

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 23 rd May 2024
Report Subject	Estyn Revised Frameworks for Inspection of Schools and Local Government Education Services
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been developed to provide members with an overview of the Estyn Inspection Framework for schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) and an update on the revised Local Government Inspection Framework, from September 2024.

Estyn commissioned an independent review into the work of the inspectorate and, 'A Learning Inspectorate,' was published in June 2018. The report made a series of recommendations on how Estyn might adapt their work moving forward in order to contribute constructively to the national education reform underway in Wales.

Estyn adopted a gradual approach to the development of inspection in schools and PRUs and have already made a number of changes to the inspection framework which have been trialled over the past twelve months;

- In their transition year 2020–2021, Estyn paused maintained school and PRU inspections so that inspectors could visit settings to discuss and prepare for curriculum changes.
- In September 2021, Estyn amended inspection arrangements for schools, to align with the changes to education in Wales. This included the removal of the four summative judgements (Excellent, Good, Adequate and Unsatisfactory) and the reduction in notice time for inspections from 15 days to 10 days.
- In recent months, Estyn have worked with a number of providers to pilot their proposed inspection arrangements which will be introduced during the 2024 academic year.

Estyn have published their guidance for the next inspection cycle of maintained schools and PRUs; "Inspecting for the future (2024 – 2030)".

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members confirm that they have received sufficient information about the new inspection arrangements for Estyn's inspections of schools, pupil referral units and local government education services.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CHANGES TO INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS
1.01	<p>What will guide Estyn's new approach?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners will continue to be Estyn's priority. Everything they do has to have their best interests at heart.• The new arrangements will be leaner and more focused on the most important areas that drive improvement.• Arrangements will be manageable for all providers and complement their own processes of evaluation and improvement.• Will explore a wider variety of inspection activities to better support improvement across individual providers and sectors. This will include how Estyn tailor activity in individual provider inspections, thematic inspections and a range of other visits.• More regular contact with schools and other providers, offering more up-to-date feedback for parents and carers.• Bring external inspection and providers' internal evaluation processes closer together. Better alignment of these processes will better support improvement.• Use of Estyn's resources where they are needed most, such as with settings that need support and monitoring for improvement.
1.02	<p>2024 inspection framework for schools and pupil referral units</p> <p>The school or pupil referral unit will continue to receive 10 working days' notice for a core (Section 28) inspection.</p> <p>Across the inspection framework, inspectors will consider the focus areas in relation to the impact they have on all pupils' learning and well-being. There will now be 3 inspection areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teaching and learning2. Well-being, care, support and guidance3. Leading and improving <p>Estyn will continue to include a nominee, peer and lay inspector as part of their core inspection team. They will continue to publish a report following a core inspection which will show strengths and areas for improvement. A separate report will also be published for parents.</p> <p>Within a 6 year period, schools and pupil referral units will now also have an interim visit in addition to their core inspection.</p>

	<p>Interim visits will last between a day or two days and will involve between one and four inspectors visiting, depending on the size of the school or pupil referral unit. These visits will normally reflect on the recommendations made during the previous core inspection or current school or pupil referral unit improvement or development plans.</p> <p>Schools and pupil referral units will not need to prepare for an interim visit and will normally be given 5 days' notice ahead of time. Following an interim visit, Estyn will provide feedback to the headteacher and publish a short letter on their website.</p>
1.03	<p>Inspection area 1: Teaching and Learning will focus on:</p> <p>How effectively does the school's or PRU's curriculum, teaching and assessment support all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn and make progress • develop their knowledge, skills and understanding • develop positive attitudes to learning • develop their Welsh language skills
1.04	<p>Inspection area 2: Well-being, care, support and guidance will focus on:</p> <p>How effective is the care, support and guidance the school/PRU provides in ensuring that all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barrier to progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are safe and secure • attend school regularly • are respected and fairly treated • develop leadership skills and take on responsibility • receive any additional guidance or support they require relating to the next steps in their development.
1.05	<p>Inspection area 1: Leading and Improving will focus on:</p> <p>How effectively do leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress, learn and make progress • develop a culture, inclusive ethos and strategic direction that support the progress and well-being of all pupils • identify and address areas for improvement, including addressing previous Recommendations • address national priorities, including improving the quality of teaching and the development of the Welsh language • ensure that professional learning improves the quality of teaching, supports school improvement and equips all staff to carry out their roles • manage the school's/PRU's resources.

1.06	<p>During all core (Section 28) inspections, the inspection team will continue to consider whether the school or pupil referral unit needs any follow-up activity.</p> <p>There are two types of statutory follow-up activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special measures 2. Significant improvement <p>Special measures and significant improvement are statutory categories that apply to schools and pupil referral units causing concern as defined by the Education Act 2005 and any associated circulars.</p> <p>Estyn has a duty to inform the Minister for Education and Welsh Government officers when schools or PRUs are placed in these categories and will keep them informed of subsequent progress following monitoring inspections, as required by the legislation.</p>
1.07	<p>Inspection of local government education services (LGES)</p> <p>Estyn are also evolving their local government education services (LGES) inspection model. They have carried out consultation with stakeholders to help inform their thinking and have piloted proposed arrangements during this academic year.</p> <p>In their consultation, Estyn proposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out separate inspection of school improvement services and services provided through a formal partnership of two or more local authorities. • Shorten the notification period from ten to eight weeks. • Have a five-week notification period for a school improvement service inspection and inspections of other services provided through formal partnerships. • Continue with developing local inspection questions and discuss and finalise these with the local authority, school improvement service or other services provided through formal partnerships. • Develop local inspection questions for school improvement services inspections as well as inspections of services provided through formal partnerships. • The current inspection guidance has three inspection areas – outcomes, education services and leadership. Estyn proposed to combine the outcomes and services areas into one inspection area (IA) which they are calling 'Education services and their impact' (IA1) and the second inspection area (IA2) would then be called Leading and Improving. • Use regular monitoring visits as part of follow-up activities in local authorities causing significant concern • Develop the same follow-up processes for a school improvement service or a service that is provided through formal partnerships which is 'causing significant concern' • Identify reporting requirements for all LGES and school improvement services' inspections • Gain feedback on usefulness of inclusion of cameos and case studies in their reports

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with a designated link inspector for each local authority and school improvement service • Introduce an annual focused visit to each local authority /school improvement service • Formally evaluate the impact of the local authority’s work in supporting individual schools and PRUs in special measures. Estyn propose that the link inspector undertakes specific activities which could include for example, joining the monitoring team or visiting the school independently of the monitoring team to consider and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the support provided by the local authority. The outcome of this work would be a brief letter to the local authority. <p>Estyn published the findings from their consultation in December 2023 and have used them to help inform the new inspection arrangements from 2024 onwards.</p> <p>The revised guidance has not yet been published.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no financial implications arising from this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>There are no specific risks arising from this report and subsequent actions.</p> <p>The Council’s Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Regular discussions are held between education officers and the regional school improvement service to ensure that schools receive appropriate advice and support for self-evaluation and improvement planning. Local authority officers regularly attend headteacher forums to consult with schools on support needed.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no appendices to this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>1. Estyn inspection arrangements: how the inspectorate will inspect education and training from 2024 and beyond.</p> <p>https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/inspecting-future-2024-2030</p> <p>2. Estyn guidance on how and what they will inspect in maintained schools and pupil referral units from September 2024</p> <p>https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection-guidance-search</p> <p>3. Estyn consultation results - Local Government education services</p> <p>https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2024-02/Survey%20Results%20-%20LGES%20ENG.pdf</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704054 Cymraeg/ Welsh 01267 224923 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Estyn – the office of His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training (HMCI) in Wales. Estyn provides an independent inspection and advice service on quality and standards in education and training provided in Wales.</p> <p>Estyn’s vision – to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales.</p> <p>Estyn’s mission – to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through their advice, inspection and capacity building.</p> <p>Section 28 inspection – section 28 of the Education Act 2005, says that registered inspectors must report on; the educational standards achieved by the school; the quality of education provided; how far education meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school; the quality of leadership and management; the spiritual, moral, social and culture development of pupils and the contribution of the school to the well-being of pupils.</p> <p>Nominee – Estyn actively involve schools in the inspection process by inviting a senior member of staff, called the nominee, to liaise with the inspection team during the visit. They are not a full member of an inspection team and do not ‘inspect’ or evaluate the provision.</p>

Peer Inspector – Estyn use peer inspectors on inspections in nearly all sectors that they inspect. Peer inspectors work as senior leaders/ managers in schools/ providers. They are full members of the inspection team and they undertake a wide range of inspection activity. They also write parts of the inspection report.

Lay Inspector - members of the general public and Estyn's corporate services staff who Estyn train to join a school inspection. The lay inspector focuses on the experience of school for pupils and the contribution that the relationships and environment make to their safety, attitudes to learning and well-being.