



The Educational
Institute of
Scotland

**HMIE INSPECTIONS
ADVICE FOR MEMBERS IN
SCHOOLS AND NURSERIES**

Published January 2007

Statutory legal framework of HMIE

HMIE have the right as an executive agency of the Scottish Ministers under the terms of the Scotland Act, 1998, to carry out inspections of Scottish schools, further education colleges and local authorities. The core objective is to “provide sustainable improvements in standards, quality and achievements for all learners.” (Framework Document, 2001)

HMIE can inspect the following:

- ◆ All schools
- ◆ Pre-school learning centres
- ◆ Community learning and development
- ◆ Residential provision
- ◆ Secure accommodation
- ◆ Local authorities’ education services
- ◆ Colleges of further education
- ◆ Initial teacher education

The Inspectors are governed by the HMIE Charter which sets out aims and standards for Inspections. In its dealings with schools, parents and the public HMIE is committed to being:

- ◆ Independent
- ◆ Fair
- ◆ Open
- ◆ Responsive
- ◆ Courteous

For additional information on HMIE and inspections, the EIS recommends a visit to the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk to view relevant publications for your sector of education, e.g. “How Good Is Our School?”, “A Journey to Excellence” and “School/College Partnership”.

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 set up the Care Commission, which registers and inspects all the services regulated under the Act, taking account of the national care standards issued by Scottish Ministers.

Please note that if your school has a nursery department, a pre 5 unit or a residential unit attached to it you will also be subject to inspection by the Care Commission.

Useful information can be found at www.carecommission.com

HMIE INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS

Schools should be alerted to a 'Core Inspection' three working weeks before it is due to take place. This is not always possible due to holiday periods.

The Inspectors will inspect

- ◆ learning, teaching, attainment and achievement
- ◆ support for pupils
- ◆ the environment for learning and teaching and ethos
- ◆ inclusion

The Inspectors will form a view on how well the school can bring about improvements. In gathering evidence to make evaluations, the inspection team will use the framework of 'How Good is Our School?'

The inspection team will consist of at least one HM Inspector (HMIE). There may be additional HMIEs and/or an Associate Assessor and a Lay Member. The Managing Inspector will lead the team and be responsible for the inspection report. The inspection will normally be completed in one week.

An Associate Assessor may come from a number of backgrounds but usually from within education. An Associate Assessor can be a teacher, head teacher or practising elsewhere within education. They are full members of the Inspection Team.

A lay member is likely to come from outwith education. Lay members will look at school ethos and relationships within the school and with the community.

Before the main inspection week, teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire. They should do so honestly. These questionnaires are confidential. It is important that Inspectors are made aware of teachers' views.

Questionnaires will also be sent to parents/carers and pupils.

Before the main inspection period, the Inspectors will ask the school to provide information e.g. a school profile, self evaluation and priorities for improvement. You do not have to give information to the Inspectors in addition to what they request. Sometimes, they may ask for additional information about the school.

In secondary schools, the Head teacher will be required to brief the inspection team about the school's improvement agenda prior to the inspection period.

In secondary schools Inspectors will focus on four subject departments during an inspection. English and Mathematics are always inspected.

Inspectors will –

- ◆ visit classes to evaluate learning, teaching and attainment
- ◆ talk to pupils and examine their work.
- ◆ meet with senior school managers

- ◆ in secondary schools, meet departmental heads of identified departments to discuss their departmental profiles (which are submitted by the school before the inspectors arrive)
- ◆ discuss the approaches schools/departments are taking to improve the quality of learning and teaching and pupils attainment and achievement.

HMIE have advised the EIS that they are aware of the disruption that an inspection may cause. They wish to reduce this disruption to teaching and learning to a minimum. This may not always be possible but the EIS expects every effort to have been made to minimise disruption. Any concerns about this should be reported in the monitoring form to be returned to EIS.

Members of staff do not have the right to refuse to meet members of the Inspection Team. However, at all times teachers should be treated courteously and with consideration.

When teachers are asked for their views by members of the Inspection team they should be open, frank and courteous.

PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

HMIE wishes to engage in discussion with teachers, head teachers and others connected with the school. They will discuss professional issues and pupils' experiences.

The EIS advises teachers to take this opportunity to express their views.

The Managing Inspector will provide a briefing about the inspection process and answer any questions.

Inspectors will meet members of staff and visit classes, meet pupils and provide feedback to staff, the head teacher and senior staff on the main findings of the inspection.

Teachers should take advantage of discussion opportunities with HMIEs to provide them with appropriate information. Such discussions should not normally take place beyond the working time arrangements outlined in "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century". Any work or discussions taking teachers beyond this should be within the schools' working time agreement.

During the brief discussion you should highlight any strengths or concerns relating to the teaching and learning experience of pupils. The HMIE team can make recommendations which are helpful to the school.

THE REPORT DRAFT

The draft report will be given to the head teacher, chairperson of the school board, the education authority or board of governors. The head teacher will discuss the draft report with the Managing Inspector. Additional evidence or factual accuracy will be considered at this time.

Members of staff should be made aware of key findings at this stage by the head teacher.

Teachers are not entitled to see the **draft** report.

The EIS has made representations to HMIE about this. HMIE are concerned to keep the report

confidential until the publication date. If it is believed that there are factual inaccuracies contained in the report ensure concerns are raised with the head teacher so that any mistakes can be corrected. There should be overall feedback with members of staff on the Inspection at this stage. No member of staff should be identified **by name** in the final published report. It may be difficult to hide the identity of a teacher. HMIE have responsibilities under both DATA Protection Legislation and Child Protection Legislation. If any EIS member believes they are the subject of any concern about competence contact the local association secretary for advice.

THE FINAL REPORT

Please note the timescale for the publication of the Final Report is normally within 20 working weeks of the notification of the inspection. The school will receive copies of the report during the week before the official publication date.

All members of staff are entitled to see the final report as soon as it is delivered to the school. If distribution of the report is delayed contact your local association secretary and the Managing Inspector.

SIX POINT SCALE 2005

HMIE uses 6 levels to describe the performance of the school.

NEW LEVEL	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION	CHARACTERISTICS	POSSIBLE FOLLOW THROUGH
Level 6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding	High quality experiences and achievement.	There may be a good practice follow-up inspection.
Level 5	Very Good	Major strengths	Few areas for improvement BUT should continue to strive towards excellence.	Likely to be an Action Plan
Level 4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement	Require to take action to address significant areas of school improvement.	Action Plan required/ Follow-up visit
Level 3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses	Recognises positive aspects of the pupils' experience BUT weaknesses must be resolved to improve pupils' experience.	Action Plan required and follow-up inspection/ visit.
Level 2	Weak	Important weaknesses	Pupils' experiences diminished. School requires structured and planned action.	Follow-up inspection/ visit/Monitoring.
Level 1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses	Adjudged to require immediate remedial action and support.	Follow-up inspection/ visit/Monitoring.

FOLLOW THROUGH ACTIVITIES

Follow-through arrangements should be proportionate to a school's current level of performance and its capacity to drive forward its own continuous improvement programme.

Follow through activities recommended in the report may include: preparation of an action plan, monitoring progress, liaison with Local Authority and further visits.

Any follow through activities recommended by HMIEs must be discussed with teaching staff.

The EIS recommends that they must take account of working time arrangements and the duties of teachers as outlined in “A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century” and also take account of school development plans.

Teaching staff should also be advised of outcomes of progress reports and further visits. Not all schools will be visited again. HMIE may wish to continue its involvement with a school until progress is made.

The Local Authority will be involved in this process. Inspectors will focus on where the school requires most support.

Follow-Through Activities may include –

- ◆ Best practice visits to examine notable good practice in more depth;
- ◆ Moderation visits in a sample of schools to help decide whether the education authority should proceed to produce the follow-through report for parents;
- ◆ Follow-through inspections by HMIE usually around two years after the initial inspection;
- ◆ Interim inspection where significant weaknesses have been identified and there is a need to inform parents of progress after a shorter period, e.g. a year; and
- ◆ Support visits to work with school and education authority staff to help the schools improve aspects of its work.

The EIS advises that any follow through activity recommended as a result of the inspection report must be provided with the appropriate resources.

EIS representatives should advise the Local Association Secretary if they have concerns about unreasonable expectations contained in follow through activity.

HMIE and Care Commission Inspections

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act, 2001 requires HMIE to undertake integrated inspections with the Care Commission in centres where the provision of care includes any educational elements.

HMIE has been collaborating with the Care Commission in integrated inspections in the pre-school sector, mainstream and special residential schools and secure units.

The range of pre-school services covered by integrated inspections includes –

- ◆ nursery classes attached to primary schools
- ◆ nursery schools
- ◆ playgroups
- ◆ private nurseries
- ◆ childminders
- ◆ crèches
- ◆ out of school clubs.
- ◆ care homes for children and young persons
- ◆ school care accommodation services (hostels, residential schools and boarding schools)

These inspections take account of National Care Standards, Early Education and Child Care up to the age of 16, and The Child at the Centre.

The Care Commission can also inspect these services on its own.

INTERGRATED INSPECTIONS

Integrated inspections of a nursery school or class

These inspections will be carried out jointly by an Associate Assessor (AA) working for HMIE and a Care Commission Officer (CCO).

The inspection will look at -

- ◆ the environment
- ◆ quality of children's experience
- ◆ support for children and families
- ◆ management

The inspection will evaluate the quality of programmes in the following key areas of development and learning:

- ◆ emotional, personal and social development
- ◆ communication and language
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the world
- ◆ expressive and aesthetic development
- ◆ physical development and movement

During the inspection inspectors will

- ◆ visit playrooms and observe staff and children
- ◆ talk to children about their activities
- ◆ talk with staff and parents

Inspectors will give particular attention to

- ◆ the quality of children's experience.
- ◆ capacity for improvement
- ◆ parents' views through a questionnaire

The inspection team will reach their evaluations based on evidence gathered during the inspection. They use their professional judgement to weigh up strengths and weaknesses. In gathering evidence and making evaluations, the team will use the 'National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16' and the quality indicators in 'The Child at the Centre'.

INSPECTORS' REPORT

The report of the inspection will highlight key strengths and identify recommendations for improvement.

A report on the aspects inspected in the nursery school or class is sent to all parents, the nursery school staff, the education authority (or governing body) and the local MSP.

If necessary, a plan of action to help staff overtake recommendations for improvement will be set out in the report.

Unannounced Inspections can be undertaken by the Care Commission.

Head teachers may find it helpful to consider contacting their local Care Commission Officer to advise in advance of any dates where they consider that it may not be appropriate for the inspection to take place. This may apply to enrolment days, full day trips when all children will be absent from the nursery and head teacher in-service training days. Care Commission staff will take account of these factors when setting their inspection programme. In some cases, however, the inspection visit may need to proceed in the absence of the head teacher in the light of other Care Commission operational arrangements and requirements.

HMIE INSPECTION CHECKLIST FOR EIS REPRESENTATIVES

You may find the following checklist useful in the event of your establishment being inspected by HMIE:

BEFORE A PLANNED INSPECTION	
◆ advise EIS headquarters, Education Department of inspection and request monitoring form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ check HMIE Briefing Notes relevant to your sector. (www.hmie.gov.uk)	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ advise members to complete the HMIE questionnaire and that this questionnaire is confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>

DURING THE INSPECTION	
◆ support members by seeking to ensure that time free from class contact is provided to speak with members of the inspection team.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ contact the local association secretary immediately if anything unacceptable or unreasonable occurs (e.g. demands on teachers should not extend beyond their contractual working day). The EIS has an “Early Warning” arrangement with senior HMI in order to seek to resolve problems during the inspection.	<input type="checkbox"/>

AT THE STAGE OF THE DRAFT REPORT	
◆ alert the LA secretary if individual members complain about a criticism or inference in the draft report.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ present to the School Board (in writing, in person or by briefing staff member/s of the Board) the EIS view of the key findings of the inspection report.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ present to the Head Teacher the EIS view of the key findings of the inspection report.	<input type="checkbox"/>

AT THE STAGE OF THE FINAL REPORT	
◆ monitor when teaching staff are provided with the final report.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ monitor the media coverage of the report and draw any biased coverage to the attention of the LA secretary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ seek the support of the LA secretary to ensure the provision of resources required to address issues raised in the proposed action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ seek the support of the LA secretary to monitor aspects of the “follow through” activities which refer to classroom observation.	<input type="checkbox"/>

