

## Inspection Matters

Issue No 10

September 2008

### Information about inspection arrangements

Relevant to: inspections of all schools, including pupil referral units

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## Types of inspection guidance

The basis for all school inspections from September 2004 is the **Common Inspection Framework**. We provide three types of guidance on the use of this framework.

**Guidance on the inspection of schools** sets out the arrangements and requirements for inspecting on the basis of the framework. There are separate guidance handbooks for:

- primary and nursery schools;
- secondary schools;
- special schools and pupil referral units; and
- independent schools.

**Supplementary guidance** will cover topics such as listening to learners, inspecting bilingualism and child protection. This guidance will give more detailed advice about important aspects of the framework.

All of these documents are available on our website at [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**Inspection Matters** will cover items that arise from time to time that are relevant to inspectors.

## **1 Revisions to the guidance handbooks**

Estyn has now completed the review of the guidance handbooks for each sector. The main revisions to the guidance handbooks were covered in this year's update training, which all inspectors were invited to attend.

The review incorporates issues that have been drawn to inspectors' attention in Inspection Matters 1 to 9. In addition, the primary / nursery handbook now includes specific guidance on inspecting the Foundation Phase.

Inspectors should note that supplementary guidance issued since the introduction of the Common Inspection Framework in September 2004 is not fully included in the new guidance handbooks. Inspectors should therefore continue to take account of this separately when carrying out inspections.

The new guidance handbooks can be found at:  
[www.estyn.gov.uk/dynpages/publications\\_recent.asp](http://www.estyn.gov.uk/dynpages/publications_recent.asp)

Two versions of the handbooks have been published. In one version, for ease of reference, the text has been highlighted where major revisions and significant amendments have been made to the sequence of information.

### **Guidance on schools in need of special measures or significant improvement**

The protocols for guiding inspectors when they are considering recommending a school as in need of special measures or significant improvement are now included in Annexe 2 of the new guidance handbooks.

## **2 Recently published supplementary guidance**

### **Guidance on the revised curriculum arrangements**

Supplementary guidance on inspecting the recently revised curriculum and assessment arrangements is now on the website.

A separate supplementary guidance dealing with Foundation Phase issues has also been published on the website.

### **Other supplementary guidance**

Since the last Inspection Matters was published in May 2007, the following supplementary guidance has been published on the website:

- inspecting healthy living (including physical activity and food and drink) (May 2007);

- inspecting the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (May 2007);
- inspecting collective worship in non-denominational schools (May 2008); and
- inspecting Learning Pathways 14-19 in secondary schools and special schools (August 2008).

All these publications can be found at:  
[www.estyn.gov.uk/dynpages/publications\\_recent.asp](http://www.estyn.gov.uk/dynpages/publications_recent.asp)

### **3 Additional guidance on gathering evidence and using lesson evaluation forms and general evaluation forms**

This additional guidance complements the information already provided in the revised guidance handbook for the inspection of primary, secondary, special and independent schools. Information on how to complete lesson evaluation forms (LEFs) and general evaluation forms (GEFs) can be found in:

- Section 2: Conducting inspections, sub-section 2.8: During the inspection; and
- Section 3: Key Question 1, sub-section 1.1.

#### **Gathering evidence about standards in different types of inspection**

In the pre-inspection commentary (PIC), in all types of inspection, you should include evidence about teacher assessment and/or national examination results for standards of attainment in each key stage. You should compare the school's performance with national, local and benchmark data.

In addition to observing lessons, you will need to scrutinise a representative sample of pupils' work. You should include a range of work from pupils of different abilities in different classes. It is advisable to scrutinise pupils' work as early as possible during the inspection to help inform judgements in lesson observations.

In short inspections, you should choose subjects that will help you to verify the accuracy of the school's judgments about standards of achievement in key skills. In practice, this may mean scrutinising work from one or two core subjects as well as several foundation subjects.

In standard inspections, in order to gather evidence for judgements about key skills, you may need to look at work in subjects outside the six subjects chosen for inspection.

#### **Completing LEFs and GEFs**

You should use a GEF to record evidence about standards from your scrutiny of pupils work. You should provide a grade at least for each key stage and usually for each year group.

When grading LEFs you should, if possible, include judgements about the standards of pupils' previous and current written and practical work. If this is not possible at the time, you should record these judgements on a GEF.

The words and phrases used in the left-hand column below are those that you should use to quantify pupil numbers in your evaluations in LEFs and GEFs. The phrases in the right-hand column are the more precise explanations.

Nearly all.....	with very few exceptions
Most.....	90% or more
Many.....	70% or more
A Majority.....	over 60%
Half/around half.....	close to 50%
A Minority.....	below 40%
Few.....	below 20%
Very few.....	less than 10%

For example:

Most pupils understand and use the equivalences between fractions, decimals and percentages competently.

A few pupils can describe how a push or pull can make something speed up, slow down or change direction.

A minority of pupils cannot sustain concentration and do not work together effectively in small groups.

When coming to a judgement on standards, it is important for you to consider the grades from both the LEFs and GEFs. There is no weighting to LEFs and GEFs: you should use your professional judgement to determine the overall standard for each key stage, with the greatest weighting given to standards at the end of a key stage.

## **Inspecting lessons**

### **Short inspections**

In short inspections, teams should spend enough time in classes to gain evidence about pupils' key, personal, social and learning skills, as well as the quality of teaching.

In small primary and secondary schools, teams will probably need to observe every teacher; however, in other schools it is not necessary to observe every teacher.

### **Standard and full inspections**

In standard and full inspections, teams should observe enough lessons to make judgements about pupils' standards of achievement in the subjects inspected, as well as key skills.

## **4 Peer assessors**

When a peer assessor is to join an inspection team, it is Estyn's responsibility to notify the contractor. It is then the contractor's responsibility to pass on the peer assessor's details to the registered inspector.

## **5 Inspecting post-16 religious education**

Schools must provide religious education for all post-16 students. Religious education can be provided in a variety of ways for post-16 students in schools and it is not necessary for a school to provide regular timetabled religious education lessons to provide good quality learning experiences. An increasing number of schools choose to provide religious education through occasional special events or conferences.

Parents have the right to withdraw their son or daughter from post-16 religious education. Furthermore, students aged 18 or above can withdraw themselves from religious education. The school should keep a record of all students who are withdrawn from religious education. Schools must not ask post-16 students whether or not they would like religious education – an 'opt in' approach is against the law.

Inspectors have recently found that, in a few schools, all post-16 students are withdrawn from religious education. In such circumstances, inspectors need to check the school's records carefully to ensure that every individual student is, indeed, legitimately withdrawn from religious education, and that this has been requested by a parent if they are under 18. If every student is legitimately withdrawn from religious education then inspectors must not judge the school to be failing to provide statutory religious education for post-16 students.

However, if every student is withdrawn, the school may have pro-actively encouraged this. If the school is deliberately seeking to restrict the breadth of curriculum provided by encouraging all students to withdraw from religious education then inspectors must take this into account when grading question 3.2 for post-16.

## **6 Revised quality monitoring checklists for inspections and reports for September 2008**

Estyn has produced revised QMI/QMR checklists for September 2008 to reflect revisions included in inspection guidance documents.

All contractors have been provided with the revised checklists and inspectors should contact contractors to make sure that they are aware of the revisions.

## **7 Estyn's arrangements for assuring the quality of contracted work in relation to school inspection – policy and procedures**

Estyn's policy for assuring the quality of contracted out work in relation to school inspections has been in place since January 2006.

The policy was reviewed in September 2007 and the updated policy can be found on Estyn's website.

## **8 Inspecting and reporting on ICT under the new national curriculum arrangements**

The title of IT has changed to ICT in the revised national curriculum. Inspection report templates will be amended by Estyn to reflect this. The revised inspection template, with the new ICT heading, is to be used for all the above inspections from September 2008.

However, the Athene IT subject profile will continue to be titled as IT, not ICT for all primary, secondary, special, independent and PRU inspections.

## **9 Inspecting Welsh second language and bilingualism in English-medium primary schools**

The guidance below has already been drawn to the attention of inspectors who attended annual update training.

Pupils' ability to switch between Welsh and English and to initiate conversations in Welsh can be a good indicator of their progress and developing capability in Welsh. However, there is evidence that inspectors do not always take sufficient account of what is reasonable to expect of pupils in this respect. Particularly in schools serving communities where there are no Welsh speakers and where pupils' contact with Welsh is limited to their time at school, it is unlikely that pupils will be able to reach this level of competence, even though they are making good progress generally. The critical factor is to assess what progress pupils are making from their starting point, taking into account the linguistic nature of the school and the area it serves.

When speaking to pupils to assess their Welsh, it is important that inspectors take into account pupils' level of competency in Welsh. Otherwise, there is a risk that inspectors will have difficulty in eliciting responses by pupils. As a result, pupils will feel intimidated and highly unlikely to do themselves or the school justice in terms of their standards in speaking Welsh. Inspectors need also to be aware of the impact of an unfamiliar accent on pupils' capacity to talk with them in Welsh.

Some reports indicate that pupils' bilingualism is 'underdeveloped' without explaining in what way. This is not helpful to schools in addressing issues and improving their provision and pupils' competence.

The recommended time allocation for Welsh second language at key stage 2 is 90 minutes a week. An increasing number of English-medium schools make increasing use of Welsh as a medium of communication at times such as registration periods. This is good practice that should be acknowledged in the inspection report. However, this should not be considered as counting towards the 90 minute time allocation for teaching Welsh. If the school does not allocate sufficient teaching time, this should be identified as a shortcoming in the section on Key Question 3.

There is evidence to suggest that inspection teams are not sufficiently aware of the extent and nature of the support provided for the delivery of Welsh by the 'athrawon bro' peripatetic. In some parts of Wales, their role has evolved to acting in an advisory capacity, rather than teach Welsh second language to classes as in the past. If an opportunity presents itself, it would be particularly useful for a member of the team to interview the 'athrawes/athro bro' to discuss the school's provision for Welsh second language and bilingualism.

## **10 Distribution of Inspection Matters 10**

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of Inspection Matters and we do not have your email address, please contact Estyn on [communications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk) to request a copy.

This edition of Inspection Matters has been sent out to all Estyn's inspection contractors for distribution to all inspectors whom they employ. A copy is also available on the Estyn website.