence and judgements in electronic format is that they can be easily copied to all members of the inspection team. This is helpful for inspectors to refer to when they draft the section of the report for which they have responsibility.

Making concluding judgements and reviewing overall progress

- 188 At the end of each day you should meet as a team to discuss what you have found during the day. One to one-and-a-half hours at the end of each day is highly desirable. It is one of the most important parts of your inspection. You will be aiming

to synthesise your findings as a team and update the 'Record of judgements and evidence' – always looking to close down issues where there is enough evidence. If you have completed the 'Evidence sheets' as advised, then the RI can copy the concluding judgements from the 'Evidence sheet' into whichever part of the 'Record of judgements and evidence sheet' is most appropriate in terms of its relevance to one of the four key questions.

- 189 Having updated the 'Record of judgement and evidence' at end of each day, you can concentrate on polishing the judgements and weighing up whether you have all the evidence you need to make judgements on the four key questions. You should always be asking: 'Have we enough evidence? Do we need anything else?', whether or not you can now treat any of your issues as resolved.
- 190 The RI will find it helpful to maintain and update the 'Record of judgements and evidence' at the end of each day. This makes the copying and pasting of judgments from the 'Evidence sheets' into a manageable task. If you leave this process until later in the week, it becomes a much harder task. It also defeats the purpose of the 'Record of judgments and evidence' as an ongoing 'touchstone' as to how the inspection is going. The 'Record of judgements and evidence' can be used to focus discussion at each team meeting and can be used to build up a set of bullet points for the presentation at the oral feedback.
- 191 During the on-site period, the inspectors will give regular feedback to senior local authority officers as the inspection progresses. This is arranged through the nominee or counterpart. The RI may arrange to meet the Director and/or senior officer at the end of each day after the team meeting or at the start of the following day. It is helpful if one inspector from the team accompanies the RI to make a note of any concerns raised by the local authority. The 'Record of judgements and evidence' is helpful during these feedbacks because you can use the emerging grades and judgments to highlight those areas that are emerging as good/improving or with many shortcomings/barriers to improvement.
- 192 You will be examining the local authority's performance in the light of the evaluation criteria shown below. The words 'service' and 'activity' are used to denote any service, function or area of responsibility that forms the focus area for the inspection.

Key Question 1: How effective is the local authority's strategic planning?

- 193 Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the local authority:
- 1.1 has clearly stated and appropriate aims that:
 - address relevant national and local priorities;
 - take account of audits of need; and
 - reflect the results of self-evaluation;
 - 1.2 consults and communicates effectively with service users, local people and key partners;
 - 1.3 has realistic and coherent strategies, policies and supporting plans for implementing activities which clearly set out how it is going to turn aims into action and what outcomes it is seeking;
 - 1.4 is effective in making decisions;

- 1.5 strategically considers resources and matches these (staff, funding etc) to its priorities for service delivery; and
- 1.6 contributes to, leads (where applicable) and gains the support of partnerships.

Key Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

194 Where appropriate, inspectors should evaluate, grade and report on the effectiveness and value for money of:

Support for school improvement:

- 2.1.1 local authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention;
- 2.1.2 the authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support;
- 2.1.3 meeting the needs of and raising standards of specific groups;
- 2.1.4 curriculum support and enhancement and broadening opportunities for learning;
- 2.1.5 support for school leadership and management including support to school governors; and
- 2.1.6 value for money;

Promoting social inclusion and well-being:

- 2.2.1 the Council's work to meet its statutory duties in respect of:
 - looked-after children;
 - excluded pupils;
 - promoting race equality and combating racism;
 - preventing and tackling bullying; and
 - child protection and well-being;
- 2.2.2 the Council's work in raising standards for specific groups of vulnerable children and young people;
- 2.2.3 support for attendance at schools;
- 2.2.4 support for behaviour in schools; and
- 2.2.5 value for money;

Additional Learning Needs (ALN):

- 2.3.1 the Council's work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN);
- 2.3.2 the Council's work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN;
- 2.3.3 the Council's provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and /or provided by or with other agencies;
- 2.3.4 the Council's work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN; and
- 2.3.5 value for money;

Access and school organisation:

- 2.4.1 the provision of an appropriate range and number of school places;
- 2.4.2 asset management planning and the education capital programme;
- 2.4.3 admissions to schools;
- 2.4.4 home-school transport;
- 2.4.5 co-ordination of early years (after Children Act 2004 has commenced); and
- 2.4.6 value for money;

Support services:

- 2.5.1 services to support schools;
- 2.5.2 corporate services for education, including schools;
- 2.5.3 property related services;
- 2.5.4 school meals; and
- 2.5.5 value for money.

Key Question 3: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

195 Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:

- 3.1 the quality of the leadership provided by elected members;
- 3.2 the quality of leadership provided by senior officers; and
- 3.3 the quality and appropriateness of membership and actions in partnership working.

Key Question 4: How well do leaders and managers at all levels monitor, evaluate and improve services?

196 Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the authority:

- 4.1 makes appropriate arrangements for securing continuous improvement with due regard for economy, effectiveness and efficiency;
- 4.2 ensures elected members play an appropriate role in performance management;
- 4.3 implements self-evaluation procedures effectively and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement; and
- 4.4 has a good track record in securing improvements.

197 As a team you should be able to see clearly 'where you are with the inspection' and what still needs to be done to establish a complete series of conclusions on each of the four key questions. Through the process of updating the 'Record of judgements and evidence', you begin to build up a body of evidence and judgements. It will pay dividends later because the 'Record of judgements and evidence' starts to give shape to the draft report. The discipline of writing down your judgements and listing the evidence for them makes the job of generating the oral feedback both easier and more robust. Indeed the oral feedback should be driven and generated by the 'Record of judgements and evidence' and your embryonic draft report. This ensures a good match between your oral feedback and the subsequent report.

- 198 In high-risk and medium-risk full inspections, there are two on-site inspection periods. At the end of the first period, you are likely to have arrived at a broad range of provisional findings about the work of the local authority as a whole. You will need to provide the local authority with some indication of these findings in an informal feedback meeting at the end of the first on-site inspection period. The team then will need to consider these findings in the team meeting that takes place between the two on-site periods of the inspection. During this meeting the team will need to decide:
- which findings no longer need further investigation and can be confirmed as concluding judgements;
 - which findings or issues need further in-depth investigation during the second on-site period of the inspection; and
 - which reality checks need to be undertaken in the second period of the inspection and who needs to undertake them.
- 199 The RI will need to discuss these reality checks with the nominee or counterpart and arrange for them to take place. The team will need to be prepared to undertake the reality checks in the second on-site period as soon as possible on the first day.
- 200 At the end of the inspection period of all types of inspection, you are now at the point of assembling your formal oral feedback.

Practical tips

- 201 Fill in your 'Record of judgements and evidence' sheet as you go through each day, making concluding judgements for as many of your inspection issues as possible. The concluding judgments come from each of the 'Evidence sheets'.
- 202 Stick rigidly to the discipline of having the daily team meeting – aim to finish at a civilised time! Try to stick to emerging good features and shortcomings and the supporting evidence. Avoid anecdotal 'ramblings' in which an inspector describes everything they has done during the day. Using the original Powerpoint slides from the briefing meeting provides a focus for the team to either substantiate hypotheses or to dismiss any initial hypotheses that may be causing concern.
- 203 Use your 'Record of judgments and evidence' as the focus for the daily meeting and in the meeting that takes place between the two on-site inspection periods in some inspections – keep asking: 'Have we got enough evidence – what is our best story for each key question?'
- 204 If you have enough evidence on an issue – don't plough on with scheduled reality checks for the sake of it – re-focus on where you need more or better evidence instead.
- 205 Write everything up there and then on the 'Evidence sheets'. You will lose it if you leave it until the next day.

When to stop

- 206 Focus on outcomes. Local authority inspection is about gathering evidence and forming views around two key judgements:
- How good is the local authority's performance?
 - Will the local authority's performance improve?
- 207 When conducting an inspection always focus on these two essential judgements. If what you are doing doesn't contribute to these judgements, then stop doing it.

Summary of interviews and visits

Date:

Name of inspector:

Date of interview	Inspectors	Interviewee	Length of interview	'Evidence sheet' reference number

10 The inspection process – the oral feedback

208 This stage describes the first of two stages of reporting back to the local authority on the findings of the inspection. This first stage is a formal oral feedback, which is essentially a PowerPoint based presentation and discussion. Section 11 looks at the second stage – the preparation and publication of the written report and, where applicable, its presentation to Council members and officers.

The moderation meeting

209 Before delivering the oral feedback to the local authority, you will be asked to discuss your findings with the MHMI for Youth and Local Authority Education Services who will scrutinise and challenge your findings. In exceptional circumstances, another MHMI may carry out the moderation exercise. This forms part of the moderation process for LAES inspections. In practice, this usually happens on Thursday or Friday morning when the MHMI attends the team meeting.

210 Following this meeting, you may need to make some changes to your presentation.

Preparing for the formal oral feedback

211 At this stage, you will have recorded your findings and concluding judgements on the 'Evidence sheets' and the 'Record of judgements and evidence' sheet. This should facilitate the task of reviewing your concluding judgements against each of the four key questions, and assembling your feedback presentation.

212 You will already have given the local authority informal feedback as the inspection has progressed. At the formal oral feedback, you tell the local authority how its major fields of responsibility have fared against the four key questions, and explain how these answers lead to the two overall judgements. You should aim to have a set of bullet points for each key question and, if possible, some sort of written draft by the time you are presenting the oral feedback. It is important to include both positive and negative findings to present a fair and balanced view. But make sure that you do not leave out strong evidence. There should be no surprises in the final report.

213 The formal oral feedback meeting normally takes the form of a PowerPoint presentation, followed by discussion of issues arising from it. The length of the presentation for the oral feedback should not normally be longer than 45 minutes. The meeting itself will of course take a lot longer to deliver if you are able to encourage the local authority to ask questions and discuss the findings. At the conclusion of the oral feedback, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation should be left with the local authority either as hardcopy or as an electronic file.

214 You will have to gauge how far to intervene in the question of who attends the formal oral feedback meeting. It is our policy to be as inclusive as possible, but local authorities expecting bad news will understandably want to limit the audience. In the first cycle of local authority inspections, the authority usually invited the same officers who attended the pre-inspection briefing meeting. However, when the inspection is critical of a particular group (e.g. members or senior corporate managers) or

individual (e.g. manager of the service), you need to insist, diplomatically, that those affected have the opportunity to be present. You will also need to be clear about people from the whole of the authority being present, especially if it is a critical report.

- 215 You should ensure through the nominee or local authority counterpart that potential participants are given this date and time as early as possible, to ensure that they have it in their diaries. You should check as far as possible that the venue is suitable for displaying a PowerPoint presentation i.e. has a screen, a suitable data projector, a table and power sockets/leads.
- 216 You must plan to run the oral feedback in a way that encourages reactions from the local authority to the inspection team. You should welcome further comments and reflections from the authority after the oral feedback – but the onus is on the council to provide additional evidence or information if it disagrees with inspectors' judgements and recommendations. The local authority should be asked to provide any such evidence within five working days of the oral feedback.

The oral feedback template

- 217 There is a PowerPoint template for an oral feedback presentation. The template is available to reporting inspectors on the O: drive.

Scoring and outcomes

- 218 The performance of the local authority in relation to the field or fields inspected will be shown on a chart that will allow local people and the local authority to compare it with that of other councils, previous inspections of the same field, and other council services that have been inspected by other inspectorates and regulators. The scoring chart appears in the PowerPoint oral feedback template. There will also be a grade given for each of the key questions.
- 219 You should tell the authority what recommendations you are making, and whether or not you are proposing any follow-up action.
- 220 Follow-up can take one or more of a number of forms, including:
- monitoring or checking for progress on action points;
 - re-inspection;
 - recommendation for an inspection of the local authority's corporate governance;
or
 - referral to Welsh Assembly Government.
- 221 If you think that a corporate governance inspection or referral due to very poor performance might be a possibility, you must alert the MHMI or Head of the Education Partnerships, Training and Inclusion Directorate immediately. However, your dialogue with the relationship manager and involvement in the risk assessment of the authority should have already highlighted any concerns of this nature.

Scoring chart

XXXXXXXXXX Local Authority XXXXXXXX Service

How good is the local authority's performance?

Good with outstanding features

Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features outweigh shortcomings

Shortcomings in important areas

Many important barriers to improvement

Some good prospects, but barriers in important areas

Improvement prospects are good, with no major barriers

Improvement prospects are good, with significant improvements already in place

Will the local authority's performance improve?

(Drag and drop the black circle ● at the required position on the chart)

Delivering the oral feedback to the local authority

- 222 The local authority may well be defensive at the oral feedback, so it is extremely important that you are well prepared to answer questions and substantiate findings. You must also be prepared to stand your ground and should not remove or water down findings unless they cannot be substantiated. It is also likely that local authorities will have already started the process of putting right some of the areas that may come up as findings, and will want that to be noted.
- 223 The RI should lead the feedback presentation and invite members of the team to answer specific questions on the areas for which they had responsibility. This will not only portray teamwork and professionalism, but it will also show an understanding of the service on the part of the whole team.
- 224 Following your presentation, or each part of it, there may be a question-and-answer session. Your team should be able to answer most of the questions, but there may be areas where you need to research the answer. You will need to take note of these questions and explain to the authority that you will answer the questions within a few days, undertake further activity, or withdraw the finding if it cannot be substantiated. It is advisable for a member of the team to take a written note of all questions and responses.
- 225 Following the question-and-answer session you should explain to the local authority the next steps and timescales/dates in which to provide a formal, written response to the findings before the draft final report is issued for their consideration. In particular, if the local authority wishes to continue to dispute any of the team's judgements, they should provide you with any relevant additional evidence within five working days of the oral feedback. You should leave a hardcopy or electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation with the authority.
- 226 You need to explain that the local authority will receive a late draft report, either electronically or in hard copy, to help with the checking of factual accuracy. Tell the local authority that you will arrange a date to meet the nominee and senior officers to discuss any factual inaccuracies in the draft report. (See paragraphs 239 and 240 for more information.)
- 227 You need to invite the local authority to submit a written response to the inspection findings for inclusion in the report. The response will be published with your agreement. The response is not the place for authority to express a view about the quality of an inspection. Authorities are able to comment on the process of inspection by completing a questionnaire at the end of the inspection and returning it to Estyn.
- 228 You must remind the local authority that it must prepare and publish an action plan within 70 days of receipt of the report from Estyn, or 80 days if a translation of the action plan into or from Welsh is deemed by the local authority to be necessary. The plan will set out the action the local authority proposes to take to address the issues identified in the report.

Documenting areas of disagreement

- 229 Occasionally, you will not be able to resolve areas of disagreement with the authority at the oral feedback. In cases where you have agreed to differ, you can document the issue and refer to it in the report. In more serious cases, where it is clear that the authority intends to pursue a formal challenge or complaint, you must take particular care to keep detailed evidence and a written record of the issue itself and what each party feels should be done.
- 230 You must also tell the authority that both Estyn and the Wales Audit Office have complaints procedures and explain how these can be accessed.

11 The inspection process – writing the report

231 This section describes the process of writing the report. Having started with your early impressions, refined them into pre-inspection hypotheses, gathered evidence while on site and finally grouped conclusions into themes for the oral feedback, you should not need to do more probing to write the report. The work you have already performed should do the job for you. The report is the concrete and permanent outcome of the inspection. It is likely that the local authority will go through it in detail, especially when you propose following-up your recommendations at a later date. It is also a public document, so you need to be aware of a potential audience beyond the immediate players in the inspection.

Report-writing

232 You should start drafting the report as early as possible in the inspection. If possible, it can be helpful to have a draft section or sections of the report as early as the quality assurance meeting with the MHMI for Youth and Local Authority Services. As RI, you may choose to allocate writing responsibilities to team members for different sections of the draft report. In doing so, you should ensure that writing responsibilities are allocated equitably and appropriately to all team members, including yourself. In the period scheduled for writing the report, you will be responsible for putting together colleagues' contributions into a first draft. You will also be responsible for editing subsequent drafts in the light of comments received from various readers.

233 By this stage you will know in general what you want to say, and have designed and delivered the oral feedback (see the previous chapter). The 'Record of judgements and evidence' will act as a record for the judgements made throughout the inspection. If the judgments in the 'Evidence sheets', as transferred onto the 'Record of judgements and evidence' have been written in a language similar to that of report, then writing the report is much easier. The oral feedback serves the purpose of presenting your judgements to the local authority, listening and responding to their reactions, and if necessary amending what you have written at that stage. You should aim to have a set of bullet points for each key question and, if possible, some sort of written draft by the time you are presenting the oral feedback. It is possible that within a further five working days of the oral feedback, you may have to consider any additional evidence the authority chooses to provide. This evidence may or may not cause you to amend part(s) of your report, including the main judgements.

Putting the report together

234 If you have been recording your evidence and judgements on the 'Evidence sheets' and transferring the judgments onto the 'Record of judgements and evidence' throughout the inspection, you should be able to cut and paste the content of the 'Record of judgements and evidence' into the report template and hence minimise 'new' writing.

235 The basic 'story' that the report relates should also be straightforward, because you will already have considered what judgements you want to make and what evidence you will base them on.

The report-writing and publication process

- 236 For most types of inspection, the RI should normally receive team members' contributions for the report by close-of-play on the Monday following the oral feedback. In low-risk combined field and low-risk single field inspections, only the RI has writing time after the on-site inspection period. The RI is responsible for putting together colleagues' contributions into a first draft. Two or three days have been allocated for this work depending on the scale of the inspection. The draft should then be distributed for comment, approval and/or amendment to all members of the team (including the Wales Audit Office inspector) by e-mail by close-of-play on the Wednesday. They should send you their comments within 24 hours. By the end of the week following the inspection, therefore, you should have incorporated their comments in an amended draft. The RI should send this draft by e-mail to the MHMI for LEAs, copied to the Post-Inspection Services team, who will open a file for the report. When the MHMI has commented on the draft, he will send his annotated text to the Wales Audit Office for comment. The RI should consider the comments made by these three 'first readers' and amend the draft as necessary before returning it to the MHMI, who will ask Post-Inspection Services to pass it in turn to the Head of Directorate and HMCI. The RI should keep a record indicating, in particular, the reasons for his/her decision where any comments or editorial suggestions from the various 'readers' of these reports, such as head of directorate, HMCI and Wales Audit Office, appear to have been ignored. The RI does not need to record the reason for every editorial decision, just those where no amendment was made in response to a reader's comment. The record should be printed out and added to the publication file for the report.
- 237 At a relatively late stage of the drafting process (that is, after you have taken account of comments from the first readers in Estyn and the Wales Audit Office and, ideally, after you have responded to the Head of Directorate's comments), you should let the authority have a copy to check for factual accuracy. This should be a hard (paper) copy or an electronic copy, but not a Word document. The latter might enable the local authority to see any amendments that have been made to the text. If it is e-mailed to the local authority, then you should arrange for the Word document to be converted into a PDF file by the ICT section at Anchor Court. The authority should be given up to five days to scrutinise the draft. They should then draw any errors to RI's attention. This can be done by post or e-mail, but is probably best done at a meeting, where RI should note, but not necessarily respond to, the authority's comments, suggestions for amendment and reasons for amending the text. It should be made clear at the outset that discussion at such a meeting must be limited to matters of factual accuracy – it should not be seen as an opportunity to re-open debates from the oral feedback.
- 238 Half a day has been set aside on the work programme for the 'factual accuracy check' meeting. RIs should be prepared to use their programmed time flexibly in order to re-schedule this meeting to the most suitable time as necessary. Ideally, this meeting will be arranged on the basis of a late draft (as indicated in the previous paragraph), but it must take place before the draft report is submitted to the Chief Inspector. If the local authority is disputing the inspection judgements, you may wish to ask a colleague, such as the regional coordinator, to attend this meeting with you. If in doubt, discuss the matter with the MHMI for Youth and Local Authority Services,

or the Head of Directorate. When the RI has amended the draft at each stage to take account of comments from all concerned, it will be forwarded to the Publications team. The RI's responsibility for drafting and re-drafting ends at this point.

239 Local authorities are invited to submit a written response to the inspection findings for inclusion in the report. The response will be published by agreement with the reporting inspector. The local authority has five working days in which to consider the draft report and to produce its response, as well as comment on matters of factual accuracy in the draft report.

240 The local authority should:

- provide a written response to the main inspection findings;
- use this response to give an early indication of how officers and members intend to tackle recommendations;
- make sure the response is brief and generally no more than one page;
- send the response to the reporting inspector within five days of receiving the draft report; and
- understand that it is the reporting inspector's right not to include the written response in the inspection report where circumstances warrant it.

For the style of reporting, it may be useful to use as a model one of the published LAES inspection reports, all of which appear on the Estyn website.

The 'Background' section in particular should provide an indication of the socio-economic context of the local authority, together with financial and other data relating to the local authority and the services reviewed.

Writing the report – the structure

241 Inspection reports will adhere to the following structure:

- Contents
- Context
- Summary
- Recommendations
- Findings (for each field inspected)
- The local authority's response to the report findings
- Grading profile
- Composition of the inspection team

The report – context section

- 242 The 'Context' section needs to be agreed with the local authority. This section should include:
- a statement setting out the context of the inspection (e.g. the focus of the inspection, its relationship to WPI and its place within Estyn's cycle of inspections);
 - a brief, factual statement of the scope of the major fields(s) of responsibility being inspected and the associated self-evaluation procedures;
 - a concise, factual statement about the nature of the local authority, its community, and those features of the area which influence its work in the services being inspected; and
 - a paragraph on finance that will be factual and very concise, including no more than a statement about how the local authority's expenditure in education relates to its Indicator-Based Assessment for education (IBA), and explaining what factors make this expenditure high, low or otherwise.
- 243 The statements in this section should include, for example, information about the number and nature of schools, the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the provision made for them, and a description of the composition of the area in terms of its ethnic, linguistic, social and economic background. The statement may refer briefly to any particular features which help to set the inspection in context, such as significant recent changes in the nature or structure of the local authority. Additional information about the political composition and funding priorities of the local authority may help set education in the context of the whole authority.

The report – summary section

- 244 The 'Summary' section should include a concise summary of the main findings of the report, written in a style that is appropriate for a wide, non-professional audience.
- 245 For each field inspected, the summary should provide clear judgements as set out in the section on Inspection Judgements in Part 2 of the Framework for the inspection of local authority education services.
- The scoring chart should head the section.
 - The rest of the summary should set out the balance of main findings in relation to each of the two key inspection judgements. These should be set out as bullet points, using 'ticks' for positive findings and 'crosses' for negative ones. Positive findings should appear first.

The report – recommendations section

- 246 This section should include clear, practical recommendations about the actions the authority should take to improve its performance.

247 The recommendations should be stated in such a way as to provide a clear basis for:

- the local authority to plan improvements in the quality of its service;
- inspectors to evaluate progress during follow-up work; and
- auditors to assess the extent to which the local authority has responded to the inspection during their annual audit of the improvement plan.

248 These recommendations should arise from the findings and relate to the key questions. The emphasis should be on raising the standards that learners achieve and improving the quality of local authority services. Non-compliance with statutory requirements should be included. The recommendations should be listed in order of priority in relation to improving the quality of services. Where the inspection highlights issues already identified as priorities in the local authority's published plans, such as the SEP/CYPP, this section should make reference to the fact.

249 The recommendations may appear in early drafts as bullet points, but will later be numbered i.e. R1, R2 etc. Keep the recommendations short – aim for two or three lines each at the most – and don't have too many. You might want to use subheadings and indented lists to emphasise the text or group the recommendations according to who is intended to carry them out.

The report – findings section

250 In this section, the judgements reported in Section 2 should be supported by evaluation, commentary and pertinent examples of evidence relating to the four key questions.

Key Question 1: How effective is the local authority's strategic planning?

251 Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the local authority:

- 1.1 has clearly stated and appropriate aims that:
 - address relevant national and local priorities;
 - take account of audits of need; and
 - reflect the results of self-evaluation;
- 1.2 consults and communicates effectively with service users, local people and key partners;
- 1.3 has realistic and coherent strategies, policies and supporting plans for implementing activities which clearly set out how it is going to turn aims into action and what outcomes it is seeking;
- 1.4 is effective in making decisions;
- 1.5 strategically considers resources and matches these (staff, funding etc) to its priorities for service delivery; and
- 1.6 contributes to, leads (where applicable) and gains the support of partnerships.

Key Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

252 Where appropriate, inspectors should evaluate, grade and report on the effectiveness and value for money of:

Support for school improvement:

- 2.1.1 local authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention;
- 2.1.2 the authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support;
- 2.1.3 meeting the needs of and raising standards of specific groups;
- 2.1.4 curriculum support and enhancement and broadening opportunities for learning;
- 2.1.5 support for school leadership and management including support to school governors; and
- 2.1.6 value for money;

Promoting social inclusion and well-being:

- 2.2.1 the Council's work to meet its statutory duties in respect of:
 - looked-after children;
 - excluded pupils;
 - promoting race equality and combating racism;
 - preventing and tackling bullying; and
 - child protection and well-being;
- 2.2.2 the Council's work in raising standards for specific groups of vulnerable children and young people;
- 2.2.3 support for attendance at schools;
- 2.2.4 support for behaviour in schools; and
- 2.2.5 value for money;

Additional Learning Needs (ALN):

- 2.3.1 the Council's work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN);
- 2.3.2 the Council's work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN;
- 2.3.3 the Council's provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and /or provided by or with other agencies;
- 2.3.4 the Council's work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN; and
- 2.3.5 value for money;

Access and school organisation:

- 2.4.1 the provision of an appropriate range and number of school places;
- 2.4.2 asset management planning and the education capital programme;
- 2.4.3 admissions to schools;
- 2.4.4 home-school transport;

- 2.4.5 co-ordination of early years (after Children Act 2004 has commenced); and
- 2.4.6 value for money;

Support services:

- 2.5.1 services to support schools;
- 2.5.2 corporate services for education, including schools;
- 2.5.3 property related services;
- 2.5.4 school meals; and
- 2.5.5 value for money.

Key Question 3: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

253 Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:

- 3.1 the quality of the leadership provided by elected members;
- 3.2 the quality of leadership provided by senior officers; and
- 3.3 the quality and appropriateness of membership and actions in partnership working.

Key Question 4: How well do leaders and managers at all levels monitor, evaluate and improve services?

254 Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the authority:

- 4.1 makes appropriate arrangements for securing continuous improvement with due regard for economy, effectiveness and efficiency;
- 4.2 ensures elected members play an appropriate role in performance management;
- 4.3 implements self-evaluation procedures effectively and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement; and
- 4.4 has a good track record in securing improvements.

The report – the local authority's response to the report findings

255 You should invite the local authority to submit a written response to the inspection findings for inclusion in the report. The response will be published by agreement with the reporting inspector. Remind the local authority that the response is not the place for the authority to express a view about the quality of an inspection.

256 Please refer to Annex 5 for greater detail.

Profile of grades

257 In this section, use the profile template to show the grades given for this inspection. The grades given for each inspection will contribute to a cumulative grade profile for the local authority.

258 Please refer to Annex 2 for further detail.

The report – members of the inspection team

- 259 In this section, use the report template to list the names of inspectors, nominees and, if applicable, peer assessors. State whether they are HMI (Estyn), Wales Audit Office inspector or a specialist education inspector from the Audit Commission. Also include the name of any inspector who supported the team, e.g. from CSSIW.
- 260 Pages and paragraphs are eventually numbered so that readers can pinpoint a particular part of the text easily. However, it is helpful if you do not format the text in early drafts. In particular, please do not 'justify' text.
- 261 You should look critically at the report in terms of:
- content (statements are demonstrably based on evidence, content reflects extent and quality of evidence);
 - tone (confident, positive, encouraging, few passive sentences, writer delivers critical judgements plainly and directly);
 - clarity (the authority knows what it needs to do as a result of the inspection; readers can find their way easily around the report);
 - language (no jargon, clichés, rambling or acronyms);
 - length (proportional to the importance of the inspection);
 - style (concise, direct but courteous);
 - format (report uses report template and styles are correctly formatted); and
 - conformity (capital letters, punctuation and so on used correctly, writing is grammatical, correctly spelt and follows Estyn writing conventions and good practice).
- 262 If the inspection team has judged an aspect of the local authority's performance to be 'Grade 1 – good with outstanding features', it will be important for the written report to identify clearly the outstanding features that led to this judgement. Local authority inspection reports should normally be written concisely and should not contain much description. However, if the local authority's performance has outstanding features, there is every reason to describe these more fully in the report in the form of 'case studies' that will enable good practice to be shared more widely.

Press release

- 263 Estyn does not at present issue press releases for inspection reports on local authority services. This policy is being kept under review and may change in future.

Presentation of the report to the Council

- 264 When the report has been published, the Reporting Inspector may accept an invitation from the Council to present the report to the full Council or to a group of designated members and officers. As the text of the report will have been published by this stage, this will not be an opportunity to re-open previous debates, but will afford an opportunity to explain and amplify the report's findings. You should ask whether members of the press are present and clarify that you are presenting the main findings and recommendations of the published report to a wider audience than might have been able to attend the original feedback from the inspection team.

265 It is very important that you stick to the content of the published report. Avoid straying into unsubstantiated comments either through being drawn into member's questions or by getting carried away with exemplification. Do not make reference to the performance of other local authorities or make comparisons with other authorities, this is not Estyn practice in a public arena.

12 Post-inspection

Capturing and disseminating good practice

- 266 One aim of the inspection service is to spread good practice. It is helpful to include examples of good practice in the written report.

Intervention measures, including referral

- 267 The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills has intervention powers under Sections 60-64 of the Education Act 2002 to secure the proper performance on an LEA's functions, where the National Assembly for Wales is satisfied that an LEA is failing to perform its statutory functions.
- 268 Referral to the Welsh Assembly Government is extremely rare, and will only follow repeated failure to induce the authority to improve its services. However you may find a case for referral, but you will know well in advance of an inspection if the authority is at high risk (as will the authority).
- 269 If you identify something that you think might potentially need intervention, you must raise the issue with the MHMI for Youth and Local Authority Services or the Head of Directorate as soon as the problem appears.
- 270 In the circumstances of the Minister evoking powers of intervention, the authority will be subject to quarterly monitoring visits to judge progress against the post-inspection action plan. These will be followed by a re-inspection, probably of all services.

MAKING INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

13 What are inspectors looking for?

The judgements that inspectors have to make

271 At the end of each inspection, you have to make two key judgements:

- how good is the local authority's performance?
- will the local authority's performance improve?

272 The inspection report will set out the evidence that led to these conclusions. It will make recommendations to help the local authority to improve. The two judgements are plotted onto a simple scoring chart, so that local people and the local authority can easily assess the authority's performance in the field inspected and compare it with that of other council services that have been inspected. (There is more about the scoring chart in paragraphs 218-221 and the scoring chart is on page 50.)

273 During the course of the inspection cycle, Estyn will complete a grade profile for each local authority recording the judgements about both the overall performance of the authority for each key question and the authority's performance in the major field(s) of responsibility. These may be gained through inspections of fields or through a 'full' inspection of the whole authority. Hence, by the end of the six-year inspection programme there will be, for each inspection and for the authority overall:

- ratings for the questions: 'how good is the local authority's performance?' and 'will the local authority's performance improve?'; and
- grades for each key question and for performance in major fields of responsibility.

The questions that lead to the inspectors' judgements

274 How do you reach your conclusions? During the inspection, you will gather enough information and evidence to answer four key questions that provide the basis for the two key judgements.

275 Using the simple structure of four key questions, you will make sure that you collect the right information and evidence to support their two judgements. The presentation of your oral feedback and final report will be based on the results of the four key questions structured around the two key judgements.

The four key questions are:

- 1 How effective is the local authority's strategic planning?
- 2 How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?
- 3 How effective are leadership and strategic management?
- 4 How well do leaders and managers monitor, evaluate and improve services?

The grades that are used

- 1 The local authority's performance will be rated on a four-point scale as follows:

- Grade 1 - good with outstanding features
- Grade 2 - good features and no important shortcomings
- Grade 3 - good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4 - shortcomings in important areas

- 2 The local authority's prospects of improvement will be rated on a four-point scale:

- Grade 1 - improvement prospects are good, with significant improvements already in place
- Grade 2 - improvement prospects are good, with no major barriers
- Grade 3 - some good prospects, but barriers in important areas
- Grade 4 - many important barriers to improvement

- 276 The local authority's performance will be evaluated according to the relevant sections of inspection criteria in Annex 2 of the Local Authority Education Services framework for inspection. These are based upon the Section 38 Council Inspection and Self-Evaluation Criteria which are set out in Annex 1 of this guidance.
- 277 Your judgements should be supported by evaluation, commentary and examples of evidence relating to the four key questions. The LAES framework for inspection provides further detail of what you need to take account of when making a judgement on the four key questions.
- 278 At the end of the inspection, you will need to complete a grade profile for the local authority's performance in the field(s) inspected. If the local authority has chosen to have single or combined field inspection, the grades from each inspection will build up throughout the six-year cycle of inspection; to give an overall grade profile covering the work of the local authority. However, if the local authority chooses to have a full inspection, then all the grades will be completed after that inspection. Please refer to Annex 2 for more detail.
- 279 The developing grade profile will provide a helpful tool for use by the Regional Team Inspector in the annual joint risk assessment involving the local authority and the regulators.



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



WALES AUDIT OFFICE

SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Annex 1: Inspection criteria



ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION IN WALES
CYMDEITHAS CYFARWYDDWYR ADDYSG CYMRU

Annex 1: Inspection criteria

Question 1a: How effective is the local authority's strategic planning? (in relation to the local authority as a whole)

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the authority:	Demonstrating typical good features:
1.1	<p>has clearly stated and appropriate aims that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address relevant national and local priorities; • take account of audits of need; and • reflect the results of self-evaluation 	<p>The authority's Improvement Plan and key strategy documents set out the authority's strategic aims and priorities. They comply with the requirements of relevant Assembly Government guidance.</p> <p>Recommendations by the authority's external auditor are few in number and identify no risks that are not already included within the council's stated aims and priorities.</p> <p>The key educational priorities as identified by the Council have been accepted by all partners and the local communities themselves, and are reflected in the Community Strategy,</p> <p>Policy Agreements reflect the educational priorities and objectives shared between the authority and the Welsh Assembly Government.</p> <p>Departments of the council all understand the priority given to education in corporate plans and policies and know how their work in liaison with the education service contributes to achieving that priority.</p>
1.2	<p>consults and communicates effectively with service users, local people and key partners</p>	<p>Senior officers, elected members and school managers including governors have a clear understanding of the authority's priorities and strategic direction.</p> <p>Decisions affecting the education service are significantly informed and influenced by good consultation with stakeholders. Stakeholders are well informed about the outcomes and reasons for decisions.</p> <p>The Council is effective in maximising acceptance of, and engagement in, its priorities, policies and plans by schools, local people and other stakeholders.</p> <p>There are effective arrangements for consulting pupils.</p> <p>Consultation and communication take appropriate account of linguistic and other diversity in the community.</p>

1.3	<p>has realistic and coherent strategies, policies and supporting plans for implementing activities which clearly set out how it is going to turn aims into action and what outcomes it is seeking</p>	<p>The Council has effective corporate policies for meeting statutory requirements that impact on its education services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • race equality and promoting racial harmony; • equal opportunities and diversity (including workforce); • safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people • corporate parenting; • arrangements for health and safety; and • disability discrimination legislation. <p>There are coherent strategic plans supported by appropriate risk assessments and effective operational plans which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific objectives; • measurable and achievable targets; • responsibilities allocated to teams or individuals; • timescales which are realistic, and include clearly defined milestones; and • resource implications that indicate how much the work will cost and the source of funding. <p>Plans are clearly informed by audit, data analysis and evaluations.</p> <p>There is an effective corporate planning cycle in which all directorates are actively involved and which is co-ordinated with the financial planning cycle.</p> <p>Corporate and other strategic plans are consistent with each other, clear, well sequenced, affordable and achievable.</p> <p>Strategic planning within the education service both reflects and influences corporate planning.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Policy Agreements and other strategic plans are clearly reflected in schools' development planning.</p> <p>There is coherence but not duplication between the various layers of plans, Policy Agreements and other initiatives.</p> <p>Stakeholders, including schools, are aware of and committed to achieving the targets.</p>
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1.4	is effective in making decisions	<p>Decision-making, including that relating to the budget, is transparent. There is an informative and analytical record of all discussions, formal and informal, that lead to significant decisions affecting the education service.</p> <p>Decision-making processes are clearly articulated and are used well to improve the education service.</p> <p>Lines of communication, responsibility and accountability are clear. There are effective procedures for defining and co-ordinating the work of the different departments.</p>
1.5	strategically considers resources and matches these (staff, funding etc) to its priorities for service delivery	<p>Resources are clearly linked to priorities. Activities are costed and feasible.</p> <p>Strategy is accompanied by sound financial planning which makes proposed developments feasible. The authority is proactive in seeking and effectively using external funding to address its priorities.</p>
1.6	contributes to, leads (where applicable) and gains the support of partnerships	<p>Active and effective partnerships exist, at all levels, for example with schools; the business community; Health Service and police.</p> <p>Clear, appropriate strategic objectives are set for partnerships, and partners are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Planning effectively links the major services provided for learners by the authority and other key partners.</p> <p>The Education service contributes effectively to other services'/stakeholders' major plans and initiatives.</p> <p>The service has a clear understanding of the relative costs and benefits of the various partnerships to which it contributes.</p>

Question 1b: How effective is the authority's strategic planning? (for each field being inspected)

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the authority:	Demonstrating typical good features:
1.1	<p>has clearly stated and appropriate aims that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address relevant national and local priorities; • take account of audits of need; and • reflect the results of self-evaluation 	<p>The authority's Improvement Plan and key strategy documents set out the authority's strategic aims and priorities for the field(s). They comply with the requirements of relevant Assembly guidance.</p> <p>The key priorities for the field(s) of responsibility, as identified by the Council, have been accepted by all partners and the local communities themselves.</p> <p>Where applicable, Policy Agreements reflect the educational priorities and objectives shared between the authority and the Welsh Assembly Government.</p> <p>The departments of the council all understand the priority given to the field(s) of responsibility in corporate plans and policies, and know how their work in liaison with the education service contributes to achieving that priority.</p>
1.2	<p>consults and communicates effectively with service users, local people and key partners</p>	<p>Senior officers, elected members, governing bodies and school senior management teams have a clear understanding of the authority's priorities and strategic direction for the field(s).</p> <p>Decisions relating to the field(s) are significantly informed and influenced by good consultation with stakeholders, including learners. Stakeholders are well informed about the outcomes and reasons for decisions.</p> <p>The Council is effective in maximising acceptance of, and engagement in, its priorities, policies and plans by schools, local people and other stakeholders.</p> <p>There are effective arrangements for consulting pupils</p> <p>Consultation and communication take appropriate account of linguistic and other diversity in the community.</p>

1.3	<p>has realistic and coherent strategies, policies and supporting plans for implementing activities which clearly set out how it is going to turn aims into action and what outcomes it is seeking</p>	<p>In the field(s), appropriate account is taken of the authority's practices and strategies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • race equality and promoting racial harmony; • equal opportunities and diversity (including workforce); • safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people; • corporate parenting; • arrangements for health and safety; and • disability discrimination legislation. <p>There are coherent strategic plans supported by appropriate risk assessments and effective operational plans which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific objectives; • measurable and achievable targets; • responsibilities allocated to teams or individuals; • timescales which are realistic, and include clearly defined milestones; and • resource implications that indicate how much the work will cost and the source of funding <p>Plans are clearly informed by audit, data analysis and evaluations.</p> <p>There is an effective corporate planning cycle in which all directorates are actively involved and which is co-ordinated with the financial planning cycle.</p> <p>Corporate and other strategic plans are consistent with each other, clear, well sequenced, affordable and achievable.</p> <p>Strategic planning within the education service both reflects and influences corporate planning.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Policy Agreements and other strategic plans are clearly reflected in schools' development planning.</p> <p>There is coherence, between the planned activities in the various layers of plans, Policy Agreements and other initiatives.</p> <p>Stakeholders, including schools, elected members and officers, are aware of and committed to achieving the targets for the field(s).</p>
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1.4	is effective in making decisions	<p>Decision-making, including that relating to the budget, is transparent. There is an informative and analytical record of all discussions, formal and informal, that lead to significant decisions affecting the education service.</p> <p>Decision-making processes are clearly articulated and are used well to improve the education service.</p> <p>Lines of communication, responsibility and accountability are clear. There are effective procedures for defining and co-ordinating the work of the different departments.</p>
1.5	strategically considers resources and matches these (staff, funding etc) to its priorities for service delivery	<p>Resources are clearly linked to priorities. Activities are costed and feasible.</p> <p>Strategy is accompanied by sound financial planning which makes proposed developments feasible. The authority is proactive in seeking and effectively using external funding to address its priorities.</p>
1.6	contributes to, leads (where applicable) and gains the support of partnerships	<p>Active and effective partnerships exist, at all levels, for example with schools; the business community; Health Service; police; and providers of further education and work-based learning.</p> <p>Clear, appropriate strategic objectives are set for partnerships, and partners are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Planning effectively links the major services provided for learners by the authority and other key partners.</p> <p>The Education Department contributes effectively to other departments' / stakeholders' major plans and initiatives, relevant to this field.</p> <p>The service has a clear understanding of the relative costs and benefits of the various partnerships to which it contributes.</p>

Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money? (overview)

Inspectors should evaluate, grade and report on the effectiveness and value for money of:				
2.1 Support for school improvement	2.2 Promoting social inclusion and well-being	2.3 Additional learning needs (ALN)	2.4 Access and school organisation	2.5 Support services
2.1.1 Local authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention	2.2.1 The Council's work to meet its statutory duties in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked-after children; • excluded pupils; • promoting race equality and combating racism; • preventing and tackling bullying; and • child protection and well-being 	2.3.1 The Council's work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)	2.4.1 The provision of an appropriate range and number of school places	2.5.1 Services to support schools
2.1.2 The authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support	2.2.2 The Council's work in raising standards for specific groups of vulnerable children and young people	2.3.2 The Council's work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN	2.4.2 Asset management planning and the education capital programme	2.5.2 Corporate services for education, including schools
2.1.3 Meeting the needs of and raising standards of specific groups,	2.2.3 Support for attendance at schools	2.3.3 The Council's provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and/or provided by or with other agencies	2.4.3 Admissions to schools	2.5.3 Property related services

2.1.4 Curriculum support and enhancement and broadening opportunities for learning	2.2.4 Support for behaviour in schools	2.3.4 The Council's work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN	2.4.4 Home-school transport	2.5.4 School meals
2.1.5 Support for school leadership and management including support to school governors	2.2.5 Value for money	2.3.5 Value for money	2.4.5 Co-ordination of early years (after Children Act 2004 has commenced)	2.5.5 Value for money
2.1.6 Value for money			2.4.6 Value for money	

Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

2.1 Support for school improvement

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:	Demonstrating typical good features:
2.1.1	Local authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention	<p>The Council has clear and appropriately differentiated procedures for monitoring, challenge and intervention with a focus on under performing schools, low performing schools and schools operating in challenging circumstances. Schools have been fully consulted on the procedures.</p> <p>There is clear distinction between the services that the Council provides to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, services that the Council offers for schools to purchase from their delegated budgets and services that the Council can broker from other providers if schools ask them to do so. Schools understand this pattern of service delivery and their responsibilities for school improvement.</p> <p>The Council is effective in ensuring that schools have access to a cost-effective range of services to support school improvement, and schools know how to purchase services relevant to their needs.</p>

		<p>The Council supports schools well in developing effective procedures for self-evaluation. These are linked to school development planning. The procedures identify clearly and precisely areas where improvement and support are needed.</p> <p>Monitoring visits by officers and/or advisers lead to clearly written reports that contain unambiguous judgements and recommendations. Governors and head teachers use the reports to plan for improvement.</p> <p>Council support for setting targets has resulted in schools having robust, challenging but realistic targets. Schools respond well to challenges set by the Council and secure significant improvements in outcomes over time.</p> <p>Data</p> <p>The Council provides schools with a good and appropriate range of performance, benchmarking and comparative data. This is readily accessible and easily understood. Data contains information about the local performance of different pupil groups.</p> <p>Data are distributed effectively at appropriate times to enable schools to use them well. The transfer of data is effective at points when pupils change schools.</p> <p>The Council effectively supports schools in the use of data to secure improvement in the short-term and to inform longer-term planning.</p> <p>The Council collects, and analyses well, an appropriate spread of data covering the full range of its functions. This includes data on school/pupil performance (including data for different pupil groups such as boys and girls, minority ethnic pupils and looked-after children), attendance, exclusions, ALN, and financial management. The Council uses this data to monitor performance and plan for improvement.</p> <p>Schools causing concern</p> <p>Monitoring is effective in identifying shortcomings at an early stage. Under-performing schools and schools which show few signs of improvement are identified by the Council. Difficulties in schools causing concern are always tackled promptly and incisively.</p>
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2.1.2	The authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support	<p>The Council's strategy for raising standards in priority areas (e.g. literacy, numeracy, ICT and KS3) is clear, coherent and well understood by schools. The strategy meets the aims set out in the relevant frameworks for Wales. Strategies encompass the vision and rationale of the relevant Welsh Assembly Government initiatives.</p> <p>The strategy takes good account of the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise standards of literacy in both Welsh and English, and to develop pupils' bilingual competence in line with WAG guidance; • provide effective support for all children in the early years; • raise standards in pupils' basic and key skills; • address differences in achievement between boys and girls; • plan for effective transition between providers and key stages; • ensure assessment is accurate, consistent and informs learning; and • identify and target accurately those schools with particular needs.

		<p>Schools have been well consulted about the nature and timing of support. They know what level of support to expect as a result of the Council's identification of their particular needs and the subsequent targeting of schools.</p> <p>The Council secures sufficient high quality training in both Welsh and English, where required, for priority initiatives.</p> <p>The Council promotes well-being (and supports schools in doing so) through pro-active work in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSE and health education; • Sport and physical health; • Recreation and Out of School Hours Learning; and • experiences and activities to support the relevant strands of 14-19 Learning Pathways. <p>Good links are formed with other related initiatives and projects in priority areas.</p> <p>Council initiatives are delivered by credible experts. Staff delivering the strategy are well managed and appropriately informed.</p>
2.1.3	Meeting the needs of and raising standards of specific groups	<p>The Council's policies on equal opportunities, bilingualism and combating racial harassment are well understood and used by schools.</p> <p>The policies are comprehensive, up to date and include effective procedures for monitoring and evaluation as well as specifying action for development.</p> <p>The Council monitors the attainment, attendance, exclusions, mobility and admissions of vulnerable groups. It has a clear view of the extent and reasons for any weaknesses and takes appropriate action where necessary to secure improvements in outcomes.</p> <p>Funding under the ethnic minority achievement grant and the traveller education grants has been well-utilised in schools according to criteria that identify needs. The use of the grant is rigorously and effectively monitored and its links to school improvement are well established.</p> <p>The Council disseminates good practice with regard to minority ethnic, travellers and asylum seeker children achievement. It provides good advice and INSET targeted at weaknesses, and/or makes well judged brokerage arrangements. This has led to improvements in schools.</p>

		<p>The expertise of mainstream teachers to support ethnic minority, travellers and asylum seeker learners and provide a diverse curriculum, has been effectively developed</p> <p>There is viable and effective provision for Traveller children.</p>
2.1.4	Curriculum support and enhancement and broadening opportunities for learning	<p>The Council has accurately identified the need to provide extra learning opportunities and support in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • music tuition; • Athrawon Bro; • Schools library service; • OSHL; • PE and sport; and • experiences and activities to support the non-formal and informal strands of 14-19 Learning Pathways. <p>It actively supports the provision of an appropriate range of activities to meet needs in these areas in partnership with other services and providers.</p>
2.1.5	Support for school leadership and management including support to school governors	<p>The Council has identified the overall management development needs of governors and senior and middle managers in schools across the authority.</p> <p>There is a systematic programme of support and development for senior and middle managers including mentoring, consultancy, leadership programmes and the dissemination of good practice.</p> <p>The Council analyses well the overall strengths and weaknesses in governance across the authority and has an effective strategy for general improvement where this is needed.</p> <p>The Council has effective policies to manage governor recruitment including from minority groups. The policies result in low or decreasing rates of governor vacancies.</p> <p>The Council's relations with governors and school managers place due emphasis on school autonomy.</p> <p>The Council ensures governors are provided with relevant benchmarked information about the school's performance, including analysis of financial data and of pupils' performance. The Council ensures governors receive useful guidance on how they should use this data.</p>

		<p>Council support and training programmes are highly relevant and are responsive to the needs of individual governors, including those new to the role, and to needs of whole governing bodies.</p> <p>The quality of training is monitored and its impact evaluated.</p> <p>Attendance at training is carefully monitored.</p> <p>The Council is helpful and accessible; it responds rapidly and effectively to crises and emergencies.</p>
2.1.6	Value for money	<p>The Council compares its costs and outcomes with those of other authorities.</p> <p>The Council regularly reviews its services and related policies in order to secure continuous improvement with due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>

Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

2.2 Promoting social inclusion and the well-being of learners

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:	Demonstrating typical good features:
2.2.1	<p>The Council's work to meet its statutory duties in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked after children (LAC); • excluded pupils; • promoting race equality and combating racism; • preventing and tackling bullying; and • child protection and well-being. 	<p>The Council rigorously fulfils its duty as a corporate parent. It promotes the educational achievement as well as providing good pastoral support of children in its care.</p> <p>The Children's Services Plan and the Children First Plan define a clear and coherent strategy that enable looked after children to make good progress.</p> <p>The Council receives regular reports on the attainment of looked after children, sets meaningful targets for improvement and monitors educational progress. The Council monitors the quality of educational provision for looked after children who are placed out of county.</p> <p>The Education Department and Social Services have agreed and effective procedures for working together and mutually sharing information about looked after children.</p> <p>The Council promptly provides full-time education of a high standard for excluded pupils and young offenders.</p>

		<p>Most pupils participate fully, make good progress and are re-integrated successfully into mainstream provision.</p> <p>The Council monitors the use of exclusion in schools including the rates and length of fixed-term exclusions, the rate of permanent exclusions and the number of exclusions overturned by independent appeal panels. It takes effective action to reduce exclusion rates.</p> <p>The Council provides good leadership to schools by drafting and circulating clear policies and procedures for tackling all forms of racism and promoting racial harmony.</p> <p>The Council offers helpful advice and support to schools to promote the implementation of effective anti-bullying policies.</p> <p>The Council has formally accepted the recommendations of the report of the committee of enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence and is implementing an action plan which responds to the recommendations of the report.</p> <p>Procedures are developed to monitor incidents of racial harassment in the work place and in schools, and the Council takes firm action to support its policies.</p> <p>The Council takes a lead role in co-ordinating partnerships, establishing Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and sharing budgets.</p> <p>The Council promotes good working arrangements between schools and social workers and follows up with the social services department when schools report difficulties.</p>
2.2.2	<p>The Council's work in raising standards for specific groups of vulnerable children and young people, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minority ethnic groups; • refugees/ asylum seekers; • looked after children (LAC); 	<p>The Council fulfils the requirement of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that all children and young people, including vulnerable groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive their equal entitlement to education; • enjoy learning and achieve high standards; • attend school regularly; and • participate fully in education. <p>The Council has effective procedures to identify pupils not in school and to ensure that no child or young person becomes lost to education and to identify pupils at risk of being lost to education if they move into the area.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young parents and pregnant young women; • young offenders; • children of families in difficult circumstances; • young carers; • pupils at risk of homophobic bullying; • pupils educated otherwise than at school; and • Gypsies and Travellers. 	<p>The Council has effective referral systems that are well known to schools, social services and health professionals. There are good links with all partners at both strategic and operational levels, including clear protocols for the sharing of relevant information.</p> <p>The systems are effective in promptly identifying pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school and/or underachieving and, where possible, in preventing them from doing so.</p> <p>The Council has systems to identify children and young people whose well-being and achievement are at risk, according to local circumstances. It meets the children and young people's needs. The Council monitors and evaluates the impact of its strategy on the participation and achievement and takes timely action to address shortcomings.</p> <p>The Council provides suitable full-time education promptly for school age children and young people who are not in school. Most pupils attend regularly, make good progress and are re-integrated successfully into mainstream provision.</p> <p>There are effective procedures to monitor the education of children and young people educated outside school, including children educated at home by their parents. The Council provides parents educating their children at home with helpful guidance when requested to do so.</p> <p>The Council provides good quality guidance and access to training for school staff to meet the respective needs of vulnerable groups. Where relevant, there is multi-agency input.</p> <p>The Council actively promotes the importance of training with schools.</p> <p>The Council has sponsored projects and initiatives to improve the well-being and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils, and there is significant evidence of beneficial impact.</p> <p>Individual children, young people and communities are consulted and listened to when decisions are made about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their own future; • local provision; and • the planning and management of new services.
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2.2.3	Support for attendance at school	<p>Attendance rates are high, and/or improving faster than nationally or in similar LEAs.</p> <p>Unauthorised absence is reducing.</p> <p>The Council has a clear and well structured policy on attendance which is well understood by schools and helps parents to fulfil their statutory responsibilities under the 1996 Education Act.</p> <p>There is an effective strategy for promoting regular school attendance, which schools understand, and it is well integrated into all relevant key plans.</p> <p>There are effective arrangements for monitoring the attendance of 14-16 year old learners who may be receiving provision at a site other than the school.</p> <p>There is very effective liaison and co-ordination between relevant council services and good working relationships with schools and other agencies such as the local youth offending team, the police and courts. All statutory and legal responsibilities are fully met. There is consistent and appropriate use of legal powers.</p> <p>The Council addresses the attendance of specific and/or vulnerable groups, (e.g. children in public care and traveller children) and tackles specific causes of non-attendance (including bullying and harassment).</p> <p>Data on attendance are effectively monitored. Weaknesses are identified and addressed rapidly.</p> <p>The Council provides targeted support to schools to improve attendance based on a clear analysis of need and transparent criteria.</p> <p>The Council gives schools well thought out and comprehensive guidance on managing attendance and disseminates good practice effectively.</p>
2.2.4	Support for behaviour in schools	<p>Rates of permanent and fixed-term exclusion are reducing, or the incidence of exclusion is lower than in similar authorities. There are effective arrangements in place for young people making the transition back into school. Young people remain in school, attain satisfactory attendance rates and make good educational progress</p> <p>The Council has set clear and challenging targets for the decrease in the rate of permanent and fixed term</p>

		<p>exclusions. There are improvements by targeted schools and groups of pupils.</p> <p>The Council strategy and plans for meeting the targets are clear and based on needs audits.</p> <p>Progress in meeting the targets is regularly monitored and careful analysis of data leads to appropriate action. The Council provides schools with comprehensive guidance on good practice in managing behaviour. It provides access to good quality training.</p> <p>There is readily available and effective support for behaviour management for schools. The service has good working relationship with schools and other agencies based on clear procedures.</p>
2.2.5	Value for money	<p>The Council allocates support and/or delegated funding on the basis of clear criteria. Support and/or funding is well targeted according to need.</p> <p>Schools receive support and advice on the use of funding that is delegated. The Council monitors the impact of delegated funding on improving behaviour.</p> <p>The Council compares its costs and outcomes with those of other authorities.</p> <p>The Council regularly reviews its services in order to secure continuous improvement with due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>

Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

2.3 Additional learning needs

The term ALN applies to children and young people whose learning needs are additional to the majority of their peers. Children and young people with ALN include those who:

- have SEN;
- are disabled;
- have medical needs;
- have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, including those who are school phobics and school refusers;
- are more able and talented; and
- are learning English as an additional language.

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:	Demonstrating typical good features:
2.3.1	The Council’s work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)	<p>The Council makes sure that all children and young people with additional learning needs aged 5 to 16 receive appropriate full-time education that meets their individual needs.</p> <p>The Council provides all children and young people with statements of SEN with the additional provision to which their statement entitles them. When statements of SEN require it, the Council makes full-time provision for children under the age of 5 and young people over the age of 16.</p> <p>The Council fulfils the requirements of the SEN and Disability Act 2001. In particular it ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statements of SEN are of good quality and produced speedily; • statutory reviews of progress are effectively planned, managed and coordinated; and • educational settings make reasonable adjustments to the buildings, curriculum and provision of information to provide access for people with disabilities. <p>The Council fulfils the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and section 175 of the Education Act 2002. In particular it ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding policies and procedures effectively promote the safety and well-being of children and young people with ALN; and • it promotes the educational achievement of looked after children who have ALN.

2.3.2	The Council's work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN	<p>The Council provides effective training for staff in early years settings and in schools to enable them to meet the needs of children and young people with ALN.</p> <p>The Council develops the capacity of all educational settings to meet pupils' additional learning needs by helping schools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet their statutory responsibilities in respect of pupils with ALN; • provide appropriate support and learning opportunities for pupils with ALN; • work effectively with partner agencies to obtain specialist support for individual pupils when necessary; and • monitor and evaluate outcomes for different groups of pupils as part of the process of school self-evaluation. <p>Outreach services, including any that are provided by special schools, have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people with ALN.</p> <p>The Council monitors and evaluates the impact of its policies and provision on the achievements of children and young people with ALN, and takes timely action to address any under-performance.</p>
2.3.3	The Council's provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and /or provided by or with other agencies.	<p>The work of the Council is effective in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping children and young people with ALN to make good educational progress in relation to their individual learning targets; • preventing the exclusion of pupils with ALN; and • achieving high standards of attendance by pupils with ALN. <p>Children with SEN are identified and their needs are assessed at a sufficiently early stage for their needs to be met.</p> <p>There are clear protocols which are consistently applied across agencies for assessing the individual needs of children and young people, and for deciding on provision. Children and young people have access to an appropriate range of support to meet their needs.</p> <p>The educational and training provision for children and young people with ALN meets their curriculum, staffing, equipment and transport needs and is effectively co-ordinated. Pupils with difficulties in physical or mental health who are unable to attend school receive as much education as possible, and maintain good links with their schools.</p>

		<p>The progress of individual children and young people with ALN is regularly reviewed and communicated between agencies, and targets revised accordingly.</p> <p>Statements of ALN are reducing in number as a result of earlier assessments and provision.</p> <p>Children and young people with ALN are properly prepared and supported when they make transitions between different phases of education and different settings.</p> <p>Children and young people with ALN receive impartial information, advice and guidance on educational training and employment opportunities post-16.</p> <p>Pupils with ALN, particularly those with difficult behaviour or who are reluctant to attend school, receive targeted support to improve their behaviour and attendance.</p> <p>Looked After Children who have ALN receive timely and effective support.</p> <p>Individual children and young people are consulted and listened to when key decisions are made about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their own future; • local provision; and • the planning and management of new services.
2.3.4	The Council's work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN	<p>Where services provide direct support for parents and carers of pupils with ALN, this has a positive impact on the outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>There is effective and co-ordinated advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with ALN, including SEN Parent Partnership and Mediation services. The Council provides clear information that enables parents and carers of children and young people with ALN to access the services that their children need.</p> <p>Services give clear information to parents/carers about their child's progress and achievements.</p> <p>Services support parents/carers and help them contribute to assessment of their child's needs.</p> <p>Parents and carers of children and young people with ALN are helped to obtain assessments of their own needs where appropriate.</p>

		<p>Parents and carers are consulted and listened to when key decisions are made about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their child’s future; • local provision; and • the planning and management of new services.
2.3.5	Value for money	<p>The Council compares its costs and outcomes with those of other authorities and can demonstrate that children and young people with ALN achieve good outcomes in relation to costs of the services that it provides.</p> <p>Where the Council commissions support for pupils with ALN from external agencies, it can show that outcomes are good and that it is achieving value for money.</p> <p>The Council’s funding policies encourage early intervention to meet the needs of pupils with ALN.</p> <p>The Council regularly reviews its services in order to secure continuous improvement with due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>

Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

2.4 Access and School Places

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report:	Demonstrating typical good features:
2.4.1	The provision of an appropriate range and number of school places	<p>There is sufficient capacity in both primary and secondary sectors, including Welsh-medium and special education, and no school is significantly overfilled or has significant surplus capacity without good reason.</p> <p>There are well-developed and accurate systems for forecasting and monitoring the requirements for places across all phases, including nursery, special and sixth form provision and for Welsh-medium education. This takes into account the impact of collaborative arrangements for learners aged 14-19.</p> <p>The Council has up to date knowledge of the capacity of schools.</p> <p>There are clear arrangements for regular, pro-active review of trends across the authority and in individual schools.</p>

		<p>There are clear arrangements for regular, pro-active review of standards of education across schools in the authority and this information is used in planning for school re-organisation.</p> <p>The authority is making good progress in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing numbers at overfull schools; • removing significant numbers of surplus places; and • meeting the needs of the local community. <p>Class sizes fully meet statutory requirements.</p>
2.4.2	Asset management planning and the education capital programme	<p>The Council has accurate, up-to-date information about the condition, sufficiency and suitability of all school buildings.</p> <p>It makes good use of information about local needs, liaising effectively across Council departments, such as housing, planning and social services</p> <p>The Council has a clear idea of the capital resources available to it over the next three years, and has considered all the options.</p> <p>Priorities for investment in school and other education buildings are transparent and have been agreed with schools.</p> <p>Funds for repairs and maintenance in school budgets are clearly identified, and the Council ensures that schools undertake their responsibilities in relation to their premises.</p> <p>The building programme is managed effectively. Projects are completed to time and budget with minimum disruption to schools.</p> <p>Building design takes account of statutory requirements including building regulation, disabled access, energy efficiency and sustainability.</p> <p>The Council has clearly defined policies for health and safety and school security and there is clear understanding of the respective responsibilities of the authority and schools themselves. It has established procedures for monitoring and dealing with areas of significant risk.</p> <p>Emergency repairs are prompt and easily organised. Out-of-hours emergencies are attended promptly. There is good immediate and follow-up support to the headteacher following fires, floods and other major incidents.</p> <p>Schools are well supported in developing their own health & safety policies.</p>

		<p>Comprehensive information, guidance and training are available to schools.</p>
2.4.3	Admissions to schools	<p>Local admissions authorities consult each other and co-ordinate their arrangements effectively.</p> <p>There is an effective Admissions Forum.</p> <p>The information (which should conform with the authority's Welsh Language Policy and may also be in community languages) provided to parents on school admissions is transparent, adequate, clear and understandable and satisfies the Admissions Code of Practice</p> <p>Children coming to live in the authority during the school year, including looked-after children, and children returning from custody who are no longer on a school roll, are accommodated without delay in schools that meet their needs.</p> <p>Parents' preferences are met to the maximum extent that is reasonable.</p> <p>Appeals are dealt with quickly and equitably to enable all pupils to be inducted into their new schools during the summer term before taking up their places in September.</p> <p>Arrangements comply fully with legislation and guidance related to equal opportunities.</p> <p>Guidance in the Code of Practice on School Admissions is regularly reviewed and is actively responsive to individual need.</p> <p>There are effective arrangements for the re-integration of children who have been excluded from other schools.</p> <p>The Council has a whole-authority approach to the admission of pupils outside normal admission points, which all schools support.</p>
2.4.4	Home-school transport	<p>The Council's home-school transport eligibility policy meets statutory requirements, is unambiguous, easily accessible to parents and applied consistently.</p> <p>The policy ensures that pupils receiving free transport are not discouraged from attending after-school activities.</p> <p>The Council's policy takes account of other policies promoting community safety, sustainability and healthy living.</p>

		<p>The usual duration of a single journey to or from school is no longer than 45 minutes for primary school pupils and one hour for secondary school pupils, except where parents have chosen to send their children to schools requiring longer journeys.</p> <p>Drivers and escorts are recruited and trained in accordance with child protection requirements</p> <p>The Council has developed service standards to ensure safety, punctuality and reliability, and to minimise problems of bullying and vandalism on home-school transport.</p> <p>The authority has a code of practice on school transport which has been the subject of consultation with parents, pupils, schools, transport operators. Arrangements for dealing with unruly behaviour are clear and are consistently applied.</p> <p>Home-school transport arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure that routes are planned efficiently and that the methods of procurement strike the right balance between service quality and cost.</p> <p>The home-school transport budget is well managed and controlled.</p>
2.4.5	Co-ordination of early years	<p>The authority has carried out an audit of provision of “nursery education”* in maintained and non-maintained settings to establish whether the provision is sufficient in their area.</p> <p>The authority is well informed about the qualifications of staff in the non-maintained and is actively working with partners to ensure playgroup leaders are appropriately qualified.</p> <p>The authority has set up a system to regularly review the sufficiency of nursery education in its area.</p> <p>The authority has a clear plan for the delivery of places in maintained and non-maintained settings for the early years, supported by a clear rationale for the registration of settings. (WAG guidance states that local authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure the availability of a good quality part-time place for all three year olds whose parents or carers choose one. The provision should be accessible from the child’s home and consideration should be given to parental wishes for Welsh medium provision)</p> <p>The authority’s Children’s Information Service provides high quality and effective advice to parents and carers.</p> <p>The authority, in conjunction with its partners, provides high quality support and training for staff working with the early years in both maintained and non-maintained settings.</p>

		<p>The authority has robust quality assurance systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of work with the early years in both maintained and non-maintained settings.</p> <p>* note that “nursery education” means full-time or part-time education suitable for children who have not attained compulsory school age (whether provided at school or elsewhere)</p>
2.4.6	Value for money	<p>Links between the provision of school places, asset management planning, admissions to schools and home to school transport are regularly reviewed and strike a conscious balance between quality of education, supporting parental choice and cost.</p> <p>The Council compares its costs and outcomes with those of other authorities.</p> <p>The Council regularly reviews its services in order to secure continuous improvement with due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>

Question 2: How effective are services and how does performance compare, including value for money?

2.5 Support services

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:	Demonstrating typical good features:
2.5.1	Services to support schools	<p>The services provided are free standing; schools purchasing one service do not have to purchase others.</p> <p>Details of the services offered or brokered by the Council are well presented. Services are easy to order, whether as an integrated package or as individual elements.</p> <p>Schools have all the information they need to exercise choice over the level, volume and amount spent on services. Information is provided in a way that schools can monitor the service that they receive.</p> <p>SLAs and/or contracts contain clear service standards and termination notice periods for the services provided or brokered by the Council.</p> <p>Council monitoring demonstrates that the service standards are met in most respects. Any failures or inefficiencies are tackled at an early stage.</p> <p>Prices of in-house services are competitive, and related to the costs of provision. Invoicing arrangements work smoothly in a normal commercial manner.</p> <p>Where a service that impinges on statutory provision is provided by an external supplier, the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to monitor provision.</p> <p>The Council supports schools wishing to procure services themselves by providing model specifications and offering high quality client support in managing contracts.</p>
2.5.2	Corporate services for education, including schools	<p>(a) Finance</p> <p>The Council's financial systems work reliably, and link effectively to schools' systems. Information is accurate and schools feel well supported. Reconciliation, where required, is electronic and works smoothly. Errors are resolved readily and immediately.</p> <p>Schools are supported to manage their own budgets and offered suitable software and training to model them.</p>

Guidance and training are available that encourage schools to base decisions on desired educational outcomes, and to take into account good employment practice.

Schools have ready access to high-quality individual advice on budget setting and financial management.

Education service managers feel well-supported in financial management and can predict and manage their budgets or trading accounts actively and effectively through the year.

(b) HR

The division of responsibilities for staff between Council and schools is clear and understood by members, officers, governing bodies and employees.

Education department administration is reliable, central staff records are accurate and regularly checked against school records.

The Council is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers and learning support staff

Recruitment is well supported. Contracts of employment are always issued within the statutory time period.

Personnel links with payroll are reliable and accurate. Any errors are rectified promptly and smoothly.

Schools have easy access to a range of up-to-date model policies covering issues such as recruitment, equalities, pay, discipline, grievance, capability, sickness and other absence, redundancy, retirement.

Casework is well-supported and advice is technically reliable. Industrial tribunals are few in number and the Council is successful in most cases. Capability cases are pursued with proper vigour.

The industrial relations climate is positive, with effective channels of communication with relevant unions.

Heads and governors are routinely offered training in employers' responsibilities. The take-up of training is monitored, with intervention where it is needed.

The Council monitors school performance in statutory employment practice and intervenes in inverse proportion to success.

The Council receives good advice on the strategic management of HR, including advance warning of statutory changes and their implications, recruitment and labour force issues and well-analysed information on the performance of schools in this area.

There is good support for service managers in dealing with individual employment issues, and cases that cannot be resolved preventively are dealt with consistently, fairly, firmly and promptly.

(c) ICT

There is an efficient, effective Council strategy in place for the management of pupil performance data and staff, premises and financial information.

There is effective, well-managed electronic communication between schools, and between schools and the Council. Council communications to schools are effectively prioritised and well-presented. The Council responds promptly to communications from schools.

Schools are well-supported in purchasing and in technical support. There are common hardware and software platforms across the Council, but non standard items are not precluded other than where they would create problems authority-wide. Response times for delivering technical solutions and/or repairs are rapid and do not compromise administrative or educational service delivery in schools.

Schools have effective written and on-screen guidance and effective telephone helpline support that extends beyond school hours. They can access effective training locally on all aspects of standard hardware and software systems, when they need it.

The Council's website provides the public with useful information about education services such as school admissions, grants, transport and services for learners with special educational needs. Key public documents such as statutory education plans and the education budget statement can be easily accessed and are up-to-date. There are useful links, eg to inspection reports on the Council's education services and its schools.

The public can access services through the website and processes are well-managed and effective. Email queries from members of the public are responded to within a reasonable period of time.

		<p>There is a well-used Council intranet available to schools containing a full range of up-to-date administrative and policy reference documents.</p> <p>Links with curriculum ICT, particularly over pupil attainment data and its use, are effective and productive.</p>
2.5.3	Property related services	<p>The respective responsibilities of schools and the Council with regard to buildings work and maintenance are set out unambiguously. The compliance of both parties is monitored effectively.</p> <p>Schools have access to effective technical advice from qualified surveyors on priority, programming, contract letting, contract supervision and payments management. Schools are aware of how their priorities will be met and feel that their technical advice is informed by educational priorities and represents good value for money.</p> <p>Technical advisers encourage schools to manage their assets well and to link their own plans to the authority's asset management plans. Advisers will be proactive in brokering joint-funded schemes and providing advice on bidding for capital.</p> <p>Maintenance contracts are available for schools to join, but they are not required to join. Contracts are well-adapted to schools' needs and provide them individually with good value for money and flexibility.</p> <p>Building projects are managed effectively.</p> <p>Emergency repairs are prompt and easily organised. Out-of-hours emergencies are attended promptly; there is good immediate and follow-up support to the school following fires, floods and other major incidents.</p>
2.5.4	School meals	<p>Council statutory responsibilities, including arrangements for free school meals and the maintenance of kitchens and equipment, are performed well. Problems are rare and promptly dealt with.</p> <p>Any central contract(s) available for schools are flexible to schools' wishes and provide good value-for-money. Pro-active client support is available to schools wishing to make their own arrangements. Problems are rare and promptly dealt with.</p> <p>Good advice is readily available on nutrition and catering options.</p> <p>The LEA has arrangements to monitoring schools to ensure that they meet their statutory duties for hygiene, nutritional standards and health and safety. Intervention, when required, is prompt and effective.</p>

		The quality of school meals is good and supports healthy living.
2.5.5	Value for money	<p>The Council compares its costs and outcomes with those of other authorities.</p> <p>The Council regularly reviews its services in order to secure continuous improvement with due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>

Question 3: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

This question should be applied to the Council as a whole and to specific fields where appropriate.

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on:	Demonstrating typical good features:
3.1	The quality of the leadership provided by elected members	<p>Elected members have a clear vision for the role of education (<i>or the field in question</i>). The vision is well expressed in published documentation, and is reflected in the community strategy, corporate plans and the strategic planning of education services.</p> <p>Members have a clear understanding of the Council's strategic role (<i>overall, and in relation to specific fields</i>) and statutory duties in the context of self-managing schools.</p> <p>Members successfully influence key partners in support of their priorities and strategies.</p> <p>The political leadership takes difficult decisions when necessary, following a rigorous and open process of examination and consultation that are consistent with strategic objectives.</p>
3.2	The quality of leadership provided by senior officers	<p>The leadership of senior officers is effective and purposeful in securing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision that meets local needs; • provision that is learner focused; • school improvement; • children and young people's well being; • inclusion; and • departmental effectiveness and efficiency. <p>Senior officers respond appropriately to new initiatives and lead developments in consultation with schools and other stakeholders.</p>

		<p>Relationships with schools are good; consultation, communications and intentions are clear, transparent and lead to a shared understanding. The authority is able to act as a 'critical friend'.</p> <p>There is a good sense of partnership with schools. Schools respect and trust senior officers who listen and take full account of their views and advice.</p> <p>Officers provide elected members with clear, succinct advice based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-informed analysis of statutory requirements; • an objective, well-balanced selection of performance indicators; • a rigorous evaluation of the status quo and the impact of existing policy; and • consideration of the future implications of policy. <p>Officers advise members in good time to enable the development of long-term policies.</p>
3.3	The quality and appropriateness of membership and actions in partnership working	<p>The Council has a clear understanding of the benefits and costs of partnership work.</p> <p>The Council makes a good contribution to ensuring that local partnerships work effectively and lead to shared priorities for education.</p> <p>Partnerships where the Council or its education department has a lead role are well-led, managed and effective.</p> <p>Partnerships bid successfully for additional funding and/or co-ordinate bids from individual members in order to further the aims of the partnership and to avoid duplication.</p> <p>The Council collaborates effectively with partners in relation to provision of 14-19 education and training, and activities for 11-25 year olds.</p> <p>Local or school-level partnership work has led to a significant beneficial impact on pupils' achievements where it was needed most.</p> <p>There are suitable structures to ensure sensible cycles of meetings which avoid duplication.</p> <p>There is effective cross-directorate working.</p>

Question 4: How well do leaders and managers at all levels monitor, evaluate and improve services?

This question should be applied to the Council as a whole and to specific fields as appropriate.

	Inspectors will evaluate, grade and report on the extent to which the authority:	Demonstrating typical good features:
4.1	Makes appropriate arrangements for securing continuous improvement with due regard for economy, effectiveness and efficiency	<p>Members and managers make effective, regular use of performance indicators, including financial information, to monitor progress in implementing plans.</p> <p>There are appropriate and timely arrangements for collecting performance indicators.</p> <p>Where necessary, monitoring leads to modifications in targets and strategies.</p> <p>The authority has a good record of improvement in relation to its educational targets and objectives.</p> <p>Regular reviews are carried out with rigorous challenge to purpose, comparison with others, competitiveness tests and consultation that is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Reviews include appropriate external challenge.</p> <p>The Council responds promptly and effectively to complaints.</p> <p>There is an effective performance management system by which elected members and senior managers monitor progress against milestones regularly and take appropriate remedial action.</p>
4.2	Ensures elected members play an appropriate role in performance management	<p>Members have clear procedures for regularly scrutinising policy decisions and all key policies are subject to an effective, democratic scrutiny.</p> <p>Members monitor and evaluate the work of the education service systematically and openly.</p> <p>Members place particular focus on aspects in need of improvement. This has led to modifications of policy where appropriate.</p>

4.3	<p>Implements self-evaluation procedures effectively and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement</p>	<p>Educational elements of any whole-authority analysis are rigorous and comprehensive.</p> <p>Leaders and managers establish self evaluation arrangements which are comprehensive, systematic and based on first-hand evidence.</p> <p>Service providers understand and are fully involved in the self-evaluation arrangements.</p> <p>Service users, partners and other stakeholders have been fully involved and consulted, and current performance has been assessed objectively against appropriate comparators.</p> <p>The Council's self-evaluation is accurate.</p>
4.4	<p>Has a good track record in securing improvements</p>	<p>Areas of the Council's work already targeted show clear signs of improvement.</p>

Annex 2: Completing the evidence base for the inspection

The evidence base for the inspection is a summary of the evidence gathered before or during the inspection.

Responsibilities of the RI

The reporting inspector is responsible for all aspects of the evidence base and this annex only applies to the reporting inspector.

- You should ensure that all the evidence is stored in the registered file or, if it is an electronic form, then in the relevant folder on the O:Drive.
- Registry will keep evidence for 12 months from the date of issue of the report.

The local authority Athene grade profile

At the end of the inspection, you will need to complete an Athene grade profile for the local authority's performance in the field(s) inspected. The grades from each inspection will build up throughout the six-year cycle of inspection; to give an overall grade profile covering the work of the local authority.

The local grade profile draws together the corporate judgements of the team about all aspects of the authority covered in the inspection framework. There is a table in which you enter the grade for fields of the local authority's work that you are inspecting. You must make sure that this is completed correctly. The profile follows the same structure as the inspection report and should, therefore, help you to write the report by providing the essential grades on each aspect of the local authority's work that is being inspected.

An electronic copy of the local authority profile is on the 'O' drive in O:\Local Authority & Youth Services\Local Authority Education Services\Local Authority inspection cycle April 2006 to March 2012\Helpful Local Authority inspection documents\Forms and templates.

The local authority inspection profile is as follows:

Section 38 Local Authority Education Services inspection grade profile

Question	Strategic management	Support for school improvement	Promoting social inclusion	Additional learning needs (ALN)	Access & school organisation	Support services
1 How effective is the authority's strategic planning?						
1.1 has clearly stated and appropriate aims that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address relevant national and local priorities; • take account of audits of need; and • reflect the results of self-evaluation 						
1.2 consults and communicates effectively with service users, local people and key partners						
1.3 has realistic and coherent strategies , and supporting plans for implementing activities which clearly set out how it is going to turn aims into action and what outcomes it is seeking						
1.4 is effective in making decisions						

Question		Strategic management	Support for school improvement	Promoting social inclusion	Additional learning needs (ALN)	Access & school organisation	Support services
1.5	strategically considers resources and matches these (staff, funding etc) to its priorities for service delivery						
1.6	contributes to, leads (where applicable) and gains the support of partnerships						
2 How effective are the authority's services?							
<i>see text for individual services</i>			2.1.1 Local authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention	2.2.1 The Council's work to meet its statutory duties in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked after children; • excluded pupils; • promoting race equality and combating racism; • preventing & tackling bullying; and • child protection and well being 	2.3.1 The Council's work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with ALN	2.4.1 The provision of an appropriate range and number of school places	2.5.1 Services to support schools

Question	Strategic management	Support for school improvement	Promoting social inclusion	Additional learning needs (ALN)	Access & school organisation	Support services
		2.1.2 The authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support	2.2.2 The Council's work in raising standards for specific groups of vulnerable children and young people	2.3.2 The Council's work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN	2.4.2 Asset management planning & the education capital programme	2.5.2 Corporate services for education & schools
		2.1.3 Meeting the needs of and raising standards of specific groups	2.2.3 Support for attendance at school	2.3.3 The Council's provision for children and young people with ALN	2.4.3 Admissions to schools	2.5.3 Property related services
		2.1.4 Curriculum support and enhancement and broadening opportunities for learning	2.2.4 Support for behaviour in schools	2.3.4 The Council's work with parents & carers of children and young people with ALN	2.4.4 Home-school transport	2.5.4 School meals
		2.1.5 Support for school leadership and management	2.2.5 Value for money	2.3.5 Value for money	2.4.5 Co-ordination of early years	2.5.5 Value for money
		2.1.6 Value for money			2.4.6 Value for money	

Question		Strategic management	Support for school improvement	Promoting social inclusion	Additional learning needs (ALN)	Access & school organisation	Support services
3 How effective are leadership and management?							
3.1	The quality of the leadership by elected members						
3.2	The quality of leadership provided by senior officers						
3.3	The quality and appropriateness of membership and actions in partnership working						
4 How well do leaders and managers monitor, evaluate and improve services?							
4.1	makes appropriate arrangements for securing continuous improvement						
4.2	ensures elected members play an appropriate role in performance management						

Question		Strategic management	Support for school improvement	Promoting social inclusion	Additional learning needs (ALN)	Access & school organisation	Support services
4.3	implements self-evaluation procedures effectively and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement						
4.4	has a good track record in securing improvements						
How good is the authority's performance?							
Will the authority's performance improve?							

Annex 3: Protocol and guidance for nominees

Background

Inspections will provide an opportunity to involve local authority's actively in the inspection process by enabling a nominee from the local authority to work with the inspection team. This will ensure greater involvement by the local authority and strengthen the partnership between the inspection team and local authority officers. It will also enable local authority's to gain a better insight into the inspection process as well as provide valuable opportunities for professional development. However, it is not a requirement that the authority has to put forward a nominee.

Local authorities are invited to select a nominee who will:

- ensure that inspectors are well informed about the context of the local authority's work;
- contribute to meetings of the inspection team;
- where appropriate, undertake inspection activities; and
- hear emerging findings of the team.

The nominee

The nominee will be a sufficiently senior office to act as a link between the local authority and the inspection team.

Before the inspection, the reporting inspector, in discussion with the local authority, will establish:

- whether the local authority wishes to take up the invitation of having a nominee; and
- the exact nature of the nominee's role.

If the local authority decides not to identify a nominee, the reporting inspector will still need to establish a climate that maintains a good working relationship with the senior staff and members.

If the local authority decides not to take up the offer of having a nominee, this will not prejudice the inspection. The fact that a local authority does not have a nominee will have no impact on the judgements made by the inspection team.

The role of the nominee is demanding and requires that person to exercise the objectivity essential to an external inspection process. The nominee will be required to respect the strict confidentiality of all inspection discussions. The exact nature of the role of the nominee can vary, depending on the circumstances and wishes of the local authority. It must be agreed before each inspection.

If the local authority decides to take up the offer of having a nominee, the nominee will need to commit time prior to the inspection to:

- become familiar with relevant documents for the inspection of local authorities; and
- undertake a one-day briefing with the lead inspector.

The relevant documents are:

- Local Authority Services in Wales – a Framework for Inspection under Section 38 of the 1997 Education Act; and
- Local Authority Services in Wales Inspections from April 2006 Guidance for Reporting Inspectors.

These documents can be found on the Estyn Website at:

www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/estyn_publications/inspection_guidance

The rest of this annex sets out the:

- role of the nominee;
- responsibilities of the nominee, the lead inspector and the local authority; and
- activities to be undertaken in the different stages of the inspection.

Role of the nominee

The scope of the nominee's role should be negotiated between the local authority and the lead inspector. The broader the role, the greater the time commitment required from the nominee. A broader role may also present a greater risk of potential conflict of interest for the nominee and the local authority should consider this in deciding whom to nominate.

In all cases, the nominee will need to:

- ensure that there is good liaison before and after the inspection with the lead inspector about administrative aspects of the inspection such as scope, documents, inspection activities and meetings;
- respond to team requests for additional information during the inspection;
- assist in resolving any problems that arise throughout the inspection process; and
- must take action in accordance with Estyn's child protection policy and procedures, if he/she is aware of, or is alerted, directly or indirectly, to an allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult.

In addition, where the local authority and the lead inspector have agreed this, the nominee may also:

- participate in team meetings where good features, shortcomings, prospects and barriers are being discussed, but he or she must take no part in deciding grades to be awarded;

- be involved in collecting evidence, where appropriate and agreed, for example in taking part in on-site inspection activities; and
- provide any additional evidence that is needed following the team meetings, interviews or reality checks.

Responsibilities

The nominee will:

- agree the exact role of the nominee with the local authority and the lead inspector;
- be familiar with the inspection framework and associated guidance;
- attend a one-day briefing with the lead inspector prior to the inspection;
- be familiar with the protocol and guidance on the role of the nominee;
- have a good understanding of the local authority's self-evaluation report and, if relevant, associated improvement plan;
- ensure there is good liaison with the lead inspector about administrative aspects of the inspection such as scope, documentation, inspection activities and meetings;
- ensure that inspectors are fully informed about the context of the local authority's work;
- be involved in collecting evidence, where appropriate and agreed;
- respond to team requests for additional information;
- respect the confidentiality of all information received during the course of the inspection;
- assist in resolving any problems that arise;
- contribute to meetings of the inspection team;
- avoid being defensive or an advocate for the local authority; and
- hear emerging findings.

The lead inspector will:

- agree with the local authority and the nominee his or her exact role;
- provide a one-day briefing for the nominee prior to the inspection;
- keep the nominee fully briefed about the conduct of the inspection;
- brief the inspection team about the role of the nominee;
- make sure that the nominee feels fully involved with the inspection team;
- plan the work of the nominee during the inspection week through negotiation with the local authority;
- ensure that the nominee is aware of the arrangements for team meetings, interviews and reality checks; and
- ensure that the nominee takes no active part in the awarding of grades.

The local authority will:

- agree the exact role of the nominee with the nominee and with the lead inspector;
- enable the nominee to attend a one-day briefing for the nominee prior to the inspection;

- normally channel any issues, concerns and further evidence through the nominee to the inspection team;
- be sympathetic to the demands placed on the nominee;
- provide support for the nominee in undertaking his or her task;
- respect the confidentiality under which the nominee is working; and
- ensure that the nominee has played a key part in the local authority's self-evaluation procedures.

Activities in the inspection process

Before the inspection

Nominee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with the inspection framework and associated guidance • Become familiar with Estyn's guidance on the role of the nominee • Attend a one-day briefing with the lead inspector prior to the inspection • Play a key role in the local authority's self-evaluation procedures • Become familiar with the inspection documentation • Take part in the discussions with the reporting inspector in the pre-inspection visit • Attend the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings • Make administrative arrangements for the inspection • Collate local authority documentation required for the inspection
Lead Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the role of the nominee during the first contact with the local authority • Provide a one-day briefing for the nominee prior to the inspection • Ensure that the nominee is involved in discussions in any pre-inspection visits • Brief the nominee fully in the same way as the other team members about the arrangements for the inspection week • Plan the work of the nominee during the inspection week • Ensure that the nominee receives all key inspection documents • Fully brief the other team members about the role of the nominee • Ensure that the nominee attends the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings
local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the role of the nominee during the first contact with the reporting inspector • Enable the nominee to attend a one-day briefing with the lead inspector prior to the inspection • Ensure that the nominee is involved in discussions in the pre-inspection visit • Clarify the role of the nominee with the reporting inspector and the nominee • Ensure that the nominee attends the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings

During the inspection

<p>Nominee</p>	<p>All nominees will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that there is good liaison with the reporting inspector about administrative arrangements; • respond to team requests for additional information; • assist in resolving any problems that arise; and • take no active part when gradings are being awarded. <p>Where agreed, nominees may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to discussions about good features, shortcomings, prospects and barriers in team meetings; • take part with another inspector in interviews; • take part with another inspector in visits to schools and other settings; • take part with another inspector in meetings with stakeholders; • be proactive in providing additional evidence following team meetings or other inspection activities • complete notes on inspection activities as appropriate; and • where appropriate, ask the inspection team to clarify its judgements.
<p>Lead Inspector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the work of the nominee and provide support as appropriate • Ensure that the nominee is as fully involved in the inspection as possible • Normally, channel requests for additional information and evidence through the nominee • Ensure that the nominee takes no active part in the awarding of grades
<p>local authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the nominee to liaise with the inspection team • Normally, channel any issues or concerns through the nominee • Provide support for the nominee in undertaking their task • Respect the confidentiality under which the nominee is working

After the inspection

<p>Nominee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the preparation of the local authority's response to the inspection • Contribute to checking the factual accuracy of the draft of report • Play a full part in devising the action plan following the inspection
<p>local authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the nominee attends the oral feedback meeting • Involve the nominee in preparing the local authority's response to the report • Involve the nominee in checking the factual accuracy of the draft of the report • Involve the nominee in devising the action plan

Statement of agreement between the reporting inspector, local authority and nominee

Agreed roles and responsibilities regarding the nominee (please tick where appropriate).

The nominee

Before the inspection	
• Become familiar with the inspection framework and associated guidance	
• Become familiar with Estyn's guidance on the role of the nominee	
• Attend a one-day briefing with the lead inspector prior to the inspection	
• Play a key role in the local authority's self-evaluation procedures	
• Become familiar with the inspection documentation	
• Take part in the discussions with the lead inspector in the pre-inspection visit	
• Attend the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings	
• Make administrative arrangements for the inspection	
• Collate local authority documentation required for the inspection	
During the inspection	
• Liaise with the reporting inspector about administrative arrangements	
• Respond to team requests for additional information	
• Contribute to discussions about good features, shortcomings, prospects for improvement and barriers to improvement in team meetings	
• Take part with another inspector in interviews	
• Take part with another inspector in visits to schools or other settings	
• Take part with another inspector in meetings with stakeholders	
• Be proactive in providing additional evidence following team meetings or other inspection activities	
• Complete notes on inspection activities as appropriate	
• Where appropriate, ask the inspection team to clarify its judgements	
After the inspection	
• Attend the oral feedback meeting	
• Contribute to the preparation of the local authority's response to the inspection	
• Contribute to checking the factual accuracy of the draft of report	
• Play a full part in devising the action plan following the inspection	

The lead inspector

Before the inspection	
• Discuss the role of the nominee during the first contact with the local authority	
• Provide a one-day briefing for the nominee prior to the inspection	
• Ensure that the nominee is involved in discussions in any pre-inspection visits	
• Brief the nominee fully in the same way as the other team members about the arrangements for the inspection week	
• Plan the work of the nominee during the inspection week	
• Ensure that the nominee receives all key inspection documents	
• Fully brief the other team members about the role of the nominee	
• Ensure that the nominee attends the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings	
During the inspection	
• Monitor the work of the nominee and provide support as appropriate	
• Ensure that the nominee is as fully involved in the inspection as possible	
• Normally, channel requests for additional information and evidence through the nominee	
• Ensure that the nominee takes no active part in the awarding of grades	

The local authority

Before the inspection	
• Establish the role of the nominee during the first contact with the lead inspector	
• Enable the nominee to attend a one-day briefing with the lead inspector prior to the inspection	
• Ensure that the nominee is involved in discussions in any pre-inspection visits	
• Clarify the role of the nominee with the lead inspector and the nominee	
• Ensure that the nominee attends the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings	
During the inspection	
• Use the nominee to liaise with the inspection team	
• Normally, channel any issues or concerns through the nominee	
• Provide support for the nominee in undertaking their task	
• Respect the confidentiality under which the nominee is working	
After the inspection	
• Ensure that the nominee attends the oral feedback meeting	
• Involve the nominee in preparing the local authority's response to the report	
• Involve the nominee in checking the factual accuracy of the draft of the report	
• Involve the nominee in devising the action plan	

Name of nominee: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Reporting Inspector: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Director of Education: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 4: Protocol and guidance for peer assessors

General principles

The peer assessor will bring the perspective of a current practitioner to an inspection. The aim is for each inspection team to have a peer assessor. The peer assessor is a full member of the team. The peer assessor will complete only those duties that can be completed during the on-site period of the inspection.

Local authorities will nominate peer assessors for selection. Estyn will train them and place their names on a database. After training, a peer assessor will be assigned to an local authority inspection after ensuring that there is no personal or professional conflict of interest.

Peer assessors will be employed by local authorities in Wales or be elected members of local authorities in Wales. They will need to have experience and expertise in education and are likely to be senior officers in the education department or directorate, or elected members who have some responsibility for education in their authority. They will be up-to-date with relevant Welsh Assembly Government regulations and requirements.

The essential attributes of peer assessors include:

- honesty, integrity and propriety;
- the ability to form sound judgements and to explain and defend these where necessary;
- good oral communication;
- well-developed writing skills;
- the ability to gather thoughts logically;
- the ability to work as a member of a team;
- willingness and capability to work flexibly; and
- the ability to adhere to the requirement for absolute confidentiality.

Estyn and the local authority will sign a memorandum of understanding that will ensure that the prospective peer assessor attends the training course and, if successful, is able to participate in an inspection.

The participation of peer assessors in inspection:

- contributes to the expertise of inspection teams and enhances the ownership that local authorities have for the inspection process;
- promotes local authorities' understanding of inspection;
- enables the sharing of good practice;
- helps to develop the skills local authorities need to carry out their own review or self-evaluation effectively; and
- enables individuals to gain a better insight into the inspection process as well as providing valuable opportunities for their own professional development.

Role of the peer assessor

The peer assessor is to act as a full member of the inspection team. Peer assessors will undertake the full range of on-site inspection activities:

- examining documents;
- interviewing key personnel;
- meeting stakeholders; and
- visiting schools and other settings, if relevant.

Peer assessor's responsibilities

The peer assessor will:

- have a working knowledge of the inspection framework and associated guidance;
- act in accordance with the code of conduct described in the 'How will inspectors behave' section of the framework;
- be familiar with this protocol and guidance on the role of the peer assessor;
- have an understanding of the local authority's self-evaluation report and any associated plan;
- liaise with the lead inspector about administrative aspects of the inspection such as examining documentation, meetings, interviews and visits;
- complete inspection notes as required;
- contribute to meetings of the inspection team;
- contribute to corporate judgements;
- where possible, attend the oral feedback meeting held during the inspection week;
- respect the confidentiality of all information received during the course of the inspection; and
- take action in accordance with Estyn's child protection policy and procedures, if he/she is aware of, or is alerted, directly or indirectly, to an allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult.

The peer assessor will not:

- attend the pre-inspection team and briefing meetings;
- attend any meetings held after the on-site inspection period;
- review any additional evidence received after the on-site inspection period;
- produce a pre-inspection commentary; or
- write a section of the report;

Lead inspector's responsibilities

The lead inspector will:

- agree with the peer assessor the specific role of the peer assessor in the inspection;
- ensure that the peer assessor receives all relevant documentation in good time;
- ensure that the peer assessor is deployed as a full member of the team;

- brief the inspection team about the involvement and role of the peer assessor;
- brief the local authority being inspected about the role of the peer assessor;
- plan the work of the peer assessor during the on-site inspection period;
- ensure that the peer assessor is aware of the arrangements for team meetings and for other inspection activities;
- assure the quality of the work of the peer assessor; and
- provide feedback on the performance of the peer assessor.

The lead inspector will not require the peer assessor to:

- attend any pre-inspection meetings;
- attend any meetings held after the on-site inspection period;
- produce a pre-inspection commentary; or
- write a section of the report.

Activities in the inspection process

Before the inspection

Peer assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becomes familiar with the inspection framework and associated guidance; • becomes familiar with this protocol and guidance on the role of the peer assessor (through training); • receives the local authority's review or self-evaluation report; and • receives the pre-inspection commentary.
Lead Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • briefs the local authority about the role of the peer assessor; • fully briefs the peer assessor about the arrangements for the inspection; • plans the work of the peer assessor during the on-site inspection period; • ensures that the peer assessor receives necessary inspection documents; and • fully briefs the other team members about the role of the peer assessor.

During the inspection

Peer assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early in the inspection, becomes familiar with the pre-inspection commentary and other key documents; • works under the direction of the lead inspector; • participates in team meetings; • contributes to corporate judgements; • interviews key personnel; • meets stakeholders, where appropriate; • visits schools or settings, where appropriate; • completes inspection notes, as appropriate; and • attends the oral feedback meeting held during the on-site inspection period.
Lead Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that the peer assessor has enough time, early in the inspection, to become familiar with the pre-inspection commentary; • monitors the work of the peer assessor and provides support as appropriate; • ensures that the peer assessor is fully involved in the inspection; and • ensures that the peer assessor contributes to the corporate judgements.

After the inspection

Peer assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensures that the lead inspector receives all relevant written documentation; and• returns all local authority and inspection documentation.
Lead inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides feedback to the peer assessor about the quality of his/her work during the inspection.

The lead inspector's feedback to peer assessors should be concerned with obtaining evidence, making judgements, communication and conduct.

Deployment of the peer assessor

Peer assessors:

- should be given the opportunity to become familiar with the pre-inspection evidence and commentary at the start of the inspection. The lead inspector should not plan any inspection activities for the peer assessor during this time;
- where possible, will be deployed in local authorities of similar size, type of location and other characteristics to their own local authority; and
- will be deployed in an local authority where there is no personal or professional conflict of interest.

Training

Peer assessors will need to complete a two-day training course before they can take part in inspection. The objectives of the course are to enable the prospective peer assessor to understand the process of inspection, the principles upon which the process is based and the criteria for making judgements. After training, they are eligible to be selected for inspection of an local authority as long as there is no personal or professional conflict of interest. Estyn will make every effort to involve peer assessors in an inspection, but can give no guarantee of this. Peer assessors and their local authorities will complete a memorandum of understanding that specifies the period in which the peer assessor will be trained and deployed. Estyn will monitor the performance of peer assessors.

Annex 5: Guidance on the local authority's response to the report's findings

Guidance

Local authorities are invited to submit a written response to the inspection findings for inclusion in the report. The response will be published by agreement with the reporting inspector.

The reporting inspector should:

- invite the local authority to make a written response to the inspection findings; and
- remind the local authority that the response is not the place for local authorities to express a view about the quality of an inspection. Local authorities are invited to comment on the process of inspection by completing a questionnaire at the end of the inspection and returning it to Estyn.

The local authority should:

- provide a written response to the main inspection findings;
- use this response to give an early indication of how officers and members intend to tackle the recommendations;
- make sure the response is brief and generally no more than one page;
- send the response to the reporting inspector within five days of receiving the draft report; and
- understand that it is the reporting inspector's right not to include the written response in the inspection report where the circumstances warrant it.

Example of an local authority's response

'The inspection findings recognise that, in most respects, we have maintained high standards since the last inspection of our support for school improvement, and that there are now improved standards in key stage 4. We are pleased that the inspectors found that the work of officers in the advisory service is an outstanding feature. In addition, the integration of support for pupils with additional learning needs and support for school improvement, which underpins the local authority's strategy for inclusion, is recognised as appropriate and effective. The skill and dedication of officers and the commitment of elected members are duly acknowledged. Most importantly, the inspection report makes clear the elements that make our local authority what it is. In particular, the report confirms that we are achieving our aim to make the local authority more inclusive and one that strives for continuous improvement for our learners.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report.

Improving our strategic planning for the delivery of services to support pupils with EBD, making wider use of benchmark data to compare ourselves with similar local authorities and tightening up some local authority procedures for performance management are aspects that we are confident we can address successfully.'