Inspection Across the UK: how the four nations intend to contribute to school improvement

Final report

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Disclaimer:

Contents

Executive summary

This study was commissioned by The Edge Foundation in 2019-2020 by Dr Bernie Munoz-Chereau (Senior Research Fellow, Department of Leadership and Learning) as the Principal Investigator, and carried out by Professor Melanie Ehren.

Exploring and comparing the inspection regimes in the four nations of the UK is timely because whilst each country has its own system, new inspection frameworks have been recently introduced in England and will shortly be implemented in other nations such as Wales. Hence, this study critically examines how and under what conditions longstanding and new inspection regimes intend to lead to school improvement.

The research questions that guided the study included:

1. What is the theory of change of each of the four inspectorates of education in the four nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (NI))?

2. What are stakeholders' views of, and experiences with, inspections?

The methodology comprised of three phases. Phase 1 reconstructed the programme theory of the inspection framework of each inspectorate of education (Ofsted in England, The Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) in Northern Ireland, Education Scotland (ES) in Scotland and Estyn in Wales) through the analysis of 60 policy documents. Phase 2 validated Phase 1 through engagement with 12 experts. Phase 3 explored the views of, and experiences with, inspections through fieldwork (24 survey and 7 semi-structured interviews) with 31 stakeholders (headteachers, governors, local authority school improvement staff and teachers).

The findings capture the similarities and differences across the four inspection frameworks in the UK. The analysis of the four programme theories revealed substantive differences between school inspection regimes across the UK. This study found some convergence in the UK inspectorates' intended mechanisms or engines through which inspections are supposed to contribute to school improvement, but mostly divergences not only in the mechanisms, but also intended effects (or desired aims) at both the school and system levels.

Regarding the system level intended effects, while England promotes social mobility and allows young people to reach their potential, the other regimes put explicit emphasis on all learners or equity: NI fosters an inclusive learning environment where all learners have access to high quality provision; Scotland's inspection framework aims to promote the highest standards of learning leading to better outcomes for all learners; and Wales aims to create the conditions to support all learners to achieve high standards and strong levels of wellbeing.

When school-level intended effects are considered, each inspectorate has a different combination of quality indicators leading to the 'good' or above judgement of schools in their nations. The key similarities were that all inspectorates judge school performance focusing on the quality of education/provision/teaching and learning, as well as leadership and management, however with varied emphasis such as Scotland's 'leadership of change'. The key difference is the extent to which other indicators are considered (beyond academic performance and leadership) by inspectorates when judging school performance. For example:

- Scotland's 'success and achievement' considers the progress in raising attainment and achievement by ensuring at the same time wellbeing, equality, and inclusion.

- Wales focuses explicitly on wellbeing.

- Wales and NI put a special emphasis on care and support.

- England addresses 'personal development', 'behaviour and attitudes,' and is the only inspectorate that explicitly aims to reduce the unintended consequences of inspections, such as gaming and off-rolling.

Although every nation wants to strike the right balance between external evaluation and self-evaluation to ultimately enhance school improvement through inspection, there are also clear differences in the intended mechanisms (or how) to improve schools across the UK. We found that the main similarities to support school improvement were:

- Giving feedback through inspection in England, Wales, and NI

- Promoting school self-evaluation in Scotland, Wales, and NI

- Enhancing professional dialogue/in-depth professional discussions/school self-reflection culture in Scotland and NI

The main differences in how inspectorates are expected to support school improvement were:

- Preventing bad practice from becoming entrenched in England

- Promoting openness and transparency about the processes and instruments in NI

Focusing on the mechanisms (or engines) that the inspectorates implement in order to improve the system level, the main similarities were:

- Providing system level feedback to inform national policy planning in the four nations

- Delivering public accountability/assurance and report to different stakeholders (i.e. parents) in the four nations

- Building capacity by including practitioners in inspection teams in England, Scotland and Wales

- Enhancing system-wide learning from good practice in England and Wales

The main differences in how inspectorates expect to support system level improvement were:

- Promoting collective engagement, learning and collaboration in Scotland

- Reducing regulatory burdens in England

The main findings from the fieldwork conducted with 31 stakeholders (headteachers, governors, LA, school improvement staff and teachers) showed:

- **More compliance than innovation:** Stakeholders in the four nations recognised that inspections encouraged more compliance than innovation. They believed that going beyond inspection frameworks held little value, especially when doing so risked taking away time from the quality of education provision/teaching and learning. They prioritised their resources and actions according to the hierarchy communicated through the frameworks, so the main sections were interpreted as areas of policy enforcement, whereas statements (communicated for example in bullet points), were interpreted as less relevant.

- **Pervasive inspection readiness:** The four UK inspection frameworks were effectively enacted by stakeholders to such an extent that they were pervasive in the sense that they constrained pedagogical and curriculum innovations beyond the framework. Examples of 'inspection readiness' abounded.

- **A two-way 'contract'** Stakeholders interpreted inspection frameworks as a two-way 'contract,' in the sense that they guided the micropolitics of schools, but also applied them to evaluate inspectorates, inspectors, and inspections. Negative experiences tended to be associated with inspectors departing from the inspection framework to follow their own agenda, and vice versa.

- **A gap remains** between how inspectorates intend to improve schools, and the way stakeholders interpret frameworks and experience inspections.

By opening the 'black box' of inspections through the reconstruction of the programme theory and its validation and fieldwork, these findings have implications for current debates about the role of inspections, and we hope they will support future practice and policy improvements. In particular, the study can help schools to identify the main intended effects and mechanisms of change of each inspectorate, and policy-makers can consider the way inspection frameworks are interpreted and enacted by stakeholders, not only within their nations but across the UK.

The following report is structured in six sections: Introduction provides the rationale for conducting this study, outlining the main strengths and limitations derived from the methodology. Theoretical Background revises previous relevant studies to ascertain: what are school inspections? and why they matter in the field of educational governance, followed by a review of previous studies about school inspection conducted across the UK. The Methodology section provides details regarding the way in which the three phases of the study were conducted to answer the research questions. The Findings section focuses on the results of Phases 1 and 2 regarding the similarities and differences in the programme theories across the UK, followed by the main results from Phase 3 addressing stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections. Concluding Remarks: Implications for Policy and Practice highlights the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings which are relevant for policy-makers, inspectors, school practitioners and other stakeholders. It also connects the findings with results identified in the review of studies included in the theoretical framework. Finally, the eleven appendices provide the building blocks of this report with a focus on the analysis and evidence for each of the four nations that are an integral part of the study.

Introduction

This section provides the rationale for conducting this study and outlines the main strengths and limitations derived from the methodology.

Rationale for conducting the study

This Edge Foundation-commissioned research explored the inspection regimes and how they contribute to school improvement in the four nations of the UK. The study adopted the scientific policy reconstruction approach (Leeuw, 2003), which is a methodology used to analyse programme theories through the reconstruction and validation with experts (those who designed and implemented them) of the intended effects and mechanisms of change within a given programme. It also qualitatively understands the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders (headteachers, governors, local authority school improvement staff and teachers) with inspections.

Exploring and comparing the inspection regimes in the four nations of the UK (Ofsted in England, The Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) in Northern Ireland, Education Scotland (ES) in Scotland and Estyn in Wales) is timely because whilst each country has its own system, new inspection frameworks have been recently introduced in England and will be shortly introduced in Wales. Hence, we set out to compare how and under what conditions longstanding and new inspection regimes can lead to improvement in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Strengths of the study

This study is novel as it adds to the field of educational governance by being the first to focus on all four inspection regimes across the UK. While a recent study compared educational leadership, management, and administration across the UK (Woods et al, 2020), and many studies have included some of the UK nations' inspectorates, this current study's specific focus is seminal. It contributes to the knowledge base regarding the inspection frameworks by adding insight into the intended mechanisms and effects for school improvement within the UK-specific research context. This study is also significant as it expands the academic field and opens possibilities for practical and policy applications, such as policy learning, exchange, and collaboration among inspectorates in the UK space. A third strength of the study is the combination of three different research phases and methods: policy reconstruction, validation, and fieldwork. Phase 1 presents a detailed analysis of causal sequences leading to improvement from standards and indicators in the four inspection frameworks. Phase 2 validated the middle range theories of change with experts from each nation. Phase 3 helped to gain an in-depth insight into the role that inspections play in school improvement, according to stakeholders' views.

Limitations of the study

Focusing on Phase 1, the reconstructed mechanisms are not necessarily generalisable to represent other inspection systems, nor do they represent intended mechanisms or outcomes beyond school improvement of the four analysed inspectorates. Regarding Phase 2, the small number of experts does not allow the taking into account of potential differences in interpretation among them. Phase 3 is small-scale and exploratory, so it cannot be interpreted as representing the views of stakeholders beyond this study. It is also important to acknowledge that the small sample was marked by differing participation among countries (for details see Table 2). Given these methodological limitations, the analysis of the survey is focused on the 6 open-ended questions provided by the 24 stakeholders. This means that the findings derived from the fieldwork are exploratory

and cannot be interpreted as representing the views of stakeholders beyond this study. In line with qualitative research that aims to describe particularity rather than generalisability of findings, sites, or places (Creswell and Creswell, 2017), the results from the fieldwork cannot be generalised beyond those studied. These strengths and limitations need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the main findings and implications of this study.

Theoretical background

This section revises previous relevant studies in order to ascertain what school inspections are, and why they matter in the field of educational governance, followed by a review of previous studies about school inspection conducted across the UK.

What are school inspections and why do they matter?

School inspections are performance systems conceived as a key accountability mechanism to govern education. Critical theorists inspired by Michel Foucault, have described inspection frameworks as 'technologies of the self': head-teachers and teachers working on transforming themselves and their institutions through self-government in order to attain what each inspectorate promotes as a good standard of education (Gillies, 2013; Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Clapham, 2015; Colman, 2020).

Inspections occupy the middle ground between policy and practice. Their evaluations are at both the system level and the level of individual institutions. Evidence from inspections can help set the policy agenda, impacting on what happens in schools and local government (Donaldson, 2018). Inspection frameworks connect the macropolitics with the micropolitics of schools by emphasising certain aspects (such as collegial collaboration, given teaching methods or the provision for students with special needs). In this way inspections communicate the message that all these areas need to be the focus of school practice if a 'good' or above judgement of the quality of a given school is desired (Ketchtermans, 2009).

Comparisons of different school inspection systems have been conducted before. For example, a comparison of the education inspection systems in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Turkey and England was led by Gurkan and Deveci (2012). While the authors found some resemblance among the education inspection systems, such as similar aims oriented to assess the quality of education, they reported relevant differences regarding the inspectorates' institutional positioning, reporting, and notice period given to schools before inspection. Critically, the inspectorate in Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were part of the ministry and their inspection reports were not public, whereas in England, Ofsted is independent from the ministry and its inspection reports were publicly accessible.

Aspects that the inspectorates in Scotland, Sweden and England had differently and in common with the rest of Europe were identified by Grek et al (2013). More precisely, the authors described Scotland's focus on school self-evaluation and promotion of a space for exchange, brokering and thinking about inspection as a meditative governing model characterised by high levels of trust and the construction of a community of learners similar to other European inspectorates. At the other extreme, they positioned Sweden and England as regulative and inquisitorial modes of governing, which were characterised as problematic in terms of trust.

The impact and mechanisms for school improvement in the inspection systems in The Netherlands, England, Sweden, Ireland, the province of Styria in Austria, and the Czech Republic were analysed by Ehren et al (2015). The authors pointed to differences regarding inspection visits' scheduling, frequency, and consequences, as well as the evaluation of process and/or output standards. They described how inspection models lead to school improvement through the mechanisms of setting of expectations, the use of performance feedback and actions of the schools' stakeholders. The authors concluded that inspectorates of education that used differentiated models to evaluate schools' practices and outcomes, and made inspection findings of individual schools public, were the most effective. However, these models were also associated with unintended consequences, as headteachers under these regimes reported narrowing the curriculum and discouraging teachers from experimenting with new teaching methods.

The relationship between the perceived effects, side effects, quality, and judgements in the Flemish inspection system were investigated by Penninckx et al (2016). This study highlighted that teachers' perceived transparency of inspection (or psychometric quality in terms of reliability and validity) and of the criteria used for determining the inspection judgement, played a crucial role when understanding the effects of inspections in schools. The intended effects of inspection, the impact on the professional enthusiasm of teachers 2 weeks after the inspection, and the inspection's emotionally disturbing effect on normal school life were also explained by teachers' perception of the inspection quality.

The quality indicators in the inspection system in Abu Dhabi were explored by Al Qubaisi et al (2016). Aware of the subjective judgement of inspectors when assessing a school's overall performance, the authors developed a method to enhance inspection quality by quantitatively weighting different inspection indicators.

Recently, the inspection mechanisms to judge failing schools were compared by Munoz-Chereau et al (2020). The authors argued that performance-based accountability systems that rank schools based on their effectiveness produce 'winners' and 'losers'. Focusing on the mechanisms that construct 'failing' schools in three notable high-stakes accountability systems worldwide - Chile, the USA and England - the authors concluded that the construction of 'failing' schools serves the competition and differentiation required for maintaining neoliberal hierarchical and unequal market-oriented regimes.

School inspection across the UK

The devolution of responsibilities for civil functions from the UK government to the Northern Ireland Assembly and to the governments in Wales and Scotland provided a fertile background for differing school inspection frameworks. Yet little research has been oriented to understand how these systems aim to support school improvement.

The UK nations governance systems have been described as divergent derived from their history and culture, including national priorities, institutions, and policies (Andrews and Martin, 2010) and convergent affected by international trends, such as globalisation, and competition over educational standards (Simpkins, 2015). School inspection frameworks across the UK are not created in a vacuum. 'Not only are inspection policy frameworks influenced by national processes of governing, but also through a flow of transnational ideas' (Brook Hall, 2017, p.112).

Despite recent research comparing educational leadership, management, and administration across the UK (Woods et al, 2020), there is little research to compare the intended inspection mechanisms and their effects across the four nations. Earlier studies using a similar methodology as this study and similar aims (Jones and Tymms, 2014; Ehren et al, 2017) compared only England to other European inspection models. This study aims to fill this gap by comparing inspection regimes across all four nations of the UK.

Methodology

This section provides details regarding the way the three phases of the study were conducted to answer the research questions.

To answer the two research questions of this study (What is the theory of change of each of the four inspectorates of education in the four nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (NI))? And What are stakeholders' views of, and experiences with, inspections? Table 1 presents the phases conducted and the data collection process for each. The methodology of each phase will be subsequently discussed.

Table 1: research questions, phases, data, and participants

Research question	Phases	Data and participants
One: theory of change of the four inspectorates of education in the UK	Phase one: Policy theory reconstruction of inspection frameworks	Policy documents (frameworks, legislation, strategy documents, news releases on websites: 60 (Ofsted: 11; ETI:10; ES:14; Estyn: 25)
	Phase two: Expert validation	Experts: 12 (Ofsted: 1; ETI:6; ES:1; Estyn: 4)
Two: stakeholders' views and experiences with inspection	Phase three: Fieldwork (survey and interviews)	Survey: 24 (Ofsted: 2; ETI:2; ES:3; Estyn: 17) Interviews: 7 (Ofsted: 2; Estyn: 5)

Phase 1: Nation reconstructions of inspection frameworks in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales

In order to answer Research Question 1: What is the theory of change of the four inspectorates of education in the UK? The programme theory, that is the conceptual 'backbone' or model of how inspections are expected to work across the UK, were reconstructed. The assumptions of how each inspectorate intends to meet the desired aims were highlighted i.e. how its inspections are expected to lead to improvement of schools and education provision. We unpacked these assumptions by analysing and collating statements from key documents available in the public domain. This gathering of assumptions forms the programme theory: a theory of how an intervention (a project, a programme, a policy, or a strategy) is expected to contribute to a chain of results that produce the intended or actual impacts (Chen, 1990).

Although each inspectorate has several roles, such as providing accountability, ensuring compliance with national regulations, informing consumer choice, providing value for money, and promoting service (including school) improvement (see Jones and Tymms, 2014), we focused on the role of improving schools. Therefore, the programme theory presents the assumptions underlying the formal inspection frameworks and describes the intended aims of inspections, and how, and under what conditions, inspections are expected to lead to intended effects. The programme theory opens up the 'black box' of inspections by describing the mechanisms through which inspections are supposed to change schools.

In this study, each inspectorate's programme theory was derived in a systematic way using Leeuw's (2003) policy scientific approach to analyse evidence from multiple source documents. A total of 60 documents were

included in the programme theory reconstruction (England: 11; Scotland: 14; Northern Ireland: 10 and, Wales: 25) (See Appendix 1: Policy documents included in the policy reconstruction). To prevent repetition, our analysis of documents was progressive in adding codes and quotations to the database, but not adding similar text from new documents. The approach, described by Leeuw (2003, p.7) encompasses the following five steps:

1. Identify the social and behavioural mechanisms that are expected to solve the problem of how inspection would contribute to school improvement. As a first step we searched and coded policy documents for statements indicating the necessity for school improvement and how inspections are supposed to contribute to improvement. Relevant statements refer to mechanisms (or engines) that drive the inspection and are believed to make them effective, statements typically having the following form according to Leeuw (2003):

   – It is evident that x will work.
   – In our opinion, the best way to address this problem is to . . .
   – The only way to solve this problem is to . . .
   – Our institution's x years of experience tell us that . . .

2. Compile a survey of these statements and link the mechanisms to the aims of inspection.

3. Reformulate the statements into conditional "if-then" propositions or propositions of a similar structure (e.g., "the more x, the less y").

4. Search for warrants that will identify disconnects in or among different propositions using argumentation analysis.

   Warrants are the 'because' part of an argument, explaining why and under what conditions inspections are expected to lead to improvement. A warrant says that B follows from A because of a (generally) accepted principle. For example, "the organisation's performance will not improve next year" follows from "the performance of this organisation has not improved during the past 5 years" because of the principle that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. The "because" part of such an argument is often left implicit, with the consequence that warrants must be inferred by the person performing the analysis.

5. Reformulate these warrants in terms of conditional "if-then" (or similar) propositions and draw a chart of the (mostly causal) links.

This reconstruction presents middle range theories of change, which means that the reconstructed mechanisms are not necessarily generalisable to represent inspection theory for any type of inspection. They are domain-specific to represent a detailed analysis of causal sequences for improvement resulting from standards and indicators in the four nations. In some cases, these sequences are not well developed and instead present a logic model rather than the context-mechanism-outcome configurations which constitute middle range theories.

Phase 2: Expert validation

In order to answer Research Question 1 in each country, experts (such as current and former inspectors) were approached to examine the Phase 1 report and validate its findings. Through this exercise twelve experts (one in England, one in Scotland, four in Wales and six in Northern Ireland) checked for misunderstandings, misinterpretations and factual mistakes in the reconstruction of the programme theory.

Phase 3: Fieldwork

In order to answer Research Question 2, stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections were explored through a qualitative purposive sampling method. First, each of the four inspectorates' websites was screened to identify 20 schools per nation recently inspected. From this population of 80 schools, 24 participants (n=24) responded to an online survey. These respondents included headteachers (n= 12), governors (n = 6),

local authority school improvement staff (n= 3) and teachers (N= 3). The online survey included 6 open-ended questions oriented to collect qualitative data. Although qualitative surveys are well-known for providing less-rich data than interviews, they allow the collection of unanticipated findings from a larger number of people in a relatively quick manner (O'Connor and Joffe, 2020).

Although the survey of 24 respondents represents a fair 25% overall response rate, participation varied significantly across nations, with highest participation from Wales. This high level of participation can be explained by Estyn's active involvement in, and support of, the study by being available for inspectors' interviews during the expert validation process, as well as disseminating the survey amongst their school networks.

From the survey answered by 24 stakeholders (2 from England, 2 from NI, 2 from Scotland and 17 from Wales), participants stated if they were willing to take part in a follow-up interview to further explore their views on inspection. Seven (n=7) semi-structured interviews (5 from Wales and 2 from England) were conducted with participants following an interview guideline - these are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: sample of the fieldwork

Data collection method	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Total
Survey	2	2	3	17	24
Interviews	2	0	0	5	7

Findings

This section focuses on the results of Phases 1 and 2 regarding the similarities and differences in the programme theories across the UK, followed by the main results from Phase 3 about stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections.

Similarities and differences in the programme theories across the UK

This section presents the programme theory of the inspectorates of education in the four nations, reconstructed in Phases 1 and 2 of the study. The reconstructed programme theories are compared for similarities and differences between the four nations.

We found substantive differences between school inspection regimes across the four nations of the UK. These include the intended effects of inspections at both the school and system levels, as well as the mechanisms which are expected to lead to these effects. These are further explained in the below sections.

Inspection intended effects at the school level in the four devolved nations

Intended effects at the school level can be derived from wider mission statements of Ofsted, ETI, ES and Estyn, but also from the standards and indicators used in inspection. These provide a good understanding of how each inspection agency conceives a 'good school' and what schools are expected to work towards. Inspectorates in each of the four nations have some similarities in their standards, but also much variation as can be seen from Figure 1.

Figure 1: Inspection intended effects at the school level

Ofsted	ETI
The standard of education, training or care is good or outstanding (overall effectiveness) in the areas of: – Quality of education – Behaviour and attitudes – Personal development – Leadership and management (safeguarding, and preventing off-rolling and gaming)	The standard of education, training or care is good or above (overall effectiveness) in the areas of: – Outcomes for Learners – Quality of Provision – Leadership and Management – Ensuring governance, care and support and child protection/safeguarding)
ES	**Estyn**
The standard of education is good or above regarding the areas of: – Leadership and management (leadership of change) – Learning provision (quality of learning, teaching and assessment) – Success and achievement (progress in raising attainment and achievement, and ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion)	The standard of education, training or care is good or above (overall effectiveness) for all learners in the areas of: – Standards – Wellbeing – Teaching and learning experiences – Care, support, and guidance – Leadership and management

As presented in Figure 1, the key similarities are that all inspectorates judge school performance focusing on the quality of education provision/teaching and learning, as well as leadership and management, however with varied conceptualisations of what constitutes high quality leadership. Scotland for example refers to 'leadership of change', whereas in England, Ofsted's standard on leadership refers to safeguarding, preventing 'off-rolling and gaming'. The change represents an acknowledgement by Ofsted that inspections have had unintended consequences, and an explicit aim of the inspection framework is to prevent them.

All inspectorates have standards for academic student outcomes but vary in the types of wider student outcomes. In Scotland 'success and achievement' considers the progress in raising attainment and achievement, while also including standards on 'wellbeing', 'equality' and 'inclusion'; Wales also focuses explicitly on wellbeing. Wales and NI put a special emphasis on care and support. England addresses 'personal development', 'behaviour and attitudes,' and is the only inspectorate that explicitly aims to reduce the unintended consequences of inspections, such as the aforementioned gaming and off-rolling.

Inspection intended effects at the system level in the four devolved nations

System level effects of inspection refer to improvement of the entire system beyond individual school quality. All inspectorates have intended system level effects, but these also vary as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Inspection intended effects at the system level

Ofsted		ETI	
–	Creating conditions that enable social mobility and allow young people to reach their potential, reducing regulatory burdens (i.e. workload)	–	Create the conditions that enable an inclusive learning environment where all learners have access to high quality provision and improved life chances
ES		**Estyn**	
–	Promote the highest standards of learning leading to better outcomes for all learners	–	Create the conditions that support all learners to achieve high standards and strong levels of wellbeing

As presented in Figure 2, whilst Ofsted expects to promote social mobility and allow young people to reach their potential, the other inspectorates put explicit emphasis on all learners or equity. ETI expects that inspections will enable an inclusive learning environment where all learners have access to high quality provision. ES aims to promote the highest standards of learning leading to better outcomes for all learners, and Estyn aims to create the conditions to support all learners to achieve high standards and strong levels of wellbeing.

Inspection intended mechanisms at the school level in the four devolved nations

We now turn to the mechanisms by which the four inspectorates aim to improve schools. The programme theories indicate that each of the inspectorates assumes that a combination of external inspection and self-evaluation will improve schools, but how these are combined and how these are expected to improve schools vary considerably. Commonalities are also visible in the role of feedback and professional dialogue as drivers to improve the school level.

Figure 3: Inspection intended mechanisms at the school level

Ofsted		ETI	
– Feedback (accurate, valid, and reliable, focused on the substance of education; targeted at the right level: sub-groups versus whole school; diagnostic value: locally informed, professional and deep conversations) – Preventing bad practice from becoming entrenched (Learning intelligently about strengths, Reviewing curriculum, Culture of improvement and preventing a culture of compliance, Repairing weaknesses, Risk assessment and local intelligence)		– Inspection via school self-evaluation (SSE) – Use of inspection feedback for improvement – Enable school self-reflection culture – Openness and Transparency – Recommend priorities (lines of inquiry) for school action (addressed in the School Development Plan)	
ES		**Estyn**	
– Inspection via school self-evaluation (Triangulation by taking into account parents', children's and young learners' perspectives) – Enhancing professional dialogue/learning		– Inspection via school self-evaluation – Providing feedback	

As Figure 3 shows, the four nations are similar in the following intended mechanisms of how inspections should lead to school improvement:

- Giving feedback through inspection in England, Wales and NI

- Promoting school self-evaluation in Scotland, Wales and NI

- Enhancing professional dialogue/in-depth professional discussions/school self-reflection culture in Scotland and NI

The main differences in how inspectorates expect to support school improvement were:

- Preventing bad practice from becoming entrenched, only in England

- Promoting openness and transparency about the inspections' processes and instruments, only in NI

Inspection intended mechanisms at the system level in the four devolved nations

The programme theories of the four inspectorates also include mechanisms of how inspection should lead to improvement of the wider education system. Figure 4 provides a summary, indicating various mechanisms of how inspections inform policy and wider capacity-building.

Figure 4: Inspection intended mechanisms at the system level

Ofsted	ETI
– Publication of frameworks and training material – Aggregation of insights from national surveys and inspections and advice to policy-makers – Informing parents – Questioning ineffective (reporting) practices – Parents make an informed choice and vote with their feet – Reducing regulatory burden (i.e. workload)	– System level feedback for policy planning – Public accountability/assurance
ES	**Estyn**
– Collective engagement, learning and collaboration – System level feedback – Assurance, scrutiny, and accountability – Publish inspection findings – Share evidence about what works – Practitioners join inspection teams as Associate Assessors or Professional Associates – Aggregate findings from individual inspections on strengths and aspects for development of the education system and/or their policy – Inform policy development – Transparency on school performance	– Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales – Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government – Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales – Spread best practice in the delivery of education and training in Wales based on inspection evidence

As presented in Figure 4, the mechanisms (or engines) by which inspections assume to improve the education system more widely are:

- Providing system level feedback to inform national policy planning in the four nations

- Delivering public accountability/assurance and report to different stakeholders (i.e. parents) in the four nations

- Building capacity by including practitioners in inspection teams by engaging practitioners in the inspection of other schools in England, Scotland and Wales

- Enhancing system-wide learning from good practice in England and Wales

The main differences in how inspectorates expect to promote system level improvement were:

- Promoting collective engagement, learning and collaboration in Scotland

- Reducing regulatory burdens in England

Fieldwork: Stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections across the UK

These findings draw on the analysis of data generated through Phase 3 of this study which consisted of 24 survey responses and 7 semi-structured interviews. This phase aimed to answer Research Question 2: What are

stakeholders' views of, and experiences with, inspections? Here the views of stakeholders that were common across the UK are presented. The specific stakeholders' views for each inspectorate are presented in Appendix 6. To provide an accurate reflection of participants' perspectives, direct quotes from stakeholders are used in an anonymous manner.

More compliance than innovation

Stakeholders across the four nations say that inspections encouraged more compliance with the inspection framework than innovation. They believed that going beyond inspection frameworks by, for example, focusing on an aspect of the curriculum that it is not assessed by the inspection held little value, especially when doing so risked taking away time from the intended effects outlined in each framework (such as quality of education). Stakeholders prioritised their resources and actions according to the hierarchy communicated through the frameworks, so the main sections were interpreted as areas of policy enforcement, whereas statements (communicated for example in bullet points), were interpreted as less relevant. For example:

> The inspection framework guides our practice, but we always think how much do they want us to do this? Is it a complete section or a small statement? (Teacher Interview, Primary academy, England)

Another stakeholder mentioned:

> …an inspection can never cover everything that's important to a school, but you get to the point where you only do things that inspectors can measure because you've got to put all your energy into that (Headteacher Interview, Primary and Secondary Special School, Wales).

Pervasive inspection readiness

Frameworks were also found to be pervasive and examples of 'inspection readiness' abounded among participants who explained many ways in which they prepared for inspection. Readiness included paperwork, submitting relevant documentation, systems and processes in place, act as an evidence provider, conduct mock interviews and visits, brief stakeholders, organise space, etc. One stakeholder said, 'The whole process can dominate the school life' (Governor, survey primary school, Wales). Stakeholders provided many examples of 'inspection readiness', which was seen as vital to success:

> [we prepared] in every way possible. At the level of all aspects of a member of staff in a school… it was an endless process, that everyone feels they must do who works in the school to ensure they please the people coming in (Headteacher, survey, Secondary school, Wales).

> We updated wall displays. Made sure lessons were fully prepared and resources were all organised for the week. Checked all work was marked and up to date. Discussed the possibility of visitors with the children. Made sure forward plans and policy folders were up to date and easy to follow (Teacher Primary school, survey, Scotland).

A two-way 'contract'

Stakeholders interpreted inspection frameworks as a two-way 'contract,' in the sense that the frameworks as explained previously guided the micropolitics of schools, and inspections were viewed negatively when the framework was not followed by individual school inspectors. Regarding the guidance of micropolitics, stakeholders enacted practices in response to them. They were alert to the changes in the framework, and eager to accommodate and shape their responses accordingly to ensure a good inspection outcome.

> …it's a little bit of second guessing, what are they going to ask us on the basis of the data, let's make sure that when they ask us that question, we can answer it (Teacher Interview, Voluntary Aided Secondary School, England).

Negative experiences tended to be associated with inspectors departing from the inspection framework to follow their own agenda, and vice versa.

> So mostly my experience of Ofsted inspectors has been fine, although we've had a couple of rogue ones where they've clearly come in with their own agenda (Headteacher Interview, Primary academy, England).

Concluding Remarks: Implications for Policy and Practice

This section highlights the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings that are relevant for policy-makers, inspectors, school practitioners and other stakeholders. It also connects the findings with results identified in the review of studies included in the theoretical framework.

In line with Gillies (2013), Ball and Olmedo (2013), Clapham (2015) and Colman (2020), the study shows how inspection frameworks are powerful policy texts enacted and implemented by school leaders and other stakeholders according to their interpretations and contexts. Therefore, a gap exists between how inspectorates intend to improve schools, and the way stakeholders interpret frameworks and experience inspections.

Given that previous research (Ehren et al. 2015) has found that inspectorates of education which implemented regimes similar to the ones in place across the UK were the most effective but were also associated with unintended consequences, it is advisable to pay attention to the unintended consequences that these frameworks are having on the education system.

In line with Ketchtermans (2009) school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders across the UK believed that working beyond the frameworks holds little merit, especially when doing so risked taking away time from ensuring a good inspection outcome and improving on standards in the framework. As Ehren et al. (2015) reported that headteachers under inspection regimes similar to ones in place across the UK reported narrowing the curriculum and discouraging teachers from experimenting with new teaching methods, policy-makers and school leaders in particular need to consider the ways in which the inspection frameworks are promoting more compliance than innovation.

Although every nation of the UK seeks to strike the right balance between external evaluation and self-evaluation to ensure a continuous cycle of improvement, there are clear differences across the Devolved Nations. These are particularly visible in how the four frameworks conceptualise a 'good' school. Whilst Ofsted appeared to be more oriented to promote social mobility, the other regimes put more emphasis on equity of all learners. Regarding the intended mechanisms for school improvement, Ofsted put more emphasis on the feedback provided to schools derived from inspection, whereas Estyn, ETI and ES put a stronger emphasis on the alignment between inspection and self-evaluation.

The reflection derived from the fieldwork on inspection frameworks as a 'two-way-contract' where individual inspectors sometimes act on their own agenda highlights the relevance to also understand actual implementation, including tone of voice used when communicating standards and in how schools are evaluated. This is in line with Penninckx et al (2016) who concluded that teachers' perceived transparency of inspection (or psychometric quality in terms of reliability and validity), and of the criteria used for determining the inspection judgement, play a critical role in understanding the effects of inspections in schools.

A final reflection refers to the system level theory of change and how inspectorates of education improve education systems more widely. The four inspectorates have highly relevant processes by which inspectorates of education can improve (evidence-informed) policy making, prevent bad practice from becoming entrenched through wider sharing of good practice, and building capacity by identifying where resources are most needed. This is an area that remains largely unexplored, both in research and also in practice, and where many gains could be made.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy documents included in the policy reconstruction

This appendix outlines by country the policy documents included in Phase 1.

Country	Documents
England	1. Ofsted (September 2017). Ofsted strategy 2017-2022. Reference no: 170039 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648212/Ofsted_strategy_2017-22.pdf 2. Ofsted (May 2019). The education inspection framework. Framework for inspections carried out, respectively, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006. Reference number: 190015 (published May 2019) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801429/Education_inspection_framework.pdf 3. Ofsted (September 2019). School Inspection Handbook https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843108/School_inspection_handbook_-_section_5.pdf 4. Handbook for inspecting schools in England under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Reference no: 190017 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730127/School_inspection_handbook_section_5_270718.pdf 5. Ofsted (September 2019). School inspection handbook – section 8; Handbook for inspecting schools in England under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Reference no: 190019 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-8-school-inspection-handbook-eif 6. Ofsted (September 2019). Risk assessment methodology: good and outstanding maintained schools and academies https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-assessment-methodology-for-maintain-schools-and-academies 7. Ofsted (2019). Selecting new schools for inspection https://www.gov.uk/guidance/selecting-new-schools-for-inspection 8. Ofsted (September 2019). Inspecting maintained schools and academies: a leaflet for maintained schools and academies. Reference no: 190038 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/829875/PDF_-_Inspections_leaflet_-_DS_created_06.09.2019.pdf 9. Ofsted (September 2019). Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-schools-guide-for-maintained-and-academy-schools 10. Ofsted (May 2019). Inspecting the curriculum; Revising inspection methodology to support the education inspection framework. Reference no: 190024 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814685/Inspecting_the_curriculum.pdf 11. Ofsted (2019). Response to consultation https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education/outcome/education-inspection-framework-2019-a-report-on-the-responses-to-the-consultation

Scptland	12. Education Scotland website (no date) 'Inspection Myths' https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/inspection-and-review-sector-specific-guidance/inspection-myths
	13. How does inspection and review support improvement? 2019, no page) https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/standards-and-evaluation-framework/09-how-does-inspection-and-review-support-improvement
	14. Education Scotland website (no date) Inspection of progress in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related gap https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/inspection-and-review-sector-specific-guidance/inspection-of-the-progress-made-by-local-authorities-in-improving-learning-raising-attainment-and-closing-the-poverty-related-gap/
	15. Education Scotland (2016) Appendix 4
	16. Education Scotland (2018) How good is OUR school? (4th edition) A toolkit to support learner participation in self-evaluation and school improvement (2018). Part One https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HGIOURS-Part1.pdf
	17. Education Scotland (2018) How good is OUR school? A toolkit to support learner participation in self-evaluation and school improvement. Part Two https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HGIOURS-Part2.pdf
	18. Education Scotland (2016) Briefing note for headteachers of all-through secondary schools being inspected https://education.gov.scot/Documents/SecondaryHeadteacherBriefingNote061216.pdf
	19. Education Scotland (2017) National Improvement Framework 2017 (NIF) https://www.gov.scot/publications/2017-national-improvement-framework-improvement-plan/
	20. Education Scotland (2016) Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education, A delivery plan for Scotland (2016) https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivering-excellence-equity-scottish-education-delivery-plan-scotland/
	21. Education Scotland (2016) Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education. A governance review https://www.gov.scot/publications/empowering-teachers-parents-communities-achieve-excellence-equity-education-governance-review
	22. Education Scotland (2016) Changes to Education Scotland inspections in August https://education.gov.scot/Documents/LettertoDirectorsofEducation-Ins.pdf
	23. Education Scotland (2017) Empowering our teachers, parents and communities to deliver excellence and equity for our children https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2017/06/education-governance-next-steps-empowering-teachers-parents-communities-deliver-excellence/documents/00521038-pdf/00521038-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00521038.pdf
	24. Education Scotland (no date) Understanding inspection and review https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-school/inspection-and-review/understanding-inspection-and-review
	25. Education Scotland (2018) About Inspection and Review https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/
	26. Education Scotland (2018) Principles of inspection and review https://education.gov.scot/Documents/principles-of-inspection-and-review.pdf
Northern Ireland	27. Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2018 https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/cir-2016-2018_1.pdf
	28. ETI (2017) A charter for Inspection https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/a-charter-for-inspection-January-2017_0.pdf
	29. ETI (2017) Inspection Guidance for schools https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/29176/1/monitoring-inspection-guidance-for-schools_3.pdf

	30. ETI (2017) Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework questions for Primary (2017) https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/isef-primary-with-shared-ed_0.pdf
31. ETI (2017) Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework questions for Post-Primary https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/isef-post-primary-with-shared-ed.pdf
32. ETI (2018) Primary Inspection Guidance https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/31245/1/inspection-guidance-primary-march-2018.pdf
33. ETI (2019) Post-Primary Inspection Guidance https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/34060/1/post-pimary-inspection-guidance-2019-2020.pdf
34. General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (no date) Striking the Right Balance Promoting Teacher Professionalism Towards a Framework of School Accountability for 21st Century Learning https://slidelegend.com/striking-the-right-balance-general-teaching-council-for-northern-_59bd82ab1723dd79e8cd8a80.html
35. ETI (2018) Information for parents - post-primary school https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-info-for-parents-2018-2019.pdf
36. ETI (2019) What happens after an inspection? Pre-school, Nursery Schools, Primary, Post-primary and Special Education https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/what-happens-after-inspection-nursery-schools-primary-post-primary-special-2019.pdf
Wales	37. Estyn, Common Inspection Framework from September 2017 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/2017%2520-final%2520CIF.pdf
38. Example of Inspection report Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg Colcot Road Barry CF62 8YU Date of inspection: March 2019 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-08/Ysgol%2520Gymraeg%2520Bro%2520Morgannwg%2520en_0.pdf
39. Estyn, no date, Inspection Explained https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection-process/inspection-explained
40. Estyn (2019) Follow-up Guidance for schools and inspectors https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/Follow-up%2520guidance%2520for%2520schools%2520and%2520inspectors%2520updated%2520Nov%25202019.pdf
41. Arrangements to review the progress of primary and special schools and PRUs placed in Estyn review https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files
42. Post inspection Action Plan, 2017 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/Post%2520inspection%2520action%2520plans%2520guidance.Aug%252017.pdf
43. Guidance regarding schools in special measures and the induction period for newly qualified teachers https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/
44. Inspector Role https://www.estyn.gov.wales/working-us/inspector-roles
45. Supplementary guidance: the inspection of literacy in schools https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/NIA%2520Supplementary%2520guidance%2520-%2520literacy_0.pdf
46. Supplementary guidance: the inspection of numeracy in schools https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/NIA%2520Supplementary%2520guidance%2520-%2520numeracy_0.pdf
47. Estyn, no date, About us https://www.estyn.gov.wales/about-us
48. Estyn, no date, Inspecting for self-evaluation: a new approach https://www.estyn.gov.wales/blog/new-approach-self-evaluation-reports-what-does-it-mean-schools
49. Estyn, no date, Inspection Myths https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/inspection-myths-busted#inspectionmythsbusted
50. Estyn, no date, A learning inspectorate: listening, learning and changing together https://www.estyn.gov.wales/supporting-education-reform/learning-inspectorate-listening-learning-and-changing-together#listening,learningandchangingtogether

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62. Improving teaching, 2018 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/improving-teaching

63. Background information about Estyn http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s82205/CR%2004%20Estyn.pdf

Appendix 2: Inspection framework programme theory in England. The programme theory reconstructed in Phase 1 is presented in this appendix.

England: Ofsted 2019 Inspection framework programme theory: a new set of principles to be(come) a force for improvement in education provision

Introduction

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, or England's inspection system of state schools, is one of the best known and studied systems in the world. Its frameworks and working methods have travelled across the world and have, for example, inspired quality reviews in New York and inspections in Abu Dhabi. At home, Ofsted has been critiqued for creating a culture of fear, naming and shaming, causing teacher recruitment and retention problems (Wilby, 2018)(particularly in the most deprived communities) and a narrow focus on test scores in a small number of subject domains. The appointment of the current chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, in 2017 saw a clear attempt to change the narrative and be a 'force for good'. For example, in August 2018 she proposed to downgrade the emphasis on exam results in inspection judgements and introduced an emphasis on a broader and richer curriculum.

The main functions of Ofsted are set out in law through two key Acts of Parliament – the Education Act 2005 (England, 2005) and the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (England, 2006) (elements of which supersede the 2005 Act). In addition to the requirements of law, details on the frameworks and mechanisms used by Ofsted in order to meet its aims are set out in key Ofsted documents. The 2005 Education Act states that all schools in England (excluding private (fee-paying) schools) should be inspected within a given time period, giving inspectors the power to inspect and take copies of any relevant records kept by schools (Section 8 Handbook, p. 7). These compulsory inspections are known as 'Section 5' inspections as they are specified in Section 5 of the Education Act. In addition to Section 5 inspections, Section 8 of the Act gives Ofsted the power to perform further inspections at the discretion of the inspector. These inspections are known as 'Section 8' inspections and will be implemented in the following circumstances:

- Section 8 inspections of schools judged to be good at their most recent Section 5 inspection and those outstanding schools that are not exempt from Section 5
- monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement
- monitoring inspections of schools judged to have serious weaknesses
- monitoring inspections of schools judged to require special measures
- any inspection that is carried out in other circumstances where the inspection has no specific designation, known as 'Section 8 no formal designation inspection'
- unannounced behaviour inspections (Section 8 Handbook, p.4)

Ofsted intended effect at the school level

The inspection framework, and particularly the standards by which schools are judged, offers further detail on the types of improvement Ofsted aims to promote. Standards include:

1) the quality of education

2) behaviour and attitudes

3) personal development

4) leadership and management.

These inform an assessment of the 'overall effectiveness' of the school on a four-point scale (inadequate, requires improvement, good, outstanding) where schools are expected to be or become at least good.

The most important change in the 2019 education inspection framework is that it now puts a single, joined-up educational conversation at the heart of inspection, built around the connectedness of curriculum, teaching assessments and standards within the 'quality of education' judgement:

> The most significant change from current arrangements is the introduction of a 'quality of education' judgement. This combines aspects of the previous key judgements of 'teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes' to provide a more holistic view of standards, particularly focusing on the curriculum. We will continue to report on all aspects of a school, as set out in section 5 of the Education Act 2005, but will do so within the new judgement headings (Section 5 inspection handbook, p.25).

The standard for 'leadership and management' additionally includes specific criteria on arrangements for safeguarding and not allowing for gaming or 'off-rolling', which is described as:

> Gaming: entering pupils for courses or qualifications that are not in their educational best interest in order to achieve apparently better performance for the school.

> Off-rolling: removing a learner from the provider's roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove a learner from their schools, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the provider rather than in the best interests of the learner (EIF, 2019, pp. 11-12).

Both are unintended consequences often reported in response to high stakes inspections and testing in England. Including these as an indicator of leadership and management is expected to prevent such practices in the future. The improvement of schools on these standards is expected to be achieved through Sections 5 and 8 inspections.

Ofsted intended effect at the system level

Ofsted also aims to inform system-wide improvement through its wider work and information provision. As Ofsted states:

> Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation. This is our guiding principle. The primary purpose of inspection under this framework is to bring about improvement in education provision (The 2019 Education Inspection Framework, p.4).

> However, our role as a force for improvement extends beyond day-to-day inspection and regulation of individual institutions. Just as important is Ofsted's role in system-wide improvement, both through helping to create the conditions that enable social mobility and allow young people to reach their potential, and also in reducing regulatory burdens across the system (Ofsted 2017-2022, p.6).

By highlighting specific practices that Ofsted does not require, such as providing curriculum planning in a specific format, it aims to reduce regulatory burdens across the system. These should target the workload of those involved in inspections, as the following statement in Ofsted's response to the consultation highlights that the new framework and the reforms are intended to:

> allow us to play our part in helping to reduce unnecessary workload for teachers, leaders and inspectors (Section 5 Inspection Handbook, p.12).

Ofsted intended mechanisms to improve the school level

Ofsted's 2017-2022 strategy provides a detailed description of how it aims to achieve 'intelligent, responsible and focused inspections' and be a force for improvement, with further detail in the inspection frameworks and guidelines.

Feedback

Our reconstruction indicates that improvement of maintained schools and academies is expected to be achieved through feedback. Schools, and particularly the head teacher, are expected to use the feedback for improvement and purposeful action planning. Feedback (including judgements about quality) is an important part of inspections, and how Ofsted aims to inform improvement. Various documents describe different elements of effective feedback and how these are expected to promote improvement through diverse mechanisms of change. Below we separate these into three different conditions of feedback:

Accurate, valid, reliable, and focused on the substance of education

Various documents emphasise the importance of accurate, valid and reliable judgements about standards of education and safeguarding which need to highlight areas of weakness in schools, as well as key strengths:

> Through … inspection' means coming to judgements of performance. Our judgements focus on key strengths, from which other providers can learn intelligently, and areas of weakness, from which providers should improve their performance (Ofsted strategy 2017-2022, p.5).

Only when inspection standards and the resulting judgement address the substance of education will feedback lead to improvement and prevent a culture of compliance, as the following statement indicates:

> There is the temptation to use the framework to do too many different things. This can encourage a compliance culture, rather than one based on improvement. In developing our 2019 education common inspection framework, we will avoid focusing on those areas that do not provide a measure of quality of education and look to report separately on areas which could skew overall judgements (Ofsted strategy 2017-2022, pp.10-11).

Various documents include statements on how Ofsted intends to ensure the accuracy, validity, reliability and focus of its feedback. The use of research evidence, placing the quality of education standard at the heart of the framework, and avoiding an emphasis on statutory requirements in the framework, are conditions which inform feedback during and after inspection. The extensive training of inspectors and internal quality control of inspection reports would ensure the accuracy of the judgements and related feedback during visits, particularly in preventing bias of judgements of schools in deprived areas.

Diagnostic and relevant for schools

Various documents also address the diagnostic value of inspections when the process allows head teachers and inspectors to develop a shared understanding of the school's standard of education and ways in which quality can be improved. A diagnostic inspection includes a professional dialogue between inspector and head teacher which focuses on areas of underperformance the school needs to address:

> In recent years, we have moved to a leaner inspection model that allows us to do more inspections at lower cost to the tax payer. We have adopted a regional model, headed by a team of regional directors. All are experienced former practitioners. This has allowed us to build a deep, professional dialogue at the local level, to share intelligence and to focus more sharply on areas of underperformance (Ofsted 2017-2022 strategy, p.4).

Professional and deep conversations

Such a dialogue requires positive working relations between inspection team and the head teacher, good professional expertise of inspectors, local intelligence, and time to collect and discuss evidence during visits. Ofsted aims to ensure a good working relationship and professional dialogue by: deploying serving practitioners on inspection teams; ensuring that inspectors in (regional) coordinating roles have a practitioner background; allowing more time during visits to collect and discuss evidence (where head teachers are invited to join lesson observations); having an inspection code of conduct (emphasising courteous and professional behaviour, treating everyone fairly, with respect and sensitivity); a 90 minute phone call in advance of the visit between the inspector and head teacher (to discuss and agree on the specifics of the inspection schedule) (Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, 2019).

> In response, we will introduce a 90-minute phone call between the lead inspector and the Head teacher (or their nominated delegate) on the afternoon before inspection begins. This will provide the opportunity to start building that vital positive working relationship between inspector and school, for professional dialogue to begin about the education provided by the school, and to discuss logistical arrangements and the timetable for the inspection (Ofsted Response to Consultation 2019, p.15).

> As part of this, we will review and aim to slim down our reporting process so that HMI and RIs have more opportunities to use their professional experience in providing challenge and support rather than writing lengthy reports (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.7).

Under these four conditions of feedback (accurate, targeted, diagnostic and professional) schools are expected to use the feedback for improvement and to learn from it. As the following statement indicates, schools are expected to be motivated to improve because:

> Ofsted has a great deal of influence over the education, training and care sectors. Many providers believe that 'what Ofsted says goes' and it is undoubtedly the case that what Ofsted has said and done has shaped the sectors we inspect (...) Inspections are career-defining moments for the professionals who operate in providers (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.8).

The new education inspection framework and emphasis on a broad curriculum is particularly expected to motivate providers to review their curriculum, especially when it was focused on achieving test and examination results:

> Throughout the framework and strategy documents, a school's leadership is addressed as the primary driver for change and capacity for improvement in the school. The head teacher is the first point of contact for the preparation of the visit and during the inspection (e.g. joining in lesson observations), but also the primary audience for the inspection feedback and in developing action plans to address such feedback. Inspectors provide oral feedback to teachers and other staff during the visit about the work that they see (Ofsted School Guidance, 2019).

Various statements, such as the following, suggest that it is the head teacher and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who are considered the crucial factor in taking action to improve the school:

> The crucial factor is the anticipated timescale for the removal of the serious weaknesses designation given the current rate of improvement. A school in which leaders and managers are taking effective action is one that will be on course to have the serious weaknesses designation removed within 30 months after the publication of the previous section 5 report. A school that is not taking effective action will be likely to continue to have serious weaknesses, or may require special measures, when the section 5 re-inspection takes place (Ofsted Section 8 Handbook, p.40).

The crucial role of leadership in school improvement is also evidenced by the consequences for schools that are judged to be 'requiring significant improvement' and those in 'special measures'. Following DfE's policy, these

maintained schools are subject to an academy order, whereas academies are being brokered or re-brokered to new sponsors by government. Both consequences involve (at a minimum) a change in leadership.

Intervening and preventing entrenched bad practice

Improvement of schools is furthermore expected to be enhanced by Ofsted's risk assessment and local intelligence which allows for an early detection of (potential) bad practice and preventing these from becoming entrenched:

> Ofsted can choose when and how often to inspect. Through this timing, Ofsted should catch providers before they fall, making the improvement easier and quicker (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.5).

Various statements also include specific references to examples of 'bad practice', such as schools that operate under the radar in providing intense religious education and radicalise children or schools that off-roll children to improve their test results. The latter (gaming and off-rolling) is also included as a separate indicator in the judgement of the 'leadership and management' of the school and will, when inspectors find such practices in schools, lead to an overall negative judgement of the overall effectiveness of the school. This should act as a deterrent to schools considering such practice.

Ofsted's intended mechanisms to improve the system level

Schools are expected to learn from good practice in other schools (as identified in the aggregated/thematic inspection reports) to inform their wider learning and improvement. The use of common framework, which allows for comparison of providers, is expected to support such wider learning and a culture of improvement. Ofsted emphasises its role in improving outcomes for young people and other learners across the education, training, and care systems:

> In an autonomous and self-improving system of education, training and care, Ofsted is one of the few organisations capable of triggering a nationwide change in practice (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.10).

> At the national level we will continue to offer impartial advice, grounded in inspection evidence, on the quality of education and care, on how that provision could be improved through national and local government action, and on the impact of current policies and other initiatives (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.7).

These outcomes are positioned at the system level where improvement is the result of more indirect change processes such as through:

Publication of frameworks and training material to inform system-wide learning from good practice

Ofsted aims to promote system-wide improvement by making frameworks, and training on elements of any framework, publicly available and allowing practitioners to learn from these materials. The response to consultation states that:

> Since 2017, inspectors have received a great deal of training on a number of the elements that underpin the new framework. In the case of the curriculum, we also made that same training publicly available, both face-to-face at free events across the country and online so that providers could use the materials at any time (Ofsted Response to Consultation 2019, p.9)

Serving practitioners on inspection teams

Learning from inspections is also enhanced by including serving practitioners on inspection teams who:

have more opportunities to take learning from inspection back into their own organisations (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.9).

Aggregating findings and local intelligence to inform national policy-makers and local stakeholders (enabling evidence-informed policy making)

Ofsted aggregates findings from its surveys and from individual inspections to provide feedback on good practice and inform national policymakers about (in)effectiveness of aspects of the education system and/or their policy.

Local knowledge of regional inspection offices is expected to also inform a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses of provision across the country and allow various providers and policymakers to 'learn intelligently'. To enable Ofsted to have such a 'bird's eye view' of what works and what doesn't work, and to inform the national policy debate and local provider practice, it needs to look at the full range and breadth of young people's experiences. Section 8 inspections of a selection of good and outstanding providers as well as national surveys are expected to offer such a variety of practices:

> We will, however, comment on the practice we see in the system and the outcomes that that practice is leading to. We will publish more aggregation of the insights from inspections, identify negative trends before bad practice becomes embedded and show what good providers are doing to lead to positive outcomes for young people (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.7).

> However, at the national level, Ofsted should play a role in improving outcomes for young people and other learners across the education, training and care systems. We will achieve this through our national survey reports and research, which highlight what is and isn't working to improve outcomes for young people. That reporting is only possible if our inspectors are exposed to the full range of practice that they can then inform others about. For that reason, we will make more use of the flexibility allowed in legislation to survey and inspect a greater proportion of outstanding schools (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.9).

Informing parents to choose a high-quality school and vote with their feet

Feedback from inspections, as described in the previous section, should also inform other stakeholders working with schools and their actions to address underperformance:

> Inspections act as a trigger for others (responsible bodies, parents/older students, government) to take action to improve practice (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.5)

Parents (and older students) are expected to read inspection reports and use these to 'vote with their feet' and choose a good or outstanding provider, as the below quote indicates:

> Ofsted inspections act as a trigger to others to take action. That action can be responsible bodies taking action to improve practice in a local authority or nursery, parents and older students being able to vote with their feet, or government being able to take action to support or, in the cases of inadequacy, convert or rebroker a failing school (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.5)

To allow parents to make an informed school choice or 'vote with their feet', Ofsted aims to make its education reports more accessible to parents, for example by making them shorter and better focused on the issues that parents care about when choosing or seeking assurance about a school, college, or childcare provider (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy). Parents (and other stakeholders) are expected to use the information from Ofsted reports as:

Ofsted has become a trusted public brand, providing valuable information about quality and giving assurance that children will be kept safe (Ofsted 2017-2022 Strategy, p.3).

Questioning ineffective (reporting) practices, reducing regulatory burden to enhance capacity for improvement

A final Ofsted objective is to reduce workload of educators and inspectors alike. Reducing inspectors' workload is a condition for enabling a professional dialogue during inspection visits (instead of having to spend time on reporting) and ensuring that inspectors have sufficient time to collect evidence (see previous section). Reducing workload of educators is furthermore a condition to enhance the capacity for high quality education. Ofsted explicitly describes the types of practices schools should not engage in for the purpose of an inspection (as these are considered ineffective), and inspectors will for example question schools who have more than two or three (assessment) data-collection points a year or write a separate action plan following a judgement of 'requiring improvement' (Section 8 Handbook, p.31).

Appendix 3: Inspection framework programme theory in NI

The programme theory reconstructed in Phase 1 is presented in this appendix.

NI: ETI 2017 Inspection framework programme theory: A set of principles to promote improvement in the interest of all children

Introduction

The current inspection system in Northern Ireland is managed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) whose responsibility is stated in Education Reform Order 1989 (Article Number 30). The Act states that:

> the purpose of inspection is to promote the highest possible standards of learning, teaching and achievement throughout the education, training and youth sectors (Charter for Inspection, 2017, p.1).

The Department of Education (DENI) is legally responsible for the external evaluation of schools, as specified in the Education and Libraries Order 1986. Within the DENI, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) conducts the inspection of early years, primary, special, and post-primary schools (A Charter for Inspection, 2017). ETI has a reputation for focusing on school self-evaluation coupled with inspection, understood as a quality assurance process (Brown et al, 2020).

Although ETI has conducted area-based inspections - such as the one carried out in West Belfast reported by Brown et al 2020-, we will focus on organisational inspections as they are the main model implemented by ETI to inspect schools. ETI has a number of roles, we will focus on its role in the improvement of schools. The starting point of the reconstruction is that through ETI inspections and school self-evaluation, schools sustain their improvement (Primary Inspection Gide 2017, 2018).

It is important to recognise that when the 2017 inspection framework was introduced, Northern Ireland's education and training system was facing unprecedented challenges derived from financial cuts and massive teachers' industrial action that included non-co-operation with the ETI's school inspection (Chief Inspector Report 2016-2018). These challenges were coupled with recommendations for change outlined in the Parliamentary inquiry into School Inspections (Committee for Education, 2015) and the OECD review of the country's Evaluation and Assessment (OECD, 2014), pointing to the need to make better use of stakeholders' questionnaires, accessible and detailed inspection reports, supportive language, enhanced role of District Inspectors on inspection teams, among other improvements oriented to adopt a more collaborative and conciliatory approach. All these antecedents pointed to the need of changing ETI school inspections and the support provided for school improvement. However, since the introduction of the 2017 framework, ETI inspections have been impacted by action approaching that of strike in most of the inspected schools. Although ETI have visited schools, these inspections have not been able to assess their effectiveness.

ETI intended effect at the school level

Particularly, the standards by which schools are judged provide details on the types of improvement ETI aims to promote. The standard of education, training or care is good or above (overall effectiveness) in the areas of:

- Outcomes for Learners
- Quality of Provision
- Leadership and Management
- Ensuring governance, care and support and child protection/safeguarding)

These inform an assessment of the 'overall effectiveness' of the school.

ETI intended effect at the system level

The intended outcome of inspection at the system level is to raise standards and improve the life chances of learners, as well as promote quality and improvement in education, youth and training:

> The purpose of inspection is to promote the highest possible standards of learning, teaching and achievement throughout the education, training and youth sectors' (Charter for Inspection, 2017, p.1).

> The unique contribution which inspection can make to raising standards and improving the life chances of learners (Charter for Inspection, 2017, p.2).

ETI intended mechanisms to improve the school level

ETI provides a detailed description of how it aims to achieve inspections that support school self-evaluation leading to improvement, with further detail in the inspection frameworks and guidelines.

Inspection via school self-evaluation (SSE)

The key driver for school improvement from inspection is via school self-evaluation (SSE), which is expected to inform the school development planning process:

> The aim of inspections is to 'evaluate the extent to which the leadership and management of the school uses self-evaluation effectively to inform the school development planning process to bring about improvement. The inspection will focus on action to promote improvement and its impact on learning and teaching and outcomes for learners, and the school's evaluation of safeguarding' (Monitor Inspection Guidance for Schools, 2017, p.2).

Use of inspection feedback for improvement: Recommend priorities (lines of inquiry) for school action

Schools, and particularly the head teacher, are expected to promote and sustain improvement through self-evaluation processes and the development planning process (School Development Plan, SDP):

> The centrality of the school development plan (SDP), in terms of planning, development and self-evaluation leading to improvement (Primary Inspection Gide 2017, 2018, pp.4-5).

> The RI (Reporting Inspector), in discussion with the principal, will identify one or two lines of inquiry linked to the priorities identified in the SDP (School Developmental Plan) (Primary Inspection Gide 2017, 2018, p. 24).

> The RI will identify and agree a line or lines of inquiry from the school development plan. Normally lines of inquiry will support the evaluation of learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; and outcomes (Monitor Inspection Guidance for Schools, 2017, p.2).

> At the time of inspection and for the line/lines of inquiry selected the school is identifying and bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of education. This will be reflected in future inspection arrangements (Monitor Inspection Guidance for Schools, 2017, p.4).

Also, ETI particularly inspects leadership and management's use of SSE to improve the school:

The SII gives the school the opportunity to demonstrate to ETI that it continues to act effectively to sustain and effect improvement through its school development planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes. The model enables ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement (Primary Inspection Gide 2017, 2018, p. 24).

As a result of the debate and challenge stimulated by the characteristics and the questions, the organisation, team or individual should be able to provide a summary of the strengths of the particular aspect under focus, identify areas that require further development and consider the actions that are necessary to continue the improvement process (Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework 2017, p.4).

Enable school self-reflection culture

The process of SSE is expected to specifically address the inspection standards, not in a tick- box manner, but to enable a self-reflection culture leading to improvement:

For the purposes of self-evaluation, the framework is designed to enable organisations, teams or individuals to initiate or continue the process of self-reflection leading to improvement; it should be used to provide a holistic approach to self-evaluation and not as an inflexible check-ist. The underpinning phase- specific characteristics of effective practice, and the self-evaluation questions, should enable the staff within an organisation to have in-depth professional discussions about specific aspects within the framework and stimulate challenge and debate about: the outcomes for learners; quality of provision; and leadership and management (Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary, 2017, p.1).

Openness and Transparency

ETI's strong emphasis on the openness and transparency of inspections leads to the publication of outlines detailing the kind of questions that inspectors may ask, as well as the draft/proforma inspection report that the inspection team will complete at the end of the inspection visit. It also leads to the open publication of inspection reports on education provision:

In creating a common framework for inspection and self-evaluation the ETI is extending the principle of openness and transparency so that all stakeholders are working together to promote improvement for all learners (Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary, 2017, p.1).

ETI provide[s] transparency in the inspection process by the publication of key indicators (ISEF, 2017, p.2).

The ETI has the statutory responsibility for the published reports on education provision, and for the evaluations and findings contained within those reports (What happens after an inspection. Pre-school, Nursery Schools, Primary, Post-primary and Special Education January 2019, p.4).

ETI intended mechanisms to improve the system level

ETI's system-wide improvement is oriented to generate an inclusive learning environment, where improvement is the result of more indirect change processes.

System level feedback for policy planning

Reporting to national policymakers and local stakeholders about the system level is expected to enhance system-wide improvement. ETI aggregates findings from its surveys and from individual inspections to inform national policymakers about the effectiveness of aspects of the education system and/or their policy:

The inspection programme is designed to provide evidence on issues on which the departments and their Ministers need particular advice. The ETI will provide advice to the departments and Ministers on request (Charter for Inspection, 2017, p.3).

In achieving this purpose, we comment on the influence and outcomes of the policies of the three departments within the education, training and youth sectors (Charter for Inspection, 2017, p.2).

School inspections will lead to reporting at the system level on standards in literacy and numeracy and on the implementation and effectiveness of this literacy and numeracy strategy (DENI, 2011, p.21).

Public accountability/assurance

Public reporting reassures stakeholders (such as parents) and the government about the effective use of resources and on the effectiveness of policy in practice leading to the quality of education:

The inspection in your child's school will tell you and others about how well the pupils are progressing in their learning; the school is helping them to learn and develop; and the school is attending to the pupils' care, welfare and safeguarding (Inspection of Post-primary Schools Information for Parents September 2018, p.1).

Inspection also provides an assurance to parents and carers that the education and training being provided for their children and young people is of good quality (...) Inspection is an important element of public accountability and confidence, and also of improvement, supporting as it does the primacy of the learner (...) Inspection also provides an assurance (...) to government on the effectiveness of policy in practice (Chief Inspector Report 2016-2018, p.4).

[The inspection process] provides the necessary assurances that resources are being used well to secure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people (...) Inspection (...) provides the assurances needed by the education and training system' (Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2018, p.8).

Appendix 4: Inspection framework programme theory in Scotland

The programme theory reconstructed in Phase 1 is presented in this appendix.

Scotland: ES 2016 Inspection framework programme theory: a new set of principles to promote the highest standards of learning leading to better outcomes for all learners

Introduction

Education Scotland (ES) is Scotland's national improvement agency for education created in 2011 as a result of the merging and replacing of Learning and Teaching Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe). This policy theory focuses on ES inspections of Scottish schools (maintained and independent, primary and secondary).

ES implemented a new inspection framework in August 2016, including new indicators and benchmarks for evaluating the quality of education. This framework and related documents form the policy theory reconstruction. We will reconstruct the assumptions underpinning the framework about how ES aims to meet the main objectives of the 2016 inspection framework.

The key functions of ES and details on the frameworks and mechanisms used in order to meet its aims are set out in legislation, Section 35 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 (asp 6). Also Part III of the 1980 Act confers upon HMIs (Her Majesty's Inspectors) the statutory functions of inspection (What is the Legal basis for inspection and review?). ES is required to inspect all primary and secondary schools in Scotland (including private (fee-paying) schools). Instead of inspecting all schools similarly on a regular basis, since 2009 schools are proportionally inspected using an annual non-representative sample of 120 schools. The selection criteria include:

- the context of schools (i.e. deprivation)

- characteristics of schools (i.e. type of school and balance across local authorities)

- other factors (i.e. local circumstances and the length of time since the last inspection) (How often do we inspect?).

Apart from the annual sample inspections, Section 66 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 gives ES the power to perform further special inspections of any school whenever desired. Sample inspections conducted in primary and secondary schools can be full (which covers four Quality indicators (Qis), or short model inspection (which covers two Qis) aiming to assess the quality of children's learning and achievement, with a particular focus on children's skills and understanding in 4 key areas: literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. The QIs (stated in the document 'How good is our school? (4th edition)' provide evidence on the extent to which the National Improvement Framework (NIF) has been implemented (Section 66).

Since 2016 a six-point scale (ranging from Excellent to Inadequate) is used twice: firstly, as a school self-evaluation tool for each school to measure itself against QIs (ES, Appendix 4, 2016); secondly, as an external evaluation tool by ES. Therefore, ES inspection builds on the review of the self-evaluation conducted by schools. A summary paper answering the framework's questions is submitted by the Headteacher of the school to the Inspectorate 5 working days before inspection, and is used 'as a starting point for discussion with the inspection team' (Briefing note for head teachers of all-through secondary schools being inspected, 2016, p.9). The questions to be answered are:

1. How well are you doing? What is working well for your learners?

2. How do you know? What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?

3. What are you going to do now? What are your improvement priorities in this area?

4. How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOS six-point scale4?

Along with the school self-evaluation, and before ES inspection takes place, ES takes into consideration stakeholders' perspectives. ES issues questionnaires to:

a) children and young people in the school. 'These give an indication of children and young people's satisfaction with various aspects of the schools to inform the inspection' (NIF, 2017, p.63)

b) parents of the school to explore their 'satisfaction with various aspects of the schools to inform the inspection' (NIF, 2017, p.66); 'Gathering the views of parents is an important part of the inspection of a school or ELC. You may be asked to fill in a questionnaire about the school or ELC and/or join a group to give your views to a member of the inspection team. Your views are carefully considered as part of the evidence during an inspection' (Understanding inspection and review), and

c) teachers and staff questionnaires.

ES uses a six-point scale (Excellent, Very good, Good, Satisfactory, Weak and Unsatisfactory) for consistently grading the 15 QIs for national and/or local benchmarking across schools. Although this is considered 'more of a professional skill than a technical process' (HGIOS, 2015, p.33), it becomes clear that the role of ES inspection is to challenge by reviewing school self-evaluation:

> The Scottish approach to bringing about improvement in schools is based on the idea that schools will evaluate their own work and then take action to share good practice and plan for any necessary improvements. In doing this, they are supported and challenged by their local authorities and by the inspection team. So inspection should not be seen as an isolated event, but rather part of an ongoing process which ensures school improvement' (Myth 10: Inspection is an isolated event that does not really have any purpose other than adding stress to the school).

The 2016 inspection framework offers further detail on the types of improvement ES inspections aim to promote, which can be seen as intermediate outcomes which lead to the ultimate outcome of promoting the highest standards of learning and better outcomes for all learners. Firstly, the self-evaluation school framework sets out three school quality aspects:

(1) Leadership and Management

(2) Learning Provision, and

(3) Successes and Achievements

The three quality aspects are further operationalised in 15 QIs and 48 themes[1]. Then, ES inspection focuses on the same three school quality aspects used in school self-evaluation but only 4 priority selected QIs and 14 themes[2]:

(1) Leadership and Management

QI 1.3 Leadership of change

1.3.1 Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community

1.3.2 Strategic planning for continuous improvement

1.3.3 Implementing improvement and change

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[1] How good is our school? (4th edition) (HGIOS?, p.9)

[2] How good is our school? (4th edition) (HGIOS?)

(2) Learning Provision

    QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

        2.3.1 Learning and engagement

        2.3.2 Quality of teaching

        2.3.3 Effective use of assessment

        2.3.4 Planning, tracking and monitoring

3) Successes and Achievements

    QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

        3.1.1 Wellbeing

        3.1.2 Fulfilment of statutory duties

        3.1.3 Inclusion and equality

    QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

        3.2.1 Attainment in literacy and numeracy

        3.2.2 Attainment over time

        3.2.3 Overall quality of learners' achievement

        3.2.4 Equity for all learners

Although the school needs to select and report on an extra QI to further demonstrate areas for improvement, the inspection team only assesses the standard 4 QIs using the six-point scale. Instead of providing an 'overall effectiveness' as in the Ofsted framework, the outcome of ES inspection is reported by each of the themes that constitute each QI.

ES intended effect at the school level

The ultimate intended outcomes of ES school inspection and review conducted in primary and secondary schools is to improve outcomes for learners to a good or above standard regarding the areas of:

- Leadership and management (leadership of change)
- Learning provision (quality of learning, teaching and assessment)
- Success and achievement (progress in raising attainment and achievement, and ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion)

ES intended effect at the system level

ES system level effects of inspection refer to improvement of the entire system, beyond individual school quality. ES inspection intended system level effects can be found in several policy documents referring to the inspectorate's role of assuring the quality of education with a special emphasis on enhancing learners' experiences:

> Inspections and reviews are designed to improve outcomes for learners through providing assurance on the quality of education and promoting improvement and innovation to enhance learners' experiences (Empowering our teachers, parents, and communities to deliver excellence and equity for our children, 2017, p.37).

> [Inspections aim] to promote the highest standards of learning leading to better outcomes for all learners (How good is our school? 2015, 4th edition, p.4).

ES intended mechanisms to improve the school level

ES implements mechanisms to improve schools. The programme theory indicates that a combination between school self-evaluation and the enhancement of professional dialogue/learning as the main drivers of change.

Inspection via school self-evaluation

The improvement of schools is expected to be achieved through the review of schools' self-evaluation. The quality frameworks are designed to enable providers to undertake self-evaluation using the same framework used by inspectors to evaluate the quality of education provision as part of inspection and review. These quality frameworks are developed in partnership with stakeholders:

> Inspection and review place an importance on exploring the extent to which an establishment/service has the ability to self-evaluate and drive its own improvement. We start an inspection by understanding the provider's self-evaluation. We work with staff to identify key themes from self-evaluation which will help to focus inspection or review activity. Where a provider has identified a priority for improvement and has taken action to make improvements, inspectors recognise this thus verifying the provider's own evaluation and supporting their journey of continuous improvement. At the end of the inspection, we report on the provider's capacity for continuous improvement (How does inspection and review support improvement? 2019, no page).

In all our inspection and review frameworks we will start by understanding the establishment or service's self-evaluation; work with staff in establishments or services to identify key themes from self-evaluation which will help to focus inspection or review activity; explore the effectiveness of the establishment/service's self-evaluation arrangements and, where we believe these are of good quality, place added reliance on the evidence produced by the establishment/service itself to streamline the inspection process; and report on the establishment or service's capacity to improve (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.3).

Enhancing professional dialogue/ learning

ES aims to bring capacity-building through constructive professional dialogue/learning with school staff during inspection. Again, inspectors first listen to the views of service providers and users, and then provide professional, evidence-based judgments. This dialogue focuses on the observed teaching, training or service delivery and aims to highlight effective practice from which schools can learn and improve:

> In all our inspection and review frameworks we will promote professional dialogue about the data which helps us to reach judgments about performance (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.3).

> We give priority to supporting improvement through constructive professional dialogue. This is one of our most valuable tools for supporting improvement when engaging with staff during inspections. Provider's value the dialogue with inspectors because the discussions can be strongly contextualised to particular local concerns. They also value the knowledge HM Inspectors have of quality frameworks, national policy and practice observed across the country. This enhances the credibility of the interaction (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.4).

Therefore, school self-evaluation and professional dialogue/learning are the main mechanisms for school improvement. School self-evaluation is not only revised and validated by inspectors, but also recognised during inspections as a school capacity. This is extended through professional dialogue, helping inspectors using this evidence to reach their judgements about school performance.

ES intended mechanisms to improve the system level

There are different mechanisms (or engines) by which ES inspections are assumed to improve the education system more widely:

Collective engagement, learning and collaboration

ES contributes to system-wide improvement through collective engagement, learning and collaboration by reporting on the quality of provision nationally:

> In order to engage stakeholders and generate collective learning and collaboration, on all our inspection and review frameworks, we will apply inspection and review guidance to allow us to report clearly on the quality of provision nationally and where appropriate, to national reporting systems (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.2).

This collectiveness is in line with the teacher collegiality that ES aims to promote and that is present in many Education Scotland's policies that go beyond inspections.

System level feedback/ Share evidence about what works

System-wide improvement is also expected to be achieved through providing feedback to different key players (such as Ministers and the public) through sharing evidence about what works:

> As part of their inspection process Education Scotland will look at how schools and establishments are working collaboratively with others and we will share evidence about what works (Empowering our teachers, parents, and communities to deliver excellence and equity for our children, 2017, p.32).

> In all our inspection and review frameworks, we will promote a learning approach in order to learn from the knowledge and experience of others and share our knowledge and experience (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.4).

Assurance, scrutiny, and accountability

ES inspections also aim to improve the system level by assuring and enhancing the confidence of policymakers as well as users of the services (i.e students and parents):

> In all our inspection and review frameworks, we will provide impartial and professional evaluations of the quality of educational provision in ways which give Scottish Ministers and users of our services assurance, accountability and a high degree of confidence in our work (...) In all our inspection and review frameworks, we will have clear lines of accountability to Ministers and the public; and comment impartially on the influence, impact and outcomes of policies to Scottish Ministers and users of services (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.2).

> Our accountability system currently includes a range of bodies with formal roles including: the Scottish Government, local authorities, Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council (...) Schools should primarily be accountable to parents and their local communities. The development of the National Improvement Framework will support parents and communities to make informed decisions and choices by providing accessible data to drive improvement and allow everyone to play their part effectively (...) We want our accountability and scrutiny arrangements to be joined-up where possible and to reduce the burden of scrutiny on those delivering education. (Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education. A governance review, 2016, p.16).

Publish inspection findings/Transparency on school performance

A further ES mechanism for improvement at the system level is the publication of insights from inspections, which is seen as transparency on school performance:

> We promote collective engagement in learning and improvement through publishing our inspection findings. This enables us to feed back the evidence we have gathered of strengths and areas for development so that, as well as giving assurance, providers use our findings to inform their next steps to secure further improvement (NIF, 2017, p.16).

> We will lead a revolution in transparency on school performance through further improvements to ParentZone – the national online resource for parents by August 2018. We will publish additional clear information on each school on a range of key measures, such as attendance rates, children's progress and grades from school inspection (Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish education Delivery plan, 2016, p.16).

Inform policy development

By signposting effective practice at the system level, policymakers can learn and identify improved ways of working:

> We focus on children's and young people's learning and outcomes for learners. Through observing practice at first hand, inspectors comment on the implementation of national policy and programmes and the impact of implementation on children's and young people's learning, success and achievement. In the school sector, the evidence and evaluation grades feed directly into the evidence base for the National Improvement Framework (NIF). This in turn informs the national improvement activity the Scottish Government and partners take forward each year (How does inspection and review support improvement? no date, website).

> We use findings from inspections to provide Scottish Ministers and their officials with evidence-based advice to help inform policy development and encourage improvement throughout the Scottish education system (Principles of Inspection and Review, 2018, p.2).

Practitioners join inspection teams as Associate Assessors or Professional Associates

ES trains and includes practitioners in inspection teams as a way of improving the system through the spreading of knowledge and skills across the sector:

> HM Inspectors do not always carry out inspections on their own. We value the knowledge, skills and expertise of current practitioners from across sectors and services, so in almost all inspection teams we are joined by practitioners from the relevant sector (…) They develop skills, knowledge and understanding from undertaking training with and working alongside inspectors. They gather valuable experience of evaluating practice using quality frameworks and observing practice in other parts of Scotland. This helps to build their capacity in evaluating quality and improvement in education so that they can use it to maximum impact to support their journey of continuous improvement in their own establishment / service and locality (How does inspection and review support improvement? no date, website).

Aggregate findings from individual inspections on strengths and aspects for development of the education system and/or their policy

ES aggregates findings from individual inspections on strengths and aspects for development of the education system and/or their policy. These findings are published and disseminated through reports:

Many schools demonstrate highly effective practice when reporting to parents. This guidance has been developed to improve the quality and consistency of reporting, ensuring parents have the information they need to support their child's learning (Reporting to Parents and Carers – Guidance for schools and ELC settings, no date).

Scotland's HM Inspectors of Education have published a new report highlighting key features found to be making the greatest difference to using assessment effectively to improve children's and young people's learning (HM Inspectors of Education publish report signposting highly effective practice on assessment within Broad General Education, 2020, website).

Appendix 5: Inspection framework programme theory in Wales

The programme theory reconstructed in Phase 1 is presented in this appendix.

Wales: Estyn 2017 Inspection framework programme theory: set of principles to achieve excellence for all learners

Introduction

National school inspections have been conducted in Wales since 1907 by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI). Since 1999 the inspectorate in Wales, called the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, changed its name to Estyn: Her Majesty's inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. In Welsh 'Estyn' means to reach out, stretch or extend (Estyn, About us, no date). Along with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and the Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn is one of the four main inspection, audit and review bodies in Wales forming 'Inspection Wales' (Estyn, About us, no date).

Estyn is independent from the National Assembly for Wales, but funded by, and accountable to, the Welsh Government. Its function is to provide an independent inspection and advice service on quality and standards in education and training (Estyn, About us, no date). In response to ongoing reforms, new inspection arrangements were introduced in 2017 through a new Common Inspection Framework that 'applies to all schools, independent specialist colleges, pupil referral units and work-based learning providers, further education colleges, Local Government Education Services and Welsh for adults' (Inspection Framework explained, no date, p. 1).

Estyn enjoys a reputation of high credibility for delivering independent, professional, and carefully consulted inspections when measuring not just academic but also social outcomes such as wellbeing. However, Estyn has also been criticised in the last decade for enhancing a high-stakes accountability culture visible in the summative judgement on a 4-point scale, which has major implications and consequences for schools. An independent review on Estyn inspection conducted in 2018 concluded that for those being inspected and for inspectors themselves, grades are dominating inspections (Donaldson, 2018). Therefore, Estyn has recognised the need to shift this focus. 'Unintended consequences of the high-stakes culture in Wales reported to the Review included narrowing of the curriculum to focus on subjects that are thought to be valued by inspectors, and performance measures. There were also many references to an undue focus on pupils thought most likely to affect performance criteria, potentially to the detriment of other pupils. The desire to achieve a high grade or to avoid a low one can also lead to significant opportunity costs as resources are devoted to amassing evidence for inspection at the expense of time spent on teaching and learning' (Donaldson, 2018, p. 24). This scenario has only intensified since Wales scored poorly on PISA 2009.

After PISA 2009, in 2011 a new inspection regime was introduced, which was characterised as the pinnacle of a further shift from a climate of relatively high trust (with evaluation primarily oriented for developmental purposes) to evaluation and assessment informing high-stake decisions (Donaldson, 2018). Under the new inspection regime, the proportion of schools in special measures and needing serious improvement doubled from 4 to 8% (Daren, 2011, no page). This dramatic shift concerned teaching unions, politicians, heads and teachers, who accused Estyn of 'moving the goalposts' (Daren, 2011, no page).

Along with the introduction of a new national curriculum and digital competence framework, as well as a new Chief Inspector, Estyn introduced a new Inspection framework in 2017 intending to bring more preventative inspections that better contribute to the educational improvement journey of schools (Evans, 2016). Recently a new shift towards a self-improving system (The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2017-2018) is inspiring the creation of a new inspection framework to be introduced in 2021.

Since 2017 the school inspection notice was reduced to 15 working days (Guidance handbook for the inspection of all-age schools 2017) and every education and training provider is inspected in a cyclical way (at least once during a seven-year period):

> Estyn implements inspections according to an inversely proportionate model, which means 'increasing levels of intervention in proportion to need' (Follow-up Guidance for schools and inspectors November 2019, p.1). First, a core inspection is implemented and then follow up activities are designed according to the overall judgement. 'During all core inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the school needs any follow-up activity. Whilst the same quality assurance processes apply to follow-up and core inspections, follow-up inspections only report whether a school continues to need follow-up activity, whereas a core inspection reports an overall judgement' (Follow-up Guidance for schools and inspectors November 2019).

The Common Inspection Framework 2017, and particularly the five inspection areas and 15 aspects by which schools are judged, offers further detail on the types of improvement Estyn aims to promote. The Common Inspection Framework (2017) (See Appendix 1) informs an assessment of the 'overall effectiveness' of the school on a four-point scale (Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement, Adequate and needs improvement, Good, and Excellent) where schools are expected to be/become at least good. More precisely, the four-point scale describes:

> Excellent – Very strong, sustained performance and practice
>
> Good – Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
>
> Adequate and needs improvement – Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
>
> Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement – Important weaknesses outweigh strengths (Inspection guidance all-aged schools, 2017, p.12).

Estyn intended effect at the school level

The ultimate intended outcome of Estyn school inspection is that the standard of education, training or care is good or above (overall effectiveness) for all learners in the areas of:

- Standards
- Wellbeing
- Teaching and learning experiences
- Care, support, and guidance
- Leadership and management

Estyn intended effect at the system level

Estyn system level effects of inspection refer to improvement of the entire system, beyond individual school quality. ES inspection intended system level effects can be found in policy documents, where the ultimate intended outcome of inspections is:

> to achieve excellence for all learners in Wales by providing independent, high-quality inspection and advice services (Estyn, About us, no date).

Estyn intended mechanisms to improve the school level

Estyn provides a detailed description of how it aims to achieve inspections:

Inspection via school self-evaluation

During inspections, inspectors listen, test, and validate the school's own evaluation of performance, priorities for improvement and areas for development:

> The starting point for inspection is the school's evaluation of its own performance, supported by relevant evidence. Inspectors will not inspect all aspects of work in depth during a core inspection. They will sample evidence to test the school's own evaluation of its work (Inspection guidance all-aged schools, 2017, p.4).

> 'Inspectors should consider the impact of improvement planning processes and how well identified priorities for improvement link to the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation procedures' (Inspection guidance all aged schools, 2017, p.25-26).

> Inspectors will use the school's improvement priorities as the starting point for the inspection and to identify key areas for investigation in order to make judgements on the validity of its findings (Inspection guidance all-aged schools, 2017, p.2).

> Meetings will provide opportunities for inspectors to test the judgements in the school's self-evaluation (Inspection guidance all-aged schools, 2017, p.8).

Providing feedback

Another key driver of school improvement is the feedback provided by Estyn to schools, which focuses on the strengths and areas for improvement, as well as the judgements for the main inspection areas and the reasons for awarding them:

> At the end of a longer classroom observation, inspectors should have a brief professional dialogue with the member of staff on the work seen. It may be necessary, in some cases, to conduct this discussion later during the inspection. The main focus of the discussion should be on the pupils, the progress they make during the lesson and the standards they achieve (Inspection guidance all-aged schools, 2017, p.8).

> At the end of the on-site part of the inspection, the team will provide oral feedback to leaders and managers. The school should invite representatives from the governing body and local authority or regional consortium to attend the meeting (...) The feedback should focus on the main judgements for each of the five inspection areas and the reasons for awarding them. The feedback meeting provides the opportunity for leaders and managers to hear and to reflect on the judgements. The feedback should focus on the strengths and areas for improvement and the factors that contribute to them (Guidance handbook for the inspection of all-age schools 2017, p.5).

Estyn intended mechanisms to improve the system level

ETI's system-wide improvement is the result of more indirect change processes through the following mechanisms:

Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government

Estyn's reports address system level issues, providing both policy feedback and insights into good practice in the areas selected for investigation:

> We also provide advice on specific matters to the Welsh Government in response to an annual remit from the Cabinet Secretary for Education. Our advice provides evidence of the effect of the Welsh Government's strategies, policies and initiatives on the education and training of learners (The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2017-2018, p.134).

Estyn will use the information to complement its remit work and to inform the findings of the Chief Inspector's Annual Report'. (Inspection guidance all aged schools, 2017, p.27).

Spread best practice in the delivery of education and training in Wales based on inspection evidence

Estyn identifies and collects interesting and innovative school practices through inspection. They invite practitioners to write case studies to be shared through the website, and writes reports based on the analysis of inspection evidence:

During the inspection, the team will also consider if there is any effective practice in the school that is worthy of consideration and emulation by other schools. Where this is the case, the reporting inspector will ask the school to prepare a case study (or studies) for dissemination on Estyn's website (Inspection guidance all aged schools, 2017, p.9).

We have a unique and independent view of standards and quality across all aspects of education and training in Wales, and this contributes to the policies for education and training introduced across Wales (The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2017-2018, p.134).

Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales

Inspecting more regularly and providing a report with clear evaluations of the strengths and areas for improvement in a school will provide parents with more up-to-date information about a school (A learning inspectorate, FAQS, no date).

We published our inspection outcomes for 2017-2018 as official statistics. The statistics were pre-announced and published on the Estyn website and prepared according to the principles and protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Our interactive data website provides summaries of our inspection outcomes and questionnaire responses from pupils and parents (The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2017-2018, p.143).

Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

By training and involving practitioners (Peer inspectors who have a managerial role in a school, Secondees from school or local authorities working two years full-time as inspectors, and Lay inspectors who are members of the general public or staff from corporate services trained to join a school inspection), capacity-building in the delivery of education and training in Wales is promoted:

Assuring the quality of inspections, the inspectorate is committed to effective training, briefing and support to allow the nominee to play an active role (Inspection guidance all-aged schools, 2017, p.10).

Appendix 6: Inconsistencies identified in each of the four analysed inspection frameworks

While conducting the scientific policy reconstruction (Leeuw, 2003) of the four programme theories during Phase 1, the expert validation work conducted during Phase 2, and the fieldwork conducted during Phase 3, some inconsistencies in each inspection framework were identified. As addressing these inconsistencies could lead to improvement in each inspectorate, we present them organised according to each of the four inspectorates.

Ofsted

- The specific emphasis on mathematics and reading is inconsistent with the overall focus on the broad curriculum. The Inspecting the Curriculum Guideline specifies 'In primary schools, inspectors will always carry out a deep dive in reading and deep dives in one or more foundation subjects, always including a foundation subject that is being taught in the school during the time that inspectors are on-site. In addition, inspectors will often carry out a deep dive in mathematics' (Inspecting the Curriculum, 2019, p.6). In secondary schools, the deep dives will typically focus on a sample of four to six subjects, looking at a wide variety of pupils in different year groups across that sample.

- More clarity is needed around how 'intent' grade descriptors in the 'quality of education' can enhance the fairness of inspections. Ofsted recognises this point when saying 'We recognise that this takes time and careful consideration. This is why we plan to phase in how we use the 'intent' grade descriptors in the 'quality of education' judgement for inspections of maintained schools and academies, non-association independent schools and FE and skills providers. While we are phasing it in, the judgement will not be negatively affected if it is clear to an inspector that leaders have a plan for updating the curriculum and are taking genuine action to do so' (p.9).

- Section 8 Reports are written for parents as the main audience. This relates to the fact that parents (and older students) are expected to read inspection reports and use these to 'vote with their feet' by choosing a good or outstanding provider. However, the main focus of the inspection is oriented towards improving schools' practices and processes to enhance learning and teaching, meaning that inspection reports would need to have (head) teachers as the main audience.

ETI

- There are potential unintended effects from the implementation of the framework and how schools are inspected, particularly because of how student outcomes are used to judge schools working in disadvantaged areas echoed previously (Northern Ireland Assembly report, 2015). This is a critical issue, given that in NI social deprivation varies significantly among local government districts. Pupil performance at age 15 is more strongly associated with schools' socio-economic intake than the OECD average. Whilst in NI 17% of the variance in mathematics scores can be explained by pupils' socio-economic background, this figure is 2% higher than the OECD average (OECD, 2014).

- ETI has implemented a proportionate, risk-based model to inspection which aims to ensure more frequent inspections in schools with more urgent needs for improvement. The model for follow-up monitoring however does not follow this principle: schools judged needing to address important areas for improvement (grade 3) get a follow-up inspection within 12 to 18 months, whilst schools evaluated as needing to urgently address significant areas for improvement (grade 4), only need to receive a monitoring inspection within a two-year timeframe and will sometimes go without inspection for a longer period.

- The framework 'should be used to provide a holistic approach to self-evaluation and not as an inflexible check-list' (Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary, 2017, p.1). Although the Inspection and Self-evaluation frameworks allow flexibility when conducting self-evaluation and external evaluation (e.g. the list of prompts provided by ETI are not fixed and allows schools to focus on different aspects and

dimensions), the downside of this approach is that it limits the potential to compare inspection outcomes over time and between schools, and introduces variability in how inspections are conducted.

- The high number of descriptors (around 80 of good practice and 80 self-reflection questions in primary, and around 90 in post-primary) hampers a prioritisation of the key aspects of school inspection and potentially confuses schools in targeting areas for school self-evaluation and improvement.

ES

- ES frameworks and working methods have an international reputation for fostering a strong culture of school self-improvement and self-evaluation as the central drivers to raise educational standards (OECD, 2015). However, ES 2016 framework has taken a turn emphasising school inspection for public accountability. Recently, the culture of fear derived from this turn has been criticised by Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), Scotland's largest and influential teaching union.

- ES aims for inspection to be carried out in partnership with schools, rather than being a practice done to schools (Inspection Myths, ES, 2018). The emphasis on school self-evaluation in inspections underpins this partnership. However, given the consequences of inspection and the judgemental nature of inspection outcomes, this partnership tends to be dominated by the inspection framework and process, particularly given the lack of clarity and inconsistencies in how both are expected to operate.

  The inspection begins with the school's evaluation of its own work and continues with inspectors' lesson observations and interviews with the school community (teachers, other staff at the school pupils and parents) (Inspection Myths, ES, 2018). Despite this expected partnership, ES inspection judgement holds more power than the school, as 'Inspection and review places an importance on exploring the extent to which an establishment/service has the ability to self-evaluate and drive its own improvement' (...); 'Where a provider has identified a priority for improvement and has taken action to make improvements inspectors recognise this, thus verifying the provider's own evaluation and supporting their journey of continuous improvement'. Therefore, ES inspection role is to challenge schools' self-evaluation, and consequently confirm or validate their ability to improve. However, it has also been stressed that when schools mirror the role of an external inspectorate following prescribed frameworks, data gathering, indicators and scoring systems to comply with external inspectorates or review teams, the process is not self-evaluation but should rather be regarded as self-inspection (MacBeth, 2006). What remains unclear in ES 2016 inspection framework is how the professional judgement derived from school self-evaluation impacts ES inspection judgements. How are discrepancies between school self-evaluation and ES Inspection resolved? Has the school self-evaluation become too formulaic and prescriptive?

- Inspections are aimed at improving schools, but reports are not written for teachers and head teachers. The main inspection outcome is an Inspection Report highlighting the strengths and aspects for development of the school. It also includes a table indicating the QI grades against the six-point scale. The Inspection Report takes the form of a 2-page letter oriented to parents, rather than the school. ES also publishes online the inspection evidence gathered during the inspection process under the form of a 6-page Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) report. In this report the context of the school and the evidence gathered by inspectors is summarised in bullet points to support the judgement of the grade assigned for each QI but is not addressed to schools either. ES also presents children, parents, and staff questionnaire results as sources of 'additional inspection evidence'. However, it is not clear how this evidence impacts ES judgement. The fact that any of the public inspection outputs explicitly addresses the school makes it more difficult to use these outcomes as a roadmap for improvement.

- ES claims that it aims to 'ensure that inspections do not result in unnecessary extra work for teachers and learners', yet the actual process and requirements for both school self-evaluation with subsequent external inspections are likely to translate into heavy workload where schools prepare extensively for an inspection.

Estyn

Given that the ongoing changes mean that a new reconstruction of the programme theory will need to be conducted shortly after the publication of this report (September 2021), instead of giving recommendations to the current inspection framework, we focus on aspects that the new inspection framework would benefit from considering.

- As Estyn has seen major changes in the past decade to address concerns about unintended consequences of inspection for teaching and learning (Donaldson, 2018), the suggested changes aim to better support the current curriculum reform and to move away from a high-stakes culture. 'Instead of using gradings, the inspection reports would provide even more clear and detailed evaluations to help encourage professional dialogue about the underlying factors contributing to the quality of the school's work'. (Estyn, Learning Inspectorate faqs, no date). It seems that removing the summative gradings in inspection reports is not enough to implement the desired cultural change. Therefore, Estyn should monitor how effectively the overall performance of a school will be communicated to different stakeholders. Thus, the key challenge for the new inspection framework would be to make sure different stakeholders (who want to see a judgement about how well schools are doing) will be able to access this judgement.

- Crucially, the expected change is aiming to put self-evaluation at the heart of the inspections system, as 'it is proposed that from 2024 inspection will have a stronger focus on validating the school's own view of their standards. Inspectors will report on how confident they are that the school's self-evaluation process is accurate and robust' (Estyn, Learning Inspectorate faqs, no date). It is critical to consider the opportunities and constraints afforded by school leaders and inspectors towards their changing roles needed to better sustain professional dialogue.

Appendix 7: Stakeholders' views and experiences in each nation about the inspection framework

Stakeholders' views and experiences regarding inspections in England

- Stakeholders defined Ofsted inspections as 'a necessary evil' until reaching the point where it is possible 'to not have Ofsted inspections and to give the leaders the trust and responsibility to run their schools effectively' (Headteacher one survey, Primary school, England).

- Conceived that the role of Ofsted inspections supported school improvement through holding schools accountable by monitoring performance and challenging them to improve.

- Those with positive Ofsted inspection experiences described inspections as professionally challenging, timetabled, delivered by consistent, professional and experienced teams, able to recognise the work that has been done, involving governors, fair and accurate, with clear expectations.

- Those with negative Ofsted inspection experiences talked about inspectors having previous judgements or driven by their own agenda, inconsistent quality of the inspection team, lack of consideration of the socio-economic context, extra unnecessary work, relying heavily on SLTs and little teacher involvement, threatening, unpredictable, relying on skewed representation of parents, enhancing inequalities, producing inaccessible report for parents, stressful and pressured situations.

- Described strong impacts derived from the inspection grade. A virtuous cycle followed an outstanding grade, characterised by cohesion, self-congratulation, school expansion, outreach services, extra funding, etc. A vicious cycle characterised by guilt and blame followed a grade below good, which remained too long until a new full inspection was conducted.

- Valued that the 2019 inspection framework was more focused on learning/student centred, and non-academic outcomes. They also criticised the inadequate frequency of the visits which did little to support collaboration opportunities with the LEAs/different academies.

Stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections in NI

- Those with positive ETI inspection experiences described them as oriented to support self-assessment and challenge: 'The specific framework for NI and the objectives are very clear with the main objective to be supportive' (Headteacher survey, Secondary school, Northern Ireland).

- Those with negative ETI inspection experiences described them as too subjective by individual inspectors 'I had an inspection within 8 months (I moved schools) and tone of inspection, evidence asked for and feedback were totally different' (Headteacher survey, Primary school, Northern Ireland).

- Mentioned that they have been conducted with no teacher involvement 'Teachers were on industrial action so did not engage, but union of Principal & VP allowed engagement' (Headteacher survey, Primary school, Northern Ireland).

Stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections in ES

- Defined ES's inspections as an audit process that supported self-reflection and improvement. "The challenges were quite rightly there for all staff, pupils, parents and partners to reflect on existing practice and consider improvement' (Headteacher one survey, Secondary school, Scotland).

- Those with positive experiences described ES inspections as a very robust and highly effective process which supported the school in contemplating a variety of ways in which to consider improvement (Headteacher one survey, Secondary school, Scotland); 'it sets the expectation of highly effective practice, provides guidelines that enable schools to strive for highly effective practice, and then support/advise schools of possible areas

for improvement as well as detail what they see as excellent practice' (Headteacher one survey, Secondary school, Scotland); 'The focus around How Good is Our School and the Quality Indicators is an excellent way in identify highly effective practice, including consideration of challenges' (Headteacher one survey, Secondary school, Scotland).

- Provided ample examples of 'inspection readiness', such as ''Ensuring my classroom looked in order - wall displays having 80/20 of the children's work for example. Ensuring my planners for the year were up to date and coherent. Paperwork seemed to be the thing that needed the most attention, so it was up to date and every figurative 'box' was ticked' (Teacher primary school, survey, Scotland).

Stakeholders' views and experiences with inspections in Wales

- Defined Estyn's inspections as an audit/confirmation process.

- Conceived that the role of Estyn's inspections supported school improvement through holding schools accountable, validating, and supporting school self-evaluation, monitoring performance, evaluating support measures, standards setting, providing benchmarks to assess school progress, scrutinising school records, and providing suggestions to improve.

- Those with positive Estyn inspection experiences described them as objective, friendly, flexible, fair, an accurate reflection of the school, delivered by a reliable and trusted organisation, able to identify further developments and provide constructive recommendations, delivered by a consistent inspection team, focused and supportive.

- Those with negative Estyn inspection experiences talked about producing extra unnecessary work, being subjective, judgemental and underhanded, promoting a culture of fear, producing reports which differed from the feedback given during inspection or were too narrow, taking little consideration of Covid-19 pandemic, producing judgements not in line with school context, lack of consideration of the socio-economic context, stressful, lack of consideration of schools' strengths, driven by secondary data, with little teacher involvement, delivered by teams out of touch with schools.

- Described strong impacts derived from the inspection grade. A virtuous cycle followed an outstanding grade, characterised by school expansion, outreach services, extra funding, as well as higher status by sharing best practice through case studies. A vicious cycle characterised by less enrolment, less parental support and difficulties recruiting staff followed a grade below good, which remained for too long until a new full inspection was conducted.

- Valued that the 2021 inspection framework generated shorter, more frequent inspections, ensured wide and diverse curriculum and was changing the inspection culture from a constant analysis of the past, to attention to the capacity and future plans. They thought that limitations existed due to the removal of the overall grade and the lack of regional approaches.

Appendix 8: Summary statements at the school and system levels in England.

This appendix presents the summary statements at the school and system levels resulting from the policy reconstruction of documents conducted in Phase 1.

England: Ofsted summary statements at the school level

Feedback

If Ofsted inspections lead to a judgement and provide feedback which is 1) accurate, valid, reliable, focused on the substance of education, 2) targeted at the right level, and 3) locally informed, professional, and informed by a deep conversation, then key strengths and areas of weakness will be identified in schools.

If Ofsted inspections identify key strengths and areas of weakness in schools, then schools will improve.

Accurate, valid, and reliable feedback, focused on the substance of education

If Ofsted inspections lead to an accurate, valid and reliable judgement, and related feedback on the substance of education to schools, then the school will improve.

- If Ofsted inspections lead to an accurate, valid and reliable judgement, then inspectors will provide feedback on areas of weakness to the school.

Provided that: inspectors are trained and unbiased, reports are quality assured, the framework is informed by (research) evidence

- If inspectors provide feedback on areas of weakness to the school, then schools (head teacher) will be motivated to improve

Because: 'what Ofsted says goes' and inspections are career-defining moments

- If schools are motivated to improve, then they will remove (serious) weaknesses (within 30 months) and improve

Because: schools with serious weaknesses or in special measures are re-inspected and required to develop an action plan

Because: maintained schools are converted, and academies brokered or rebrokered to new sponsors to ensure a more motivated and capable leadership

- If Ofsted inspections lead to an accurate, valid and reliable judgement, then inspectors will provide feedback on areas of strength to the school

Provided that: inspectors are trained and unbiased, reports are quality assured

- If Ofsted inspectors provide feedback on areas of strength to the school, then schools will learn intelligently

- If schools learn intelligently, then they will improve.

- If Ofsted inspections lead to a judgement of, and feedback on, the substance of education ('quality of education', including broad curriculum), then inspections will promote a culture of improvement, instead of compliance.

Because: schools will not be tempted to use the framework to do too many different things and will focus on areas that are about quality of education.

- If inspections promote a culture of improvement, instead of compliance, then schools will improve.
- If Ofsted inspections lead to a judgement of, and feedback on, the substance of education ('quality of education', including broad curriculum), then schools will review their curriculum

Because: 'what Ofsted says goes' and schools want a good inspection outcome

- If schools review their curriculum, they will offer a wide curriculum and not limit their focus to only achieving test and examination results.

Because: the leadership and management standard penalises gaming and off-rolling, and this will deter schools/head teachers from engaging in such practice

- If schools offer a wide curriculum and not focus on only achieving test and examination results, they will improve.

Feedback targeted at the right level

If Ofsted inspections provide targeted feedback at the right level, then schools will improve.

- If Ofsted inspections provide targeted feedback at the right level, then schools will correct shortcomings and identify where more targeted approaches to supporting disadvantaged groups and individuals are required, instead of institutional approaches.

Provided that: inspectors are properly trained in identifying what can be inferred from the performance of small sub-groups within a provider.

- If schools correct shortcomings, and identify where more targeted approaches to supporting disadvantaged groups and individuals are required instead of institutional approaches, then they will improve

Because: the EEF work shows that sometimes targeted approaches to supporting disadvantaged groups and individuals is required, while in other cases whole-school approaches are more effective

Diagnostic value feedback

If Ofsted inspections are locally informed, professional, and allow for a deep conversation, then inspections will have diagnostic value for the school to improve its areas of underperformance

- If Ofsted inspections are locally informed, professional, and allow for a deep conversation, then inspectors will have a professional dialogue and good working relations with head teachers.

Provided that: inspectors have a practitioner background/are serving practitioners

Provided that: there is sufficient time both before (90-minutes phone call) and during the inspection to discuss the schedule, collect and discuss evidence

Provided that: the inspection reporting process is slimmed down to allow HMI and RIs to use their professional experience in providing challenge and support rather than writing lengthy reports.

Because: head teachers join lesson observations and understand the judgement

Because: Ofsted has a code of conduct which ensures that inspectors behave courteously and professionally, treat everyone fairly, with respect and sensitivity.

- If Ofsted inspectors have a professional dialogue and good working relations with head teachers, then the inspection process will have diagnostic value for the school to improve its areas of underperformance

- If Ofsted inspectors have a professional dialogue with head teachers, then head teachers and inspectors will develop a shared understanding of the school's standard of education.

- If head teachers and inspectors develop a shared understanding of the school's standard of education, then inspections will focus on ways in which quality can be improved and focus more sharply on areas of underperformance.

Intervening and preventing bad practice

If Ofsted uses risk assessments and local intelligence, then schools will improve more easily and rapidly

- If Ofsted uses risk assessments and local intelligence, then it can detect potential bad practice early on

- If Ofsted detects potential bad practice early on, then it can inspect schools with such potential bad practice sooner and more often

Provided that: Ofsted can choose when and how often to inspect.

- If Ofsted inspects schools with bad practice sooner and more often, then it can catch schools before they fall.

- If Ofsted catches schools before they fall, then it can prevent such practice from becoming entrenched

- If Ofsted prevents bad practice from becoming entrenched, schools will improve more easily and rapidly.

Ofsted summary of statements at the system level

Frameworks and training material publicly available

If Ofsted makes frameworks and training material publicly available, then this will lead to system-wide improvement

- If Ofsted makes frameworks and training material publicly available, then practitioners will learn from these materials

- If practitioners learn from these materials, they will use them to improve their practice

- If practitioners improve their practice, the system in its entirety will improve.

Include serving practitioners on inspection teams

If Ofsted includes serving practitioners on inspection teams, then this will lead to system-wide improvement.

- If Ofsted includes serving practitioners on inspection teams, then practitioners will learn from inspections of other schools

- If practitioners learn from inspections of other schools, they will use it to improve their practice

- If practitioners improve their practice, the system in its entirety will improve

Aggregate findings to understand strengths and weakness of provision across the country and good practice

If Ofsted aggregates findings to understand strengths and weaknesses of provision across the country, and good practice of what works and what doesn't, then this will lead to positive outcomes for young people.

- If Ofsted aggregates findings to understand strengths and weakness of provision across the country and good practice of what works and what doesn't, then national policy-makers will be informed about (in) effectiveness of aspects of the education system and/or their policy and negative trends

Provided that: Ofsted can look at the full range and breadth of young people's experiences and have a bird's eye view.

Because: national survey reports and research and local intelligence offer a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses and of what works and what doesn't

- If national policy-makers are informed about (in)effectiveness of aspects of the education system and/or their policy and negative trends, then they will 'learn intelligently'.
- If policy-makers learn intelligently, then they will take action to repair negative trends
- If policy-makers take action to repair negative trends, then this will lead to positive outcomes for young people.

Publish inspection reports

If Ofsted publishes inspection reports, then this will lead to system-wide improvement.

- If Ofsted publishes inspection reports, then parents will read inspection reports

Provided that: Ofsted makes its reports accessible (shorter and better focused on relevant issues) for parents

Because: parents seek assurance about the quality and safety of a school and Ofsted has become a trusted brand to provide such assurance.

- If parents read inspections reports, they will use these to vote with their feet and choose a good or outstanding provider
- If parents vote with their feet, then schools will be motivated to ensure a good inspection report
- If schools are motivated to receive a good inspection report, then they will improve their standard of education
- If schools improve their standard of education, then this will lead to system-wide improvement.

Describe practices Ofsted does not wish to see in schools

If Ofsted describes practices it does not wish to see in schools, then this will lead to system-wide improvement

- If Ofsted describes practices it does not wish to see in schools (e.g. too much ineffective reporting), then schools will refrain from undertaking such practice
- If schools refrain from ineffective practice, then they will have more capacity to improve
- If schools have more capacity to improve, then they will improve their standard of education
- If schools improve their standard of education, then this will lead to system-wide improvement.

Appendix 9: Summary statements at the school and system levels in NI

This appendix presents the summary statements at the school and system levels resulting from the policy reconstruction of documents conducted in Phase 1.

Northern Ireland: ETI summary statements at the school level

Inspection via school self-evaluation (SSE)

If inspection is conducted via school self-evaluation (SSE), it will lead to school improvement.

Provided that: As a result of the debate and challenge stimulated by the characteristics and the questions, the organisation, team or individual should be able to provide a summary of the strengths of the particular aspect under focus, identify areas that require further development and consider the actions that are necessary to continue the improvement process (Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework 2017, p.4)

Provided that: 'The model enables ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement' (Primary Inspection Gide 2017, 2018, p. 24).

Provided that: [Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework] 'enable[s] the staff within an organisation to have in-depth professional discussions about specific aspects within the framework and stimulate challenge and debate about the outcomes for learners; quality of provision; and leadership and management' (Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework 2017, p.3).

Provided that: 'where the ETI has been able to report evaluative findings and/ or an overall effectiveness conclusion, principals, senior leadership teams and governors have found these and the related dialogue helpful in promoting improvement' (Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2018, p.9)

Because: 'It is not enough to confirm that actions have taken place but rather to assess the impact of the actions on the outcomes for learners' (Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework 2017, p.4).

Self-reflection culture

If ETI enables a school self-reflection culture, then it will lead to school improvement.

- If ETI enables a school self-reflection culture, then staff will have in-depth professional discussions about specific aspects within the framework.

- If staff have in-depth professional discussions about specific aspects within the framework, then challenge and debate about the outcomes for learners; quality of provision; and leadership and management, will be stimulated.

- If challenge and debate about the outcomes for learners; quality of provision; and leadership and management, are stimulated, then it will lead to school improvement.

Because: schools will focus on areas that concern quality of education.

Because: schools will identify their own areas for improvement and priorities.

Openness and transparency

If ETI operates with openness and transparency, then schools will improve.

- If ETI operates with openness and transparency, then stakeholders will have access to the kind of questions that inspectors may ask, as well as the draft/proforma inspection report that the inspection team will complete at the end of the inspection visit.

- If stakeholders have access to the kind of questions that inspectors may ask, as well as the draft/proforma inspection report that the inspection team will complete at the end of the inspection visit, then schools will improve.

Provided that: 'all stakeholders are working together to promote improvement for all learners' (Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary, 2017, p.1).

Stakeholders follow ETI guidelines.

Use ETI inspection feedback for improvement

- If schools use ETI inspection feedback for improvement, then schools will improve.

- If schools use ETI inspection feedback for improvement, they will include the recommended priorities (lines of inquiry) for school action in their School Development Plan.

- If schools include the recommended priorities (lines of inquiry) for school action in their School Development Plan, then schools will improve.

Because: 'Normally lines of inquiry will support the evaluation of learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; and outcomes' (Monitor Inspection Guidance for Schools, 2017, p.2).

Provided that: 'At the time of inspection and for the line/lines of inquiry selected the school is identifying and bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of education. This will be reflected in future inspection arrangements' (Monitor Inspection Guidance for Schools, 2017, p.4).

Because: schools will build on the external evaluation to correct shortcomings.

Because: schools will address the inspection findings.

Provided that: schools trust in the external evaluation.

Because: the school will prioritise the most pressing and relevant issues that need to be addressed

Because: schools want a good inspection outcome

ETI summary statements at the system level

System level feedback for policy

If ETI provides system level feedback for policy, then it will lead to system-wide improvement.

- If ETI provides system level feedback for policy, then national policy-makers will be informed about effective aspects of the education system.

- If national policy-makers are informed about effective aspects of the education system, then they will develop evidence-based policies.

- If policy-makers develop evidence-based policies, the system in its entirety will improve.

Provided that: ETI can assess the full range and breadth of young people's experiences and system-wide view.

Provided that: policy-makers act on ETI system level feedback.

Because: national survey reports and evidence-based feedback offer a good understanding of strengths and need for improvement.

Public accountability

If ETI provides public accountability, then it will lead to system-wide improvement.

- If ETI provides public accountability, then it will improve the confidence of stakeholders.
- If ETI improves the confidence of stakeholders, it will lead to system-wide improvement.

Provided that: 'Inspection is an important element of public accountability and confidence, and also of improvement, supporting as it does the primacy of the learner' (Chief Inspector Report 2016-2018, p.4).

If ETI provides public accountability, then it will assure the government of the effectiveness of policy in practice.

- If ETI assures the government of the effectiveness of policy in practice, it will lead to system-wide improvement.

Provided that: 'without the evidence from observing learning and teaching, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community, the Department of Education (DE) and other stakeholders of the quality of education being provided'(Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2018, p.9).

Provided that: 'When the report on the school is published, a copy of the report will be available on the ETI website at www.etini.gov.uk or at the school' (Inspection of Post-primary Schools Information for Parents September 2018, p.3).

If ETI inspections are locally informed, professional and allow for a deep conversation, then inspections will have diagnostic value for the school to improve its areas of underperformance.

- If ETI inspections are locally informed, professional, and allow for a deep conversation, then inspectors will have a professional dialogue and good working relations with head teachers.

Provided that: inspectors have a practitioner background/are serving practitioners

Provided that: there is sufficient time before, during and after the inspection to collect and discuss evidence.

Because: head teachers join lesson observations and understand the judgement

Because: ETI has a set of values which ensures that inspectors work at the highest standards of courtesy, dignity, and professionalism.

If ETI inspectors have a professional dialogue and good working relations with head teachers, then the inspection process will have value for the school to improve its areas of underperformance

- If ETI inspectors have a professional dialogue with head teachers, then head teachers and inspectors will develop a shared understanding of the school's standard of education.
- If head teachers and inspectors develop a shared understanding of the school's standard of education, then inspections will focus on ways in which quality can be improved.

Appendix 10: Summary statements at the school and system levels in Scotland

This appendix presents the summary statements at the school and system levels resulting from the policy reconstruction of documents conducted in Phase 1.

Scotland: ES Summary statements at the school level

Review school self-evaluation

If ES inspections review school self-evaluation, it will lead to school improvement

- If ES inspections review school self-evaluation, schools will evaluate their own work

- If schools evaluate their own work, they will identify key strengths and areas for development

- If schools identify key strengths and areas for development, inspectors will review the evidence provided by schools and local authorities to justify their choices.

- If inspectors review self-evaluation evidence provided by schools and local authorities to justify their choices, schools and head teachers will justify their priorities for improvement and the self-evaluation grades.

- If schools and head teachers justify their priorities for improvement and the self-evaluation grades, ES will challenge schools.

Professional dialogue

If professional dialogue is enhanced, schools will improve.

Provided that: Schools will take actions to plan for any necessary improvements

Provided that: Schools will learn from others' effective practice

Schools will accept ES advice and guidance about improved ways of working

The new regional improvement collaboratives deliver hands-on advice, support and guidance to schools to support improvement

ES Inspection is conducted under a set of principles for inspection (PRAISE Framework), which 1) is Purposeful; 2) builds constructive Relationships; 3) is context Aware; 4) gathers Information; 5) Shares information and 6) Enables Parents', children's and young learners' perspectives to be taken into account.

Because: discussions can be strongly contextualised to particular local concerns

Because: evaluations are quality assured by inspectors who manage the overall inspection programmes to ensure that all evaluations are fair and consistent.

Because: [Providers] value the knowledge HM Inspectors have of quality frameworks, national policy and practice observed across the country, this enhances the credibility of the interaction.

Because: 'School inspectors all have extensive experience in education, with many having been teachers or headteachers. Others may be educational psychologists or bring wider experience from other sectors including colleges, early years and community learning and development' (Myth 5: Inspectors don't know what it is to work in schools, website)

ES summary statements at the system level

Publish inspection findings

If ES publishes inspection findings, there will be system-wide improvement.

- If ES publishes inspection findings, then parents and other stakeholders will read inspection findings.
- If parents and other stakeholders read inspection findings, they will learn and be engaged.
- If parents and other stakeholders learn and are engaged, they will use the findings to inform their next steps to secure further improvement.
- If parents and other stakeholders use the findings to inform their next steps to secure further improvement, there will be system-wide improvement.

Provided that: ES makes the reports accessible for parents (2-page letters and focused on relevant issues).

Because: parents and other stakeholders seek assurance about the quality and safety of a school and ES has become a trusted agency to provide such assurance.

Share evidence about what works

If ES shares evidence about what works, there will be system-wide improvement.

- If ES shares evidence about what works, highly effective practice and inspection highlights will be highlighted.
- If ES highlights highly effective practice and inspection highlights, parents and other stakeholders will learn and be engaged.
- If parents and other stakeholders learn and are engaged, there will be system-wide improvement.

Provided that: ES makes the inspection highlights accessible for parents and other stakeholders

Because: parents and other stakeholders seek assurance about the quality and safety of a school and ES has become a trusted agency to provide such assurance.

Practitioners join inspection teams

If practitioners join inspection teams as Associate Assessors or Professional Associates, there will be system-wide improvement.

If practitioners join inspection teams as Associate Assessors or Professional Associates, they will build their capacity in evaluating quality and improvement.

- If Associate Assessors build their capacity in evaluating quality and improvement, they will use it to support their journey of continuous improvement in their own establishment / service and locality
- If Associate Assessors support their journey of continuous improvement in their own establishment / service and locality, there will be system-wide improvement.

Provided that: Associate Assessors are trusted in their own establishment / service and locality

Provided that: Associate Assessors take part in their own establishment / service and locality inspection

Because: school staff and other stakeholders value the insider perspective of inspectors

Aggregate findings

If ES aggregates findings from individual inspections on strengths and aspects for development of the education system and/or their policy, there will be system-wide improvement.

- If ES aggregates findings from individual inspections on strengths and aspects for development of the education system and/or their policy, evidence-based advice to Scottish Ministers and their officials will be provided.

- If evidence-based advice to Scottish Ministers and their officials is provided, policy development will be informed.

- If policy development is informed, there will be system-wide improvement.

Provided that: Scottish Ministers and their officials act on the information provided.

Because: Scottish Ministers and their officials need to assess the impact that the national policy and programmes are having on children's and young people's learning, success and achievement

Transparency on school performance

If ES provides transparency on school performance, there will be system-wide improvement.

- If ES provides transparency on school performance, clear information on each school on a range of key measures will be disseminated.

- If clear information on each school on a range of key measures is disseminated, schools will be accountable to parents and their local communities.

- If schools are accountable to parents and their local communities, there will be system-wide improvement

Provided that: ES makes the school performance accessible for parents and other stakeholders

Because: parents and other stakeholders seek assurance about the quality and safety of a school and ES has become a trusted agency to provide such assurance.

Appendix 11: Summary statements at the school and system levels in Wales

This appendix presents the summary statements at the school and system levels resulting from the policy reconstruction of documents conducted in Phase 1.

Wales: Estyn summary statements at the school level

Inspection via school self-evaluation

If Estyn's core inspections and follow up activities are implemented via school self-evaluation, then schools will improve.

Provided that: schools self-evaluation is supported by relevant evidence

Provided that: schools self-evaluation is honest

Provided that: school self-evaluations are conducted with the full involvement of the school.

- If Estyn's core inspections and follow up activities are implemented via school self-evaluation, then inspections will confirm or challenge school's own evaluation of its work.
- If Estyn's core inspections and follow up activities confirm or challenge school's own evaluation of its work, schools will not be complacent.
- If schools are not complacent, then schools will improve.
- If Inspectors consider the impact of improvement planning processes, then schools will improve.
- If Inspectors consider the impact of improvement planning processes, then schools will prioritise the implementation of the improvement plan

Because: schools want a positive inspection outcome

Provided that: the identified priorities for improvement link to the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation procedures

Provided that: Meetings will provide opportunities for inspectors to test the judgements in the school's self-evaluation

Provide feedback

If inspectors provide oral feedback during inspection, then schools will improve.

- If inspectors provide oral feedback during inspection, important aspects and weaknesses that require improvement will be identified, then schools will improve.

Provided that: professional dialogue between inspectors and teachers will take place.

Because: inspectors are highly experienced education practitioners, experts in effective practice

Because: Estyn has 'an authoritative voice on education and training in Wales' (Estyn Strategic Plan March 2016, p.3).

Provided that: the focus of the professional dialogue is the progress pupils make during the lesson and the standards they achieve.

Provided that: teachers value and reflect on the inspection feedback

Provided that: the school addresses the weaknesses

Because: 'leaders and managers support priorities through the appropriate allocation of resources.' (Inspection guidance all aged schools, 2017, p.25-26).

Because: what gets funded, gets done.

Estyn summary statements at the system level

Feedback to the government on the development of national policy

If Estyn provides feedback to the government on the development of national policy, then system-wide improvement will occur.

- If Estyn provides feedback to the government on the development of national policy, then evidence of the effect of the Welsh Government's strategies, policies and initiatives will be gathered.
- If evidence of the effect of the Welsh Government's strategies, policies and initiatives is gathered, then an evaluation of the effectiveness of policies will be conducted.
- If an evaluation of the effectiveness of policies is conducted, then it will identify policy strengths and areas for improvement.
- If policy strengths and areas for improvement are identified, then better policies can be developed.
- If better policies are developed, then system-wide improvement will occur.

Provided that: Estyn has 'a unique and independent view of standards and quality across all aspects of education and training in Wales' (The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2017-2018, p.134).

Spread best practice in the delivery of education and training

- If Estyn collects best practice through case studies across the system, then system-wide improvement will occur.
- If Estyn collects best practice through case studies across the system, evidence-based data of 'what works' is collected and disseminated.
- If evidence-based data of 'what works' is collected and disseminated, then best schools will receive public recognition.
- If best schools receive public recognition, then every school will try to emulate best practice.
- If every school tries to emulate best practice, then there will be system-wide improvement.

Provided that: best practice is based on robust inspection evidence

Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales

If Estyn provides public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales, then system-wide improvement will occur.

- If Estyn provides public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales, service users will be reassured.

- If service users are reassured, they will be loyal to providers.
- If service users are loyal to providers, trust in schools will be developed.
- If trust in schools is developed, then schools will feel confident to innovate and change
- If schools feel confident to innovate and change, then system-wide improvement will occur.

Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

If Estyn builds capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales, then this will lead to system-wide improvement.

- If Estyn builds capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales, then serving practitioners (peer, secondee and lay inspectors) on inspection teams will learn from other schools.
- If serving practitioners on inspection teams learn from other schools, they will spread best practice.
- If serving practitioners on inspection teams (peer, secondee and lay inspectors) improve their practice this will lead to system-wide improvement.

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