

POST-PRIMARY Inspection Guidance

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Post-Primary Inspection Guidance

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Introduction

The purpose of inspection is to promote the highest possible standards of learning, teaching and achievement throughout the education, training and youth sectors.

Our vision, our mission, is:

'Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners'

Further information on the work of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) including the Charter for Inspection, the ETI principles, values and standards and customer service is available on the [ETI website](#).

This handbook describes the main activities undertaken by the ETI during inspections of post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. It sets out the processes before, during and after the various models of inspections and lays out clearly for schools the kinds of evidence and activities that inspectors use to make their evaluations and on which they report. This guidance document seeks to improve the transparency of the inspection process, promote consistency and dispel any myths around inspection. While promoting consistency, the post-primary model of inspection is subject to continuous evaluation and review and therefore it is important for schools to be aware that this handbook is not a set of rigid inspection models; the ETI will carry out inspections with flexibility to respond to the individual circumstances of each school.

Post-Primary Four Day Model: Inspection Process

Pre-inspection (Notification, the pre-inspection visit and the role of the representative)

- The Inspection Services Team (IST) will notify the school of the inspection by issuing an email which contains links to the supporting documentation and by a telephone call; this will be followed up through a telephone call by the Reporting Inspector (RI) to the principal.
- The RI will undertake a pre-inspection visit. During the visit, the principal will brief the RI on the context of the school. The RI will meet with relevant senior and middle leaders and the whole staff to outline and discuss the arrangements for the inspection. During the visit, the school staff will be made aware of the ETI complaints procedure¹.
- The RI will invite the school to identify a senior member of staff to undertake the role of the representative and represent the school before, during and after the inspection. The representative will manage the inspection process within the school and will normally be the principal, a vice-principal or a member of the senior leadership team. This role is offered on a voluntary basis and a school may decide not to nominate a representative; furthermore, a representative is free to choose to attend only parts of meetings, as they see fit. It is expected

¹ <http://tinyurl.com/Comp-Procedure>

that the representative will attend the oral report back on the last day of the inspection. If this invitation is accepted, the representative must read the associated guidance² and sign the confidentiality agreement.

- The school will be requested to complete associated documentation³: the Summary Evaluation Proforma (SEP), the safeguarding proforma and the ETI pre-inspection questionnaire for governors.

During the inspection

- The RI will meet with the inspection team at the beginning of the inspection to provide an overview of the context of the school and any relevant information from the pre-inspection visit.
- The RI will allocate team duties for inspectors to lead on areas under evaluation, as required.
- Inspectors will visit lessons and hold discussions with relevant members of staff as required. The arrangements for lesson observations and discussions with staff are flexible and subject to change as the inspection progresses.
- Inspectors will not usually give advance notice of visits to lessons.
- Inspectors will typically arrive at the start of a lesson and stay until the end. However, there may be occasions when inspectors observe part of the lesson only.
- Lessons will be observed in order to support evaluations in the areas under focus. Typically this will mean that the work of some teachers may be observed on more than one occasion by more than one inspector, while the work of other teachers may not be observed at all. Usually, inspectors will have a short professional exchange with the teacher at the end of a lesson observation, outlining key strengths and/or areas for improvement; however, there may be occasions when this is not possible and arrangements may need to be made to do this at a more convenient time.
- Inspectors will give advance notice of discussions with members of staff. A programme of discussions may be agreed with the principal in advance and confirmed at the start of the inspection; however, it may also be subject to change as the inspection progresses.
- A team meeting will be held at the end of day one and towards the end of day two, normally attended by the school's representative.
- Prior to the final moderation meeting, inspectors will hold professional discussions with heads of department/co-ordinators in the areas under focus to outline main findings.

² <https://tinyurl.com/role-representative>

³ Hyperlinks to associated inspection documentation are available in the Appendix and in the inspection notification letter.

- A final moderation meeting will be held during the afternoon of day three, during which performance levels and a conclusion for overall effectiveness will be agreed by the inspection team.
- The RI and Deputy Reporting Inspector (DRI)⁴ will provide an oral report back⁵ to the school and representatives from the various stakeholders on the afternoon of day four of the inspection.

Post-inspection

- The school will receive a pre-publication copy of the report to check the accuracy of factual information.
- The final report will be published on the [ETI website](#).

There will be inspection follow-up activity; if the school has been evaluated as having either a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all learners, this will typically be a sustaining improvement inspection around three years after the original inspection.

For other schools, the ETI will engage in a formal follow-up inspection process. For schools evaluated as needing to address important areas for improvement, this will take place within 12 to 18 months; the follow-up will take place within 18 to 24 months for those schools evaluated as needing to address urgently significant areas for improvement.

General Information

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all pupils, the purpose of a four-day post-primary inspection is to evaluate:

- outcomes for learners;
- quality of provision;
- leadership and management.

The underlying operational principles include:

- the centrality of the School Development Plan (SDP), in terms of planning, development and self-evaluation leading to improvement;
- an opportunity for the school to provide its own evaluation of the outcomes for learners and the quality of learning and teaching;

⁴ On occasion this may be another team member.

⁵ The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.

- a strong focus on the pupils' learning experiences and their progression in learning;
- an enhanced pupil voice, through discussions with a sample of the pupils and the opportunity for pupils to complete a confidential questionnaire;
- an opportunity for parents and staff to provide their opinions of the quality of education provided through confidential questionnaires;
- an evaluation of the quality and impact of governance; and
- greater engagement with the school through the role of the representative and the offer of joint lesson observations.

The roles and responsibilities of a typical post-primary team inspection on a four-day include:

Team members	Responsibilities
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to the evaluation of the provision for the care and welfare of the pupils • contribute to the evaluation of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs
Reporting Inspector (RI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans and manages the inspection • briefs the school, including the teaching and non-teaching staff • maintains regular communication with the school, including clarification of any queries • deploys the inspection team • leads the evaluation of strategic leadership, capacity to effect and sustain improvement and outcomes for pupils • chairs all team meetings and the moderation meeting • deals with any issues or matters arising • confirms completion of safeguarding proforma
Deputy Reporting Inspector (DRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assists with all aspects of the inspection • leads on the evaluation of the quality of the provision (for learning) • contributes to the evaluation of senior and middle leadership • liaises with the inspection team to oversee the provision for pupils with additional learning needs
Core inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads on the evaluation of the curriculum and careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)
English specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads on the evaluation of English and literacy
Mathematics specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads on the evaluation of mathematics and numeracy
Other subject specialist(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads on the evaluation of specialist subject(s)/area of provision

Associate assessor(s) (AA(s))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contributes to the evaluation of areas within their professional experience and expertise (more than one AA may be deployed on parts or all of the inspection)
Representative (voluntary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a senior leader from the school manages the inspection process from within the school attends the appropriate full inspection team meetings, including the moderation meeting and the oral report back at the end of the inspection.

The size and composition of the inspection team will vary according to the size and context of the school. There will be a RI, DRI and core team. An associate assessor (AA) is deployed on almost all inspections. Post-primary inspections will typically include a specialist subject focus on English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy. The evaluation of at least one other specialist subject or the school's learning support unit, may be included.

In reaching evaluations the ETI use the key indicators which are available in the Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication (ISEF)⁶.

The ETI also publishes additional guidance and support materials for principals, teachers, parents and governors. This additional guidance (including what follows in this document) is provided for illustrative purposes only and may vary depending on the size and context of the school and emerging findings and evidence as the inspection progresses. All four-day inspections will, however, adhere to the process outlined above.

What happens before the inspection?

Following email notification of the inspection, the IST and the RI will contact the principal by telephone as soon as possible to discuss the following:

- the composition of the inspection team (including the AA(s)), the date for the pre-inspection visit, confirmation of the dates of the inspection and the arrangements for reporting to the school;
- the arrangements for the inspection of subject areas and other aspects of the work of the school to be included in the inspection;
- the distribution of the pupil, parental/guardian, teacher and support staff letters regarding online questionnaires;
- the completion of the Summary Evaluation Proforma (SEP), including a written evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching in the school, which should be given to the RI on the day

⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>

of the pre-inspection visit;

- the completion of the safeguarding proforma which should be signed and dated by the chairperson of the board of governors and the principal, and given to the RI on the day of the pre-inspection visit (where possible) or before day one of the inspection;
- the availability of the ISEF for Governors and the completion of the pre-inspection questionnaire for governors;
- the role of the school, supported by the Education Authority (EA) C2k, in preparing the relevant statistical information on the secondary school information disc (SSID), which is shared electronically with the ETI; the school is not required to print out the SSID;
- the option for the school to nominate a representative for the inspection and the associated guidance for this role;
- the opportunity for a joint lesson observation;
- the decision about whether to include lesson observations in religious education (RE), and if so, the need for the school to make a formal request of the Chief Inspector;
- the availability of key members of senior and middle leadership to meet with the RI during the pre-inspection visit; and
- the availability of a base room for the inspection team.

The RI should be made aware of any issue or event which you think may affect the school or any of the staff before, or at any time during, the inspection.

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The pre-inspection visit

The pre-inspection visit will be undertaken by the RI and includes:

- a meeting with the principal to provide information on the inspection process, including the option for the school to nominate a representative for the inspection, to discuss the priorities in the SDP and the shared education partnership, if applicable to the school, and to enable the RI to become familiar with the school's context;
- a discussion with the principal about the arrangements for:
 - the lesson observation visits on day one of the inspection, including the option of joint lesson observations
 - the principal's short input on the morning of day one
 - a suitable base room for the inspection team and access to the school's documentation supporting the school development planning process
 - agreeing the time for meeting with governors at the end of school on day two of the inspection

- agreeing the time for the report back meeting on the afternoon of day four of the inspection and those who will be in attendance
- holding discussions with key members of the senior leadership team about their roles and responsibilities

- meeting with the heads of subject departments (including the learning support co-ordinator and the head of CEIAG) to be inspected, as time permits;
- meeting with the chair of governors (or his/her representative), if available;
- meeting with a group of senior pupils, time permitting;
- briefing the staff at the end of the school day, and giving them an opportunity to ask questions;
- reading the relevant documents, including the SDP; and
- collecting the completed and verified key inspection documentation including:
 - the Summary Evaluation Proforma (SEP);
 - the safeguarding proforma;
 - the pre-inspection questionnaire for governors; and
 - the representative's statement of commitment and understanding proforma (if relevant).

During the visit, the school will be made aware of the ETI complaints procedure⁷.

A possible outline of the day for a pre-inspection visit is detailed below.

Please note any timings are approximate and for guidance only; the ETI is content to be guided by the school.

⁷ <http://tinyurl.com/Comp-Procedure>

Pre-inspection Day	Activity
	RI ⁸ arrives at school
Meeting with principal (and senior leaders)	<p>Discuss school's context and recent and current priorities set in the SDP.</p> <p>Discuss roles and responsibilities of staff.</p> <p>Agreement, where necessary, on the arrangements for joint lesson observations and/or the participation of a representative in the inspection.</p> <p>Collection of the school's documentation: Summary Evaluation Proforma (SEP); safeguarding proforma; and, pre-inspection questionnaire for governors.</p> <p>Status of SSID, and questionnaires for pupils, parents and staff.</p>
	<p>Guidance for lesson observations as arranged by school and discussion on the use of the learning insight profile (LIP).</p> <p>Agreement of time of, and attendance at, oral report back on the last day of the inspection.</p>
Meeting with heads of departments (English, mathematics and other department/area under focus)	Discuss roles and responsibilities within the departments, format of inspection, and availability of support materials.
Meeting with leaders of care and welfare and support (eg VP (pastoral), Designated Teacher, SENCO, etc)	Discuss roles and responsibilities within the departments, format of inspection, and availability of support materials.
Meeting with curriculum and CEIAG leaders (eg VP (curriculum), ALC co-ordinator, head of LLW, head of careers education, etc)	Discuss roles and responsibilities within the departments, format of inspection, and availability of support materials.
Meeting with chair (or representatives) of board of governors	Discuss membership and structure of board. Receipt of governance proforma. Discuss format of inspection.
Meeting with senior pupils	To hear the views of the senior pupils about the life and work of the school.
Staff briefing	Briefing with question and answer session.

⁸ On occasion, RI and possibly DRI/team member.

Preparation and use of data

The tables for Year 12 and Year 14 examination outcomes in individual subjects⁹ and the secondary school information disc (SSID) tabulated SIMS information which will be published within the body of the inspection report are verified by the school.

The EA C2k will engage with the school to assist and advise in the collation and upload of the SIMS statistical information, including public examination performance data requested in advance for inspection. The normal procedure is for the SSID files to be uploaded by EA C2k at least one week before the inspection to the C2k Exchange where the ETI can access them.

The SSID will include some reports produced from the Fischer Family Trust data set. The school does not need to send the SSID to the RI, nor provide a printed version. It is expected that schools, on a regular basis as part of their self-evaluation process, access and use for benchmarking purposes the data that is kept in SIMS and from which the SSID is compiled.

It is the responsibility of the senior leaders in the school to ensure that the data is accurate and complies with the various agreed rules, for example, around pupils deemed to be ineligible for inclusion in the public examination data and the removal of pupils who have repeated GCSE examinations such as English and mathematics.

If the SSID is ready at the time of the pre-inspection visit, the RI will endeavour to check whether it is accurate and contains the necessary data. During the inspection, it is not unusual for discrepancies in data to come to light. In these instances, when the RI and the school have agreed the source of, or reason for, any discrepancies in the data it is up to the school to make the relevant changes to the SSID files and email a final version to the RI for inclusion in the data tables in the published report. The school should not need to go back to EA C2k to amend the data.

The ETI publication of data is consistent across the schools inspected and the outworking of this can be seen by accessing the most recently published post-primary reports on our website.

Questionnaires

As part of the inspection process, the ETI seeks to take account of the views of all stakeholders, including the pupils. The ETI provides an opportunity for the pupils, parents/guardians, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential online questionnaire prior to the beginning of a four-day post-primary inspection.

⁹ Completed in Section B of the Summary Evaluation Proforma (SEP).

Pupils contribute to the inspection process in a number of ways; for example, during an inspection, inspectors meet with groups of pupils to talk about how the pupils and the school work together to help the pupils learn and keep safe. In order to find out about the views of more of the pupils, the ETI has developed a confidential online pupil questionnaire.

The inspection notification letter has a link to the confidential online pupil questionnaire and the school will receive a copy of a letter for distribution to pupils. The pupils will log on to the online questionnaire link using their C2k email address. Completion of the questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes.

A summary of the view of the pupils will be reported in a confidential manner to the principal and to the chair/a representative(s) of the governors. Their responses will be treated in confidence. However, if a pupil raises a concern about child protection or safeguarding¹⁰, the inspectors will share this with the school.

The pupil letter and the confidential online pupil questionnaire advise that if any pupil has an urgent concern about his/her safety or well-being, they should speak to the Designated Teacher in the school or another adult who they trust. They are also advised that they can phone Childline free on 0800 1111.

The school will receive a copy of the letters for electronic distribution to parents/guardians and staff and which contain the relevant detail to enable them to complete the online questionnaire specific to your school.

The outcomes of the questionnaire returns from parents/guardians and staff will be reported to the principal and to the chair/a representative(s) of the governors; any matters that arise in the returns will be discussed.

If you have any queries about the pupil, parental or staff questionnaires please contact the IST.

¹⁰ If a safeguarding disclosure is made, the inspector concerned will follow the school's procedures for reporting the disclosure.

An illustration of the key activities

On all inspections, the RI will agree the timetable with the principal. The inspection will involve usually the following inspection activity. However, please note that this is neither a checklist nor definitive list.

Day one (illustration):

Day one	Activity
	Team arrival; introductions.
Period 1 (or before)	Short input by principal (maximum 15 minutes) Short team briefing, chaired by RI. Subject specialists commence the inspection of individual subjects; this may involve a meeting with the head of department (HoD)/ subject leader or co-ordinator early in the day.
Period 1 (onwards)	Lesson observations. The principal or another senior leader will be provided with the opportunity to undertake some joint lesson observations with a member of the inspection team. RI commences meetings with the principal and other senior leaders and the scrutiny of documentation. RI or other team member selects pupils for inclusion in pupil discussions on days 2 and/or 3.
Last period (or part of)	Team meeting, attended by representative. Main agenda item is the Learning Insight Profile (LIP).
After school	Meetings are held between specialist inspectors and heads of department, co-ordinators, middle leaders and staff with whole-school responsibilities.

Day two (illustration):

Day two	Activity
Morning/ afternoon	Pupil discussions take place (usually morning). Lesson visits and discussions/meetings with key staff continue. DRI meets with learning support co-ordinator/SENCO. DRI/AA meets with a representative group of middle leaders. Team meeting during last period (or part of the last period), attended by the representative.
After school	RI and DRI (or AA) meet with representatives of the board of governors. Meetings (only where necessary) are held between specialist inspectors and heads of department, co-ordinators, middle leaders and staff with whole-school responsibilities.

Day three (illustration):

Day three	Activity
Morning	<p>Lesson visits and discussions with key staff.</p> <p>During the first lesson of the day, the DRI, AA and the three subject specialists (where appropriate) will each visit a lesson, paying particular attention to the support for pupils with additional learning needs (the classes to be visited will be selected by the DRI).</p> <p>An inspector will meet with the senior leader with responsibility for the care and welfare of the pupils to discuss the outworking of the arrangements for the care and welfare for the pupils.</p> <p>RI and DRI (where possible) or AA meet with the school's senior leadership team to discuss actions in response to emergent inspection messages.</p> <p>All lesson visits and discussions with staff are concluded by lunchtime. All evidence that the school wishes the inspection team to consider should be made available before lunchtime.</p> <p>Feedback is provided by subject specialist inspectors to the heads of the departments inspected, in the presence of a member of the senior leadership team.</p> <p>These are completed before the end of lunchtime.</p>
Afternoon	<p>Moderation meeting</p> <p>Team meeting chaired by the RI, attended in full or part by the representative, to collate and discuss the findings from the inspection and to moderate and agree the key strengths and areas for improvement against the indicators outlined in the ISEF.</p> <p>Performance levels will be agreed for the core areas of the inspection, namely outcomes for pupils, quality of provision and leadership and management. The overall effectiveness conclusion for the school will also be agreed.</p> <p>An additional inspector, with responsibility for quality assurance, may attend the moderation meeting as part of the ETI quality assurance process.</p>

Day four (illustration):

Day four	Activity
Morning	<p>RI/DRI meet; team members write for issue.</p> <p>Team meets to collate, agree and edit report.</p>
Afternoon	<p>RI and DRI report orally the key findings of the inspection to the principal, senior leaders, chair/representative of the governors, representative of the employing authority and other relevant stakeholders (in agreement with the RI).</p> <p>The purpose of the oral report back is to afford the principal and chairperson the opportunity to seek clarification, where necessary, about the main inspection findings. The representative should be in attendance at the oral report back. The representative will have attended the team and moderation meetings and should already be very clear about the evidence used to make the evaluations.</p> <p>It should be noted that: performance levels and the overall effectiveness conclusion shared during the moderation meeting with the school's inspection representative are confidential and subject to quality assurance. As such, they should not be shared with anyone else between the moderation meeting and the oral report back.</p>
	<p>The performance levels and overall effectiveness conclusion fed back at the oral report back are provisional, and subject to moderation as part of the ETI's moderation and quality assurance process. They are not final until the report is published.</p> <p>The RI will mediate to the principal any changes to performance levels or overall effectiveness conclusion, as a result of any additional moderation and quality assurance. The final inspection report will contain only a summary of the key evaluations and findings rather than the finer detail shared and discussed during the moderation meeting and final oral report.</p> <p>At the oral report back, the provisional overall effectiveness conclusion will be shared with the school. This will indicate clearly to the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the capacity of the school for sustained improvement; and • the nature and timing of follow-up activity. <p>Following the report back, the school should begin work on any area(s) for improvement identified. Further detail on any post-inspection activity can be found in the ETI document <i>What Happens After an Inspection?</i></p> <p>In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to report the key findings on day four, the oral report back may be rescheduled after consultation with the managing inspector/assistant Chief Inspector with responsibility for post-primary inspections.</p>

Post- inspection

Post-inspection	Activity
Inspection report	<p>Approximately four weeks after the inspection, you will receive a final, quality- assured pre- publication copy of the inspection report for the purposes of a checking the accuracy factual information.</p> <p>This is the final opportunity to draw any inaccuracies in factual information to the attention of the RI. This procedure is intended to avoid any factual information being reported inaccurately within the published report. You are not being asked to comment on the evaluations or findings within the report. In the interests of publishing the report as quickly as possible, the school should ensure that all factual inaccuracies are identified and reported at this stage, as this is the only opportunity to do so.</p> <p>The final inspection report is published within six weeks of the inspection.</p>

Inspection of care and welfare and safeguarding

The evidence for the evaluation of the care and welfare of the pupils and the arrangements for safeguarding¹¹ will be gathered by the team throughout the inspection. Any issues that have the potential to impact adversely on the care and welfare of the pupils will be followed up by the inspection team.

Inspection depends upon first- hand inspection evidence which comprises:

- lesson/session observation, evaluation of work, conversations with pupils and with teachers and by observation of interactions between teachers and pupils. Inspectors gather evidence by talking to pupils and teachers, both formally and informally. Conversations may be carried out: informally during lessons/sessions; around the school between lessons/sessions; at break/lunchtimes, and in meetings.

Prior to the inspection, pupils, parents and staff of the school will be given the opportunity to complete an online questionnaire. A summary of the responses, including any written comments, will be reported orally to the principal and representatives from the governors during the inspection.

On day one, the pupils to be included in the discussions with inspectors will be selected; the principal will be asked to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate these meetings. On the morning of day

¹¹ If a safeguarding disclosure is made, the inspector concerned will follow the school's procedures for reporting the disclosure.

two (where possible), meetings will take place with groups of pupils from across the key stages. Typically these meetings with pupils last for around 20 to 30 minutes.

Members of the inspection team may visit an assembly, registration classes and/or other activities.

A discussion will be held with the Designated Teacher and may include other members of the school's safeguarding team. Safeguarding will be explored in terms, for example, of: how safe and secure the pupils feel; their knowledge of what to do if they do not feel safe; and the impact of the school's work to help them adopt safe practices and to be secure through the preventative curriculum.

The ETI also determines whether the school is monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and the pupils' welfare at least annually. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI safeguarding proforma¹² to underpin this.

Prior to the inspection, the school will be asked to complete the safeguarding proforma which should be verified, signed and dated by both the principal and the chair of governors; this may be made available to the RI on the day of the pre-inspection visit or at the start of the inspection. Any issues arising with regard to the safeguarding of the pupils will be followed up by the inspection team.

- The child protection/safeguarding proforma is a key piece of evidence and is designed to help schools establish the extent (ideally on an annual basis) to which they comply with child protection/safeguarding requirements and how their arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding pupils.
- Schools should note that the verified, signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by the ETI as record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.

Inspection of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The evidence for the evaluation of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs will be gathered by the team throughout the inspection.

The school is asked to provide (from the school's existing documents):

- the school's policy for SEN;
- the SEN register (current year and previous year) and details of the arrangements for SEN;
- class lists (to include pupils on the SEN register and the stage at which they are);
- details of the pupils in receipt of access arrangements (current and previous year);
- the attainments of pupils at stages 1 to 4 on the SEN register;
- the attainments of pupils at stage 5 on the SEN register;

¹² <http://tinyurl.com/Safeguarding-Proforma>

- details of work experience placements for pupils on SEN register (current and previous year); and
- a sample of individual education plans/personal learning plans across the stages.

The inspection activities will include the team gathering evidence and providing evaluative comment regarding the provision for these pupils as part of any lesson observations undertaken, through review of work in the pupils' books and of the teachers' planning, including the use of individual education plans (personal education plans).

Over the three days, inspectors will visit lessons to evaluate the learning experiences of pupils identified as requiring additional support with their learning. Where possible during the inspection, a small sample of withdrawal classes (if any) may be observed.

The DRI will meet with the leader(s), typically the learning support co-ordinator/ SENCO, with responsibility for the co-ordination of the provision and support for pupils with additional needs across the school; this meeting will focus on the outworking of the arrangements for the support of these pupils.

The following lines of discussion are used typically by inspectors but are neither a checklist nor definitive list of prompts.

To what extent are pupils' needs identified and appropriate provision put in place?

- Are procedures and practices compliant with relevant legislation and guidance documentation?
- What is the process of identification of need (involvement of parents; effectiveness of referral system; use of data/assessments)?
- What is the impact of the school's policy for SEN and the SEN register on the pupils?
- How is the SEN register maintained and reviewed?
- What are the interventions outside of the classroom, how are they prioritised and what is the impact?
- What provision is in place for pupils accessing EOTAS placements as per guidance?
- How do you know the needs of the pupils are being met in the classroom?

To what extent are pupils who require additional support with their learning participating in school life, progressing well and attaining in line with their ability?

- How pro-active is the school in creating an inclusive ethos which is supported by its pastoral care arrangements?
- How well do pupils identified with SEN progress and achieve?
- What is the school's policy and practice in analysing and monitoring the attainment of pupils identified with SEN?

To what extent do senior and middle leaders ensure that pupils identified as having SEN are participating in school life, progressing well and attaining in line with their ability?

- How do senior and middle leaders monitor, evaluate and review the impact of SEN initiatives?
- Does continuing professional development for staff take place, specific to SEN?
- What is the impact of this?
- How well is capacity of all staff to support pupils with additional learning needs being built within the school?
- Are links established with other whole-school co-ordinators, including literacy, numeracy and careers, to meet the needs of the pupils on the SEN register?
- How is the specific budget for SEN spent on meeting the needs of the pupils identified through the SEN register?
- How effective has the leadership been in raising outcomes for pupils on the SEN register?

At some stage during the morning of day three, the DRI will engage in a professional dialogue with the learning support co-ordinator/ SENCO to discuss the emergent findings with regard to the outworking of the support for pupils with additional learning needs.

Inspection of Curriculum and CEIAG

The evaluation of the curriculum and the provision for CEIAG is a very important aspect of the inspection; it will be the responsibility of one of the members of the inspection team to take the lead in the inspection of the curriculum and CEIAG.

Typically, the inspection of curriculum and CEIAG will include the following. However, please note that this is neither a checklist nor definitive list.

1. Prior to, or at the start of the inspection, the lead inspector will access and evaluate the school's most recent Entitlement Framework audit.
2. The lead inspector will meet with the member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with responsibility for curriculum planning to:

discuss and evaluate the school's approach to curriculum planning and the review/self-evaluation of the relevance, balance and flexibility of the curriculum to meet the needs, interests and career goals of the pupils.

This professional dialogue may include around aspects such as:

- the current and future arrangements in place to ease and support the transition from KS2 to KS3 (including around aspects such as: are there nurture groups; are there core teachers;

timetabling arrangements at KS3);

- integration of the subjects within holistic schemes of work;
- the percentage of curriculum time allocated at KS4 to the humanities and linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technical, social, physical and artistic learning;
- how curriculum time and learning spaces are allocated and monitored (including around aspects such as a review of curriculum maps to determine time for: areas of learning; subjects; and carousel time; ascertain what account has been taken of learning spaces (including mobiles) and class sizes when planning for the curriculum; are there sufficient and suitable class and specialists rooms for: general/core subjects; STEM/home economics/music/physical education etc; collaboration with other schools and further education providers);
- recent changes, if any, to the curriculum offer (including enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular) and the associated rationale for changes;
- proposed future changes to the curriculum, and how these are aligned with the priorities in the school development plan; and
- the linkages between curriculum planning and CEIAG (including input and impact from delivery of schemes of work across the curriculum), including work experience. This may include discussions on how work experience is planned for and integrated across the curriculum as well as: the quantity, quality, frequency, relevance and impact of work experience and/or visits to and from Further Education (FE)/Work Based Learning (WBL) stakeholders and employers.
- the range of leavers' destinations and how the school analyses and uses this data to inform curriculum planning and review;
- the rationale for, and effectiveness of, provision at Key Stage (KS) 4 and post-16 (including around aspects such as: how transition programmes/bridging courses are identified and planned for across the curriculum; if sixth form is a two or three-year programme of study; an evaluation of the bridging courses at post-16 to include the uptake, dropout and outcomes; if there a reduced curriculum offer at KS4 how many pupils avail of this; if there is duplication within transition programmes by comparison with FE colleges and WBL providers; what is the size, currency and progression of the qualifications on offer at KS4 and post-16; if there is a broad curriculum in place offering a range of skills including science and technology);
- how the curriculum planning and monitoring processes take place and how effective they are; and
- the alignment of the curriculum to government's priority skills areas and local and regional labour market information.

3. Evaluation of the quality and impact of the curriculum, staffing, resources, accommodation, and leadership and management in careers. This will involve:
 - observation of a sample of careers and/or employability lessons;
 - discussions with the teacher in charge/head of careers;
 - evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of careers advice and guidance;
 - evaluation of the extent and impact of the pupils' work-related learning opportunities and workplace knowledge and experiences. This may include discussions around aspects such as: the quantity, quality, frequency, relevance and impact of the provision for careers (to include careers interviews) and the world of work; the input and impact from schemes of work; the quantity, quality, frequency, relevance and impact of curriculum provided by FE/WBL stakeholders;
 - evaluation of the extent to which pupils acquire and apply a range of skills, dispositions and attitudes that enhance employability;
 - evaluation of the extent to which the pupils benefit from a progressive personal career planning process, across the key stages;
 - discussions around the continuing professional development opportunities for staff involved in careers;
 - discussion around the self-evaluation and development planning processes for CEIAG;
 - input to the evidence base by the ETI subject specialist inspectors; and
 - discussions with some pupil groups, particularly at Year 10, KS 4 and post-16.
4. The lead inspector will meet with the member of staff with responsibility for area learning community collaboration.
5. Review of a range of documentation, including:
 - self-evaluation and action-planning documentation;
 - option/subject choice documents at year 8 entry, KS 4 and post-16 and any criteria for progression from year 13 to year 14;
 - data about year 13 to year 14 progression, destinations of leavers at the end of KS 4, end of year 13 and end of year 14;
 - achievement and progression data for post-16 pupils following largely level 2 programmes of study at post-16;
 - evaluation of the extent and impact of the pupils' workplace knowledge and experiences;
 - pupils' workplace experiences at KS 4 and post-16;
 - schemes of work;
 - the numbers of pupils, over the past three years, accessing courses through other area learning community providers and the number of pupils from other providers accessing courses in the school, including subjects and at what level; and

- SSID achievement data.

Inspection of subject areas

Post-primary inspections will typically include a specialist subject focus on English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy. The evaluation of at least one other specialist subject or the school's learning support unit, may be included.

The inspection of specialist subjects will involve usually the following inspection activity. However, please note that this is neither a checklist nor definitive list.

Inspection of specialist subjects (illustration)

Stage	Inspection activity
Pre-inspection	<p>Specialist inspectors access teacher timetables to plan observation visits and meetings.</p> <p>Inspectors also access the SSID data to analyse trends in the pupils' achievements in public examinations and to benchmark these against similar schools in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Teachers and middle and senior leaders have the opportunity to attend a whole- staff briefing delivered by the RI in advance of the inspection. There is the opportunity for HoDs/subject co- ordinators, teachers and other staff to ask questions or seek clarification about any aspect of the inspection process.</p>
Day one (illustration)	<p>The specialist inspectors will commence the inspection of the individual subjects or whole-school areas (for example the provision for pupils identified with additional learning needs).</p> <p>The specialist inspectors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •undertake lesson observations across the key stages; •scrutinise departmental documentation including departmental development or action plans, self-evaluation documentation, departmental reviews including examination data analysis, schemes of work, any folders/materials stored in the virtual learning environment, cross-curricular planning documents, assessment and marking policies, minutes of meetings, assessment data and subject- specific personal/ individual education plans; •meet with the HoD/subject co-ordinator, probably at the start and end of the school day; and •hold informal discussions with pupils and scrutinise samples of their work. <p>On some inspections, particularly in larger schools or departments, the specialist inspector may be accompanied by another inspector or an AA.</p>

It is important to note that these are discussions with the leaders of these areas and are not 'interviews'. Inspectors are keen to hear what they do to support pupils and to help them achieve.

The focus for discussion includes/comprises the current developments and priorities for improvement in their area of responsibility, progressed through effective self-evaluation, particularly the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision and the achievements and standards of the pupils.

There is no need for any additional documentation to be produced for this meeting. The inspectors are interested in being talked through the key current documents ie current priorities, how they became priorities and, using first-hand evidence, what evidence there is of progress being made.

The following lines of discussion are used typically by inspectors but are neither a checklist nor definitive list of prompts.

1. The role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching

Is good practice identified and shared?

- Are learning and teaching regularly/always discussed at departmental and other meetings?
- Do teachers have a shared understanding of pedagogy?
- Is the document being discussed a working document? How is it reviewed?
- Is it truly 'owned' by members of the department - how is that promoted?
- Is there a collective depository of good practice?

Is learning and teaching observed?

- Do middle/senior leaders observe learning and teaching, other than through the Performance Review and Staff Development process?
- Are there opportunities for peer observation? How effective are they?
- What other strategies are used for monitoring and evaluation?
- Do middle/senior leaders use (for example) book scoops/book looks? What has been learnt and what actions are taken?
- How are pupils' or parents' views sought and acted on in any evaluation? If so, what was learnt from this?

2. Self-evaluation and action-planning processes

How do middle leaders evaluate the work of colleagues/departments and how does that inform future planning?

- Do all departments/subject areas have action plans?

- How are the priorities decided upon? How well are they aligned to the priorities in the SDP?
- How are baseline positions identified?
- How does the self-evaluation process work? How is the impact of actions monitored and evaluated by middle managers/leaders, and by senior leaders?
- Have the prompts from the ISEF (or its predecessor Together Towards Improvement), Every School a Good School, Count, Read; Succeed, or any other relevant documents

(for example the ETI learning insight profile) been used at department meetings and to what effect?

3. The use of data to aid monitoring and evaluation of standards and progression in learning, and to inform future planning

How is the pupils' progress assessed, tracked and monitored?

- Is there a target-setting process? How are targets set, agreed, monitored?
- What provision is there for pupils who need additional support with learning?
What is the impact of any intervention strategies for pupils?
- How is the pupils' performance in public examinations analysed?
- Is performance benchmarked against similar schools? If so, what does this show?
- Are all members of each department/area of provision aware of the department's benchmarked performance?
- Is class by class performance data shared openly?
- Does the school use standardised test results to monitor progress across the school/year groups, or simply to identify those who may require additional support? How well is the data used?
- How is underperformance identified and addressed at the different levels in the school?
- What do you do to help parents support their pupil's learning?
- Do you have any links with primary schools? Transition arrangements?

4. The quality and effectiveness of the level of accountability between middle leaders, senior leaders and governors

Is there appropriate accountability?

- For whom are evaluative reports produced and what happens next? What evaluative feedback is provided by senior leaders?
- Are there meetings with the principal at which the work of the department is discussed? To what extent do they lead to improvement?

- Does the SLT/principal receive a copy of the agenda and minutes of departmental meetings? What feedback is provided? Do they access pupils' assessment data in SIMS, and what do they do with this information?
- To what extent do middle leaders have contact with, and receive feedback from, the governors?

Inspectors will also follow up with middle leaders, areas of interest or concern which are emerging as inspection findings.

Meeting with the governors

The meeting with the governors is an opportunity for the RI to seek the views of the governors and evaluate the effectiveness of the governance of the school. The meeting normally takes place towards the end of day two of the inspection. The RI will be accompanied by another team member.

Following a brief introduction, the RI will:

- explain the purpose of the meeting, namely to take account of the views of the governors on the life, work and performance of the school, including their evaluation of the effectiveness of the governance of the school;
- explain and answer questions on the nature of the inspection and the report;
- seek governors' views about their different roles in the governance of school, including safeguarding;
- report back to governors the summary of the various questionnaire returns; and
- discuss the content of the pre-inspection questionnaire where it has been completed by the governors.

The RI will seek governors' views on their role typically in the following areas. However, please note that this is neither a checklist nor a definitive list of prompts.

1. Pupil progress

This will include discussion around:

- the information received by governors about the progress made by the pupils;
- statistical trends over recent years, benchmarking and how the school's performance compares with other schools;
- the progress and performance of pupils on free school meals and those with special educational needs;
- the performance of individual subjects/departments;
- the school ethos and the role of pastoral care in raising standards; and

- the promotion of high expectations, positive attitudes towards, and value of, learning.

2. Main challenges facing the school

This will include discussion around:

- the school development planning process, consultation and identification of priorities;
- challenging underperformance and supporting improvement;
- the provision of a relevant curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of the pupils, as well as levels of collaboration across the area learning community; and
- support for pupils with free school meal entitlement and those with additional learning needs.

3. Improving quality of provision/maintaining and raising standards

This will include discussion around:

- the level of engagement with principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils;
- their role in challenging and being accountable;
- their involvement in promoting high-quality learning, teaching and assessment;
- ensuring sound financial planning; and
- the effective and efficient use of resources to meet the needs of the pupils.

Summary of key information for the inspection

At the time of the pre-inspection visit:

- the School Development Plan (SDP);
- the Summary Evaluation Proforma (SEP);
- the safeguarding proforma;
- the pre-inspection questionnaire for governors;
- day one lesson visits/timetables; and
- the school organisation structure and staff responsibilities.

At the time of the inspection, in the baseroom:

- hard copies of staff timetables;
- evidence from the self-evaluation process;
- minutes of senior leadership team meetings;
- minutes from the meetings of the board of governors
- departmental minutes, developmental and action plans, including schemes of work;

- whole-school policies and action plans for literacy, numeracy and ICT, learning and teaching and special educational needs;
- special educational needs register, samples of individual education plans/personal learning plans and details of arrangements for special educational needs;
- supporting evidence for the safeguarding proforma, including safeguarding/child protection and pastoral care policies;
- returns from any pupil questionnaires/focus groups or evidence of their involvement in the decision-making process; and
- a school map.

At the time of the inspection, for inspectors visiting classes:

- planning file (normal planning notes: for example medium-term or longer-term);
- current individual education plans/personal learning plans;
- class assessment and tracking data; and
- samples of pupils' work across the ability range.

Sustaining Improvement Inspection

Background

After a school has been evaluated through inspection, by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement, or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement, the ETI will monitor the school's continuing action to sustain and effect improvement; a sustaining improvement inspection (SII) will be used for this purpose.

Typically, schools that were evaluated as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement will receive a SII three years after their last inspection; however, there may be occasions when the ETI deem a different model of inspection to be more appropriate.

What is the focus of the sustaining improvement inspection?

The SII gives the school the opportunity to demonstrate to the 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 the ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement.

While the ETI will focus on priority areas of development and the school's evaluation of safeguarding, the ETI's prime interest lies in the strength and effectiveness of the school's capacity to sustain and to effect improvement. The purpose of the agreed line(s) of inquiry during the inspection is to determine the extent to which the school is able to illustrate the impact of how its teachers and leaders (supported and challenged by its governors) use first-hand evidence to reflect, evaluate and act to sustain and effect improvement. It is this **capacity for self-evaluation leading to improvement which ETI will inspect and report upon primarily.**

How will the sustaining improvement inspection work?

Notification

- Schools will receive email and telephone notification two working days prior to the SII from IST¹⁴.
- Further guidance on the inspection process will be provided by IST at the time of notification; this should enable any queries to be clarified.
- Where possible, the Reporting Inspector (RI) will also make contact with the principal of the school by telephone, prior to the commencement of the inspection.

¹⁴ There may be occasions, for example, school/public holidays where the notification period will be more than two days.

- The principal should inform the chair of the Board of Governors that the SII is taking place and make arrangements for the report back at the end of day two, at approximately 3.30 pm.
- If available, a base room should be provided for the inspection team.
- The complaints procedure¹⁵ is available on the ETI website.

The inspection

- The inspection will typically be conducted by the District Inspector (DI) as RI and another team member¹⁶. The inspection will take place over two days. The other team member normally attends for one day. The RI will keep the principal updated on the arrangements as the inspection progresses.
- No contact with Education Authority C2k will be necessary in relation to the school's data, although it is expected the school will provide the team with an analysis of the pupils' attainment in public examinations since the last inspection along with any other assessment and pastoral data the school wishes to share.
- At the start of the inspection, the RI, in discussion with the principal, will identify and agree one or two lines of inquiry linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan (SDP). The line(s) of inquiry must be substantive and, in the case of a school previously evaluated as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement, may include confirming that any area(s) for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection has been addressed.
- The agreed line(s) should demonstrate to the ETI the capacity of the school to effect continued and sustained improvement or its capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Normally evaluation of the line(s) of inquiry will lead to an analysis of: learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; actions to address any issues identified during the last inspection; and outcomes for pupils.
- An oral report¹⁷ will be provided to the school¹⁸ at the conclusion of the inspection. This report back will provide: an evaluation of the key aspects of the inspection; the overall outcome of the inspection; and an outline of the potential follow-on inspection activity for the school.
- A short report will be published on the [ETI website](#).

What will the inspectors evaluate?

During the SII, there will be a review and discussion of a specific sample of school self-evaluation documents as part of the school development planning process and of first-hand data analysis related directly to the line(s) of inquiry. This will include the school's evaluation of: outcomes for pupils; the quality of learning and teaching; and leadership and management at all levels.

¹⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/Comp-Procedure>

¹⁶ Associate Assessor (AA) or inspector.

¹⁷ *The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.*

¹⁸ *Typically the principal and chair or another representative of the governors if the chair is unavailable.*

Typically, this will involve discussions with relevant staff members and be informed by lesson observations. The purpose of the lesson observations is to provide the school with an opportunity to present first-hand evidence of the impact of improvement work. The SII will include a review of safeguarding.

The following inspection activities may take place over the course of the inspection.

- The RI and principal will discuss:
 - the outcomes for pupils, including the data trends since the last inspection;
 - how the SDP priority areas were identified;
 - the key staff involved and their role throughout the school development planning process;
 - the on-going monitoring and evaluation strategies used to measure and evaluate the impact of actions to effect improvement;
 - the school's evaluation of how successful it has been in affecting improvement in the pupils' learning and attainment; and
 - the safeguarding proforma¹⁹.
- The RI will agree a programme for the inspection with the principal; this programme, however, may change as the inspection activity progresses. The programme will include the RI arranging meetings with key staff, including the principal, members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders as necessary.
- Lesson observations will be selected through discussion between the principal and the RI; the school may wish to identify particular sessions that best demonstrate the impact of actions to effect improvement.
- The RI and the team member will review the school's internal and external data, including data from public examinations, including the data available through the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) dataset. No SSID will be produced and there is no involvement from EA C2k.
- The RI and the team member will review the quality of the pupils' work.
- The RI will discuss arrangements for the oral report back with the principal as the inspection progresses.

¹⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/Safeguarding-Proforma>

The quality of arrangements for safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding will be included in the inspection and reported on. On SIs, the ETI reviews and reports on the school's evidence of assurance that safeguarding reflects or reflects broadly the relevant guidance.

The ETI also determines whether the school is monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and the pupils' welfare at least annually. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI safeguarding proforma to underpin this.

- The ETI child protection/safeguarding proforma is a key piece of evidence and is designed to help schools establish the extent (ideally on an annual basis) to which they comply with child protection/safeguarding requirements and how their arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding pupils.
- The completed proforma (verified, signed and dated by the principal and the chair of governors) will indicate to the RI the extent to which the school (based on its own annual review) reflects or reflects broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education and Section 2(c) School Development Planning Regulations (2010).
- Schools should note that the verified, signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by the ETI as a record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.
- Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the focus may change to that of safeguarding. This may include identification of an area related to safeguarding in circumstances where the RI deems it necessary to report on such issues, for example, where a safeguarding disclosure²⁰ is made to a member of the ETI team by a member of staff or a pupil or there are obvious breaches of on-line safety. If the school does not provide sufficient assurance that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Department, the ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

Documentation

There is no requirement for the school to create additional documentation for the inspection. The school should make available existing documentation relating to relevant aspects of development.

²⁰ If a safeguarding disclosure is made, the inspector concerned will follow the school's procedures for reporting the disclosure.

The key documents required will be:

- the SDP and associated action plans;
- a list of staff and classes;
- teachers' timetables and timetables for any intervention groups;
- the completed child protection/safeguarding proforma verified, signed and dated by the principal and the chair of the board of governors;
- long-term (whole-school) and medium-term (year group or class) planning;
- analysis of the pupils' attainment in public examinations since the last inspection;
- performance data (qualitative or quantitative data) which forms part of the development plan evaluation and review process, indicating that the actions taken are leading to improvement for the pupils, including interventions for individuals or small groups of pupils;
- individual education plans/personal learning plans; and
- samples of work (if available) which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes for pupils.

An illustration of the key activities:

On all inspections, the RI will agree the timetable with the principal (and this may include a shorter duration):

Day one (illustration):

Day one	Activity
	Arrival at school and introductions.
Period 1	<p>Initial meeting with the principal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDP reviewed for line(s) of inquiry. • Completed safeguarding proforma provided to the RI. • Queries clarified. <p>Timetables obtained to select observations.</p>
Period 1 (onwards)	<p>Lesson observations/review of relevant documentation.</p> <p>Meetings with teachers/leaders as required:</p> <p>eg senior leaders/middle leaders/designated teacher/literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator.</p>
After school	Brief update meeting with the principal.

Day two (illustration):

Day two	Activity
Morning	Brief meeting with principal to confirm arrangements for day and to address any issues or concerns arising from previous day. Lesson observations as required. Review of documentation/lesson observations as required. Meetings with senior/middle leaders.
Afternoon	Report writing.
After school Approximately 3.30 pm-4 pm	Oral report back ²¹ to the principal and chair of the board of governors or representative of the board of governors (if available).

The report

If the school continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners, then the ETI will report accordingly. If during the SII, the ETI identifies an area for improvement which the school has the evident capacity to address, it will report accordingly. The outcome of the SII will inform the timing and extent of future inspection activity.

If the school does not demonstrate sufficiently to the ETI that it has sustained its high level or capacity for improvement, and/or if performance has declined, the ETI will report accordingly and the school's next full inspection will be brought forward with an appropriate degree of urgency commensurate with the degree of risk determined by the ETI.

The short report will reference the outcome of the original inspection, the line(s) of inquiry, key findings, the evaluation of safeguarding at the time of the SII and a conclusion as detailed below.

If arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory²², reference will be made to a six week follow-up visit.

Conclusion

In the case of a school evaluated as demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the last inspection:

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

²¹ The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.

²² Or the school does not provide evidence of assurance that the arrangements reflect or reflect broadly the relevant guidance.

Or

[Insert name of school] has not demonstrated sufficiently a high level of capacity for sustained improvement; this will be reflected in the future arrangements for inspection of the school.

In the case of a school evaluated as demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the last inspection:

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

Or

[Insert name of school] has not demonstrated sufficiently the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils; this will be reflected in the future inspection arrangements for the school.

Baseline Monitoring Inspection

Background

New schools, including those which have been established as a result of an amalgamation, will have a baseline inspection in their second year. This baseline inspection will be a Baseline Monitoring Inspection (BMIn).

What is the focus of the baseline monitoring inspection?

The aim of the BMIn 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 effect improvement and its impact on learning and teaching and outcomes for pupils, and the school's evaluation of safeguarding. In addition to this, the BMIn will include an evaluation of the extent to which the leadership and management of the school have established a clear vision, culture and ethos for the school.

Together these evaluations and the outcome of the inspection inform future inspection activity.

How will the baseline monitoring inspection work?

Questionnaires

For schools due a BMIn, the ETI provides an opportunity for pupils, parents/guardians and teaching and support staff to complete a confidential online questionnaire, either towards the end of their first year of provision or at the beginning of the second year. The Inspection Services Team (IST) will be in touch with the school to facilitate this at the appropriate time.

The pupil letter and the confidential online pupil questionnaire advise that if any pupil has an urgent concern about his/her safety or well-being, they should speak to the Designated Teacher in the school or another adult who they trust. They are also advised that they can phone Childline free on 0800 1111.

A summary of the view of the pupils will be reported in a confidential manner to the principal and to the chair/a representative(s) of the governors. Their responses will be treated in confidence. However, if a pupil raises a concern about child protection or safeguarding²³, this will be shared with the school.

²³ If a safeguarding disclosure is made, the inspector concerned will follow the school's procedures for reporting the disclosure.

The outcomes of the questionnaire returns from parents/guardians and staff will be reported to the principal and to the chair/a representative(s) of the governors; any matters that arise in the returns will be discussed.

If you have any queries about the pupil, parental or staff questionnaires please contact the Inspection Services Team (IST).

Notification

- Schools will receive email and telephone notification two working days prior to the BMin from IST²⁴.
- Further guidance on the inspection process will be provided by IST at the time of notification; this should enable any queries to be clarified.
- Where possible, the Reporting Inspector (RI) will also make contact with the principal of the school by telephone, prior to the commencement of the inspection.
- The principal should inform the chair of the Board of Governors and the employing authority (EA/CCMS) that the BMin is taking place and make arrangements for a meeting with inspectors and the chair/representative of the governors, preferably on day one if possible, and for the oral the report back at the end of day two.
- If available, a base room should be provided for the inspection team.
- The complaints procedure²⁵ is available on the ETI website.

The inspection

- The inspection will normally be conducted by the District Inspector (DI), who will be the RI. Depending on the size and context of the school, there will be up to three team members which may include an Associate Assessor (AA). The inspection will take place over two days.
- No contact with Education Authority C2k will be necessary in relation to the school's data, although it is expected the school will provide the team with an analysis of the pupils' attainment in public examinations since the inception of the school, along with any other assessment and pastoral data the school wishes to share.
- At the start of the inspection, the RI, (in consultation with the team and the principal), will identify and agree two lines of inquiry from the school development plan. Normally lines of inquiry will support the evaluation of: success of the amalgamation/establishment of the new school in terms of vision, ethos and working relationships; learning and teaching; action to effect improvement; and outcomes.

²⁴ There may be occasions, for example, school/public holidays where the notification period will be more than two days.

²⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/Comp-Procedure>

- An oral report²⁶ will be provided by the RI and DRI to the school²⁷ at the conclusion of the inspection. The school may wish to invite the employing authority to this report back. This report back will provide: an evaluation of the key aspects of the inspection; the overall outcome of the inspection; and an outline of the potential follow-on inspection activity for the school.
- A short report will be published on the [ETI website](#). The school will receive a copy for a pre-publication factual accuracy check prior to publication.

What will the inspectors evaluate?

The quality of learning and teaching

- A sample of lesson observations, chosen by the RI in consultation with the principal, based on the priorities within the school development plan and the lines of inquiry.
- Discussions with some groups of pupils.

Action to promote improvement

- The three-year school development plan and the associated action plans.
- Self-evaluation leading to improvement.
- Discussions with the principal, governors and senior and middle leaders as appropriate.

Outcomes for pupils

- Lesson observations.
- Scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.
- Performance data (qualitative and quantitative) held by the school and also the school's evaluation of outcomes for learners.
- Discussions with some groups of pupils.

The quality of arrangements for safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding will be included in the inspection and reported on. On a BMIn, the ETI reviews and reports on the school's evidence of assurance that safeguarding reflects or reflects broadly the relevant guidance.
- The ETI also determines whether the school is monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and the pupils' welfare at least annually. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI safeguarding proforma²⁸ to underpin this.
- The ETI child protection/safeguarding proforma is a key piece of evidence and is designed to help schools establish the extent (ideally on an annual basis) to which they comply with child

²⁶ The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.

²⁷ Typically the principal and chair or another representative of the governors if the chair is unavailable.

²⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/Safeguarding-Proforma>

protection/safeguarding requirements and how their arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding pupils.

- The completed proforma (verified, signed and dated by the principal and the chair of governors and principal) will indicate to the RI the extent to which the school (based on its own annual review) reflects or reflects broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education and Section 2(c) School Development Planning Regulations (2010).
- Schools should note that the verified, signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by ETI as a record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.
- Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the line(s) of inquiry may change to that of safeguarding²⁹. If the school does not provide assurance that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Department, the ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

Documentation

There is no requirement for the school to create additional documentation for the inspection. The key documents required will be:

- the school development plan (SDP) and associated action plans;
- a list of staff and classes;
- teachers' timetables and timetables for any intervention groups;
- the completed child protection/safeguarding proforma verified, signed and dated by the principal and the chair of the board of governors;
- long-term (whole-school) and medium-term (year group or class) planning;
- most recent data from public examinations;
- performance data (qualitative or quantitative data) which forms part of the development plan evaluation and review process, indicating that the actions taken are leading to improvement for the pupils, including interventions for individuals or small groups of pupils;
- individual education plans/personal learning plans; and
- samples of work (if available) which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes for pupils.

²⁹ If a safeguarding disclosure is made, the inspector concerned will follow the school's procedures for reporting the disclosure.

An illustration of the key activities:

Day one (illustration):

Day one	Activity
	Arrival at school and introductions. Principal sets context.
Period 1-2	Inspection team review SDP and suggest two lines of inquiry. RI holds initial meeting with the principal to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree lines of inquiry from SDP; • discuss completed safeguarding proforma; • clarify any queries; and • obtain timetables to select and agree a sample of lesson observations.
Break onwards	Lesson observations. Scrutiny of relevant documentation. Meetings with teachers/leaders as required: eg senior leaders/middle leaders/designated teacher/literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator. Meeting with governor(s) if possible (this meeting is flexible and can be on day two).
After school (approx 3.30 pm)	Team meeting.
4 pm	RI and DRI meet briefly with principal to discuss emerging findings before leaving school.

Day two (illustration):

Day two	Activity
Morning	Brief meeting with principal to confirm arrangements for the day and to address any issues or concerns arising from previous day. Lesson observations as required. Meetings with a sample of pupils. Scrutiny of documentation as required. Further meetings as appropriate to the lines of inquiry.
Afternoon	Inspection team moderation meeting - collation of findings. Report writing.
After school 3.30 pm-4 pm (approx)	Oral report back ³⁰ to the principal and chair or representative of the board of governors (if available), and a representative from the employing authority (if available).

³⁰ The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.

The report

The short report will reference the lines of inquiry, key findings, the evaluation of safeguarding and a conclusion as detailed below.

If arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory³¹, reference will be made to a six week follow-up visit.

Conclusion

At the time of inspection and for the lines of inquiry selected, the school is identifying and bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of education. This outcome will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

Or

At the time of inspection and for the lines of inquiry selected, areas for improvement have been identified. This/These include(s) the need to:

This outcome will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

³¹ Or the school does not provide evidence of assurance that the arrangements reflect or reflect broadly the relevant guidance.

Monitoring Inspection

Background

Key stakeholders generally agree that inspections by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) should be more proportionate to risk with more frequent, shorter inspection activities where that is appropriate.

As a consequence, the ETI aims to visit schools (outside of their baseline inspection³²; full inspection or follow-up process) formally, approximately every three years either as a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (SII) or Monitoring Inspection (MIn). This is in addition to the incidental district visits undertaken by district inspectors (DIs).

Schools not having a baseline inspection³³, full inspection, follow-up inspection or SII will have a MIn that will determine the type and timescale of the next inspection activity.

What is the focus of the monitoring inspection?

The aim of the MIn 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, outcomes for pupils and the school's evaluation of safeguarding.

Together these evaluations and the outcome of the inspection inform future inspection activity.

How will the monitoring inspection work?

Notification

- Schools will receive email and telephone notification two working days prior to the MIn from the Inspection Services Team (IST)³⁴.
- Further guidance on the inspection process will be provided by IST at the time of notification; this should enable any queries to be clarified.
- Where possible, the Reporting Inspector (RI) will also make contact with the principal of the school by telephone, prior to the commencement of the inspection.
- The principal should inform the chair of the Board of Governors that the MIn is taking place and make arrangements for the report back at the end of day two, at approximately 3.30 pm.
- If available, a base room should be provided for the RI.
- The complaints procedure³⁵ is available on the ETI website.

³³ New schools, including those which have been established as a result of an amalgamation, will have a baseline inspection in their second year. This baseline inspection will be a Baseline Monitoring Inspection (BMIn).

³⁴ There may be occasions, for example, school/public holidays where the notification period will be more than two days.

³⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/Comp-Procedure>

The inspection

- The inspection will typically be conducted by the District Inspector (DI), wherever possible, in the role of RI. The inspection will take place over two days.
- No contact with Education Authority C2k will be necessary in relation to the school's data, although it is expected the school will provide the RI with an analysis of the pupils' attainment in public examinations over the past three years, along with any other assessment and pastoral data the school wishes to share.
- At the start of the inspection, the RI, in consultation with the principal, will identify and agree one or two lines of inquiry from the school development plan (SDP). Normally lines of inquiry will support the evaluation³⁶ of learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; and outcomes.
- An oral report³⁷ will be provided by the RI to the school³⁸ at the conclusion of the inspection. This report back will provide: an evaluation of the key aspects of the inspection; the outcome; and an outline of the next inspection activity for the school.
- A short report will be published on the [ETI website](#).

What will the inspectors evaluate?

The quality of learning and teaching

- A sample of lesson observations should be chosen by the RI in consultation with the principal, based on the priorities within the school development plan.

Action to promote improvement

- The three-year school development plan (SDP) and the associated action plans will be evaluated; discussions will take place with the principal and relevant senior and middle leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

- Lesson observations.
- Review of pupils' work.
- Performance data (qualitative and quantitative) held by the school and also the school's evaluation of the outcomes attained by the pupils, linked to the school development plan.

The quality of arrangements for safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding will be included in the inspection and reported on. On MIns, the ETI reviews and reports on the school's evidence of assurance that safeguarding reflects or reflects

³⁶ This will be informed by the school's evaluation of learning and teaching, and outcomes.

³⁷ The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.

³⁸ Typically the principal and chair or another representative of the governors if the chair is unavailable.

broadly the relevant guidance.

The ETI also determines whether the school is monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and the pupils' welfare at least annually. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI safeguarding proforma³⁹ to underpin this.

- The ETI child protection/safeguarding proforma is a key piece of evidence and is designed to help schools establish the extent (ideally on an annual basis) to which they comply with child protection/safeguarding requirements and how their arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding pupils.
- The completed proforma (verified, signed and dated by the principal and the chair of governors) will indicate to the RI the extent to which the school (based on its own annual review) reflects or reflects broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education and Section 2(c) School Development Planning Regulations (2010).
- Schools should note that the verified, signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by the ETI as a record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.
- Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the focus may change to that of safeguarding⁴⁰. If the school does not provide sufficient assurance that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments, the ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

Documentation

There is no requirement for the school to create additional documentation for the inspection. The key documents required will be:

- the SDP and associated action plans;
- a list of staff and classes;
- teachers' timetables and timetables for any intervention groups;
- the completed child protection/safeguarding proforma verified, signed and dated by the principal and the chair of the board of governors;
- long-term (whole-school) and medium-term (year group or class) planning
- data from public examinations for the last three years;

³⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/Safeguarding-Proforma>

⁴⁰ *If a safeguarding disclosure is made, the inspector concerned will follow the school's procedures for reporting the disclosure.*

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- performance data (qualitative or quantitative data) which forms part of the development plan evaluation and review process, indicating that the actions taken are leading to improvement for the pupils, including interventions for individuals or small groups of pupils;
- individual education plans/personal learning plans; and
- samples of work (if available) which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes for pupils.

An illustration of the key activities:

Day one (illustration):

Day one	Activity
	Arrival at school and introductions.
Period 1	Initial meeting with the principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review school development plan • Agree line(s) of inquiry. • Completed safeguarding proforma provided to the RI. • Queries clarified. • Timetables obtained to select observations.
Period 2 (onwards)	Lesson observations/scrutiny of relevant documentation. Meetings with teachers/leaders as required: eg senior leaders/middle leaders/designated teacher/literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator.

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Day two (illustration):

Day two	Activity
Morning	Brief meeting with principal to confirm arrangements for day and to address any issues or concerns arising from previous day. Lesson observation as required. Review of documentation/class visits as required.
Afternoon	Report writing.
After school 3.30 pm-4 pm (approx)	Oral report back ⁴¹ to the principal and chair of the board of governors or representative of the board of governors (if available).

⁴¹ The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.

The report

The report will contain: an introduction to the model of the inspection; the focus of the inspection including the line(s) of inquiry; a brief summary of key findings and one of two conclusions below that will inform the next inspection activity.

The arrangements for safeguarding⁴² will also be reported on. If arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory, reference will be made to a six week follow-up visit.

Conclusion

At the time of inspection and for the line(s) 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.

Or

At the time of inspection and for the line/lines of inquiry selected areas for improvement have been identified. This/These include(s) the need to:

This/These will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

⁴² Or the school does not provide evidence of assurance that the arrangements reflect or reflect broadly the relevant guidance.

Follow-up Inspection Process

After all post-primary four day model inspections there will be follow-up inspection processes. There are four overall conclusions that have individual follow-up processes:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Post-Inspection action plans

When the overall conclusion is that the school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners, the ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement through district visits. There is no requirement from the School Improvement Team (SIT) in the Department of Education for the school to draw up internal action plans.

When the overall conclusion is that the school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners, following an inspection, the SIT will ask the school to draw up an internal action plan which will be monitored through district visits.

When the overall conclusion is that the school needs to address (an) important area(s) or address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners, following an inspection, SIT writes to the school requesting an action plan.

SIT forwards the action plan to the ETI for comment. There may be some contact with the school at this point. For example, an optional district visit may be conducted if clarification of the action plan is required. The action plan forms the basis for the follow-up inspection process.

[Whole-school interim follow-up visit and follow-up inspection procedures](#)

There is **no notification letter for an interim follow-up visit**; approximately two weeks before the visit, the DI contacts the school to provide notification of the interim follow-up visit and to make arrangements.

Schools receive formal notification of the follow-up inspection from the Inspection Services Team (IST) approximately two weeks before the inspection. The DI will usually be the RI for follow-up inspection activity.

Overall Conclusion	Address Important Area(s) for Improvement	Address Urgently Significant Areas for Improvement
Interim follow-up visit	One day visit led by the DI to monitor progress. No written report left with the school.	Up to two days led by the DI to monitor progress. A short written report letter is issued to the school and employing authority.
Follow-up Inspection	Typically a one-day visit with up to four team members (depending on specialist areas). A written report is issued and published on the ETI website.	Up to three days with up to four team members (depending on specialist areas). A written report is issued and published on the ETI website.
Timescale	12-18 months from original inspection.	18-24 months from original inspection.

[Interim follow-up visit](#)

At the initial phone call, the DI explains that the aim of the interim follow-up visit is **to evaluate the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement**. It is a matter for the school to demonstrate progress in taking forward the action plan which may take the form of an interim evaluation. The school should be made aware that the evidence gathered during the visit (including, for example, lesson observations, discussions with key staff, pupils and so on) contributes to the overall follow-up inspection evidence base. A meeting with the employing authority representative may be necessary to determine the nature, extent and impact of the support provided.

An oral report is given to the principal, the chair (or representative) of the board of governors and a representative of the employing authority. In the case of schools where the overall conclusion was that the school needs to address urgently significant areas for improvement the support officer should also be invited, and following the oral report, these schools receive a short written report letter.

Follow-up inspection

The IST will notify the school of the inspection by telephone call; this will be followed up through a telephone call by the RI, which will normally be the DI, to the principal and an email which contains links to supporting documentation.

The follow-up inspection builds on the evidence base from the interim follow-up visit including lesson observations, discussions etc It is the responsibility of the school to provide clear, concise, robust evidence of **sustained and sustainable** improvement.

Following notification of the inspection, the IST and the RI will contact the principal by telephone as soon as possible to discuss the following:

- the composition of the inspection team, confirmation of the dates of the inspection and the arrangements for reporting to the school;
- the arrangements for the inspection of subject areas and other aspects of the work of the school to be included in the inspection;
- the distribution of the teacher, support staff and parental/guardian letters regarding online questionnaires;
- the availability of some governors for a meeting during the inspection;
- the role of the school, supported by the Education Authority C2k, in preparing the relevant statistical information on the secondary school information disc (SSID); and
- the decision about whether to include lesson observations in religious education (RE), and associated actions; and
- the availability of a base room for the inspection team.

At the end of the follow-up inspection, an oral report⁴³ is given to the principal, the chair (or representative) of the board of governors and a representative of the employing authority. In the case of schools where the overall conclusion had been that the school needs to address urgently significant areas for improvement, the support officer should also be invited.

The school receives a pre-publication copy of the follow-up inspection report for a factual accuracy check which is then published on the website.

⁴³ *The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.*

Following up on units/subjects

If during the original inspection the provision in a subject area or a unit has been evaluated as less than good there will be a specialist follow up inspection regardless of the overall conclusion of the whole school.

Overall Evaluative Conclusion	High Level of Capacity/Capacity to Sustain Improvement	Address Important Area(s) for Improvement	Address Urgently Significant Areas for Improvement
Following up on specialist subjects/ units where there are important or significant areas for improvement.	<p>One day visit from specialist inspector to re-evaluate the provision approximately 12-18 months after the original inspection.</p> <p>There will be an oral report back to the principal and head of department, but no written report will issue.</p>	Follow-up by specialist team member(s) as part of the overall follow-up inspection within 12-18 months after the original inspection.	Follow-up by specialist team member(s) as part of the overall follow-up inspection within 18-24 months after the original inspection.

Partial inspections

In some instances, for example, inclement weather, or other unique circumstances, the ETI may not be able to complete all aspects of an inspection. Such instances are dealt with by the ETI on a school by school basis, and it is important for the principal and the RI to stay in contact throughout the inspection process.

The underlying protocols adhered to by the ETI in these situations are:

- the ETI will endeavour to complete as much of the inspection as possible;
- the principal (or chair of the board of governors if the principal is unable to be involved) should liaise with the RI, including the provision of information around the extent of any ongoing problems or issues;
- the ETI will require access to:
 - the SDP and all related school documentation including departmental planning and action plans, whole-school policies for literacy, numeracy, ICT, pastoral care and safeguarding (including the completed safeguarding proforma), learning and teaching, assessment and so on;
 - groups of pupils for discussions; and
 - the pupils' written work.
- the ETI will consider the inspection as complete and publish a report outlining the progress made on the inspection and any available evaluations, including the adequacy of the school's arrangements for safeguarding; and
- where there is insufficient evidence to reach an overall conclusion evaluation, the school will be considered in the planning for future inspection activities.

Further detail around the arrangements specific to individual schools will be provided through the RI and IST.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Four Day Inspections

Does the principal always take on the role of the representative?

Mostly but not always - if not the principal, the representative should be in a senior leadership position with full and immediate access to the principal. The representative should be able to take actions or make decisions as necessary and be a key member of staff involved in improvement planning after the inspection. It is expected that the representative will attend the oral report back on the last day of the inspection.

Taking on the role of representative can be a good developmental opportunity for a member of the senior leadership team. Further details about the role of the representative and who is best suited to fulfil it can be found in the ETI document *The Role of the Representative in the Inspection Process*⁴⁴.

The organisation may prefer not to nominate a representative. In this circumstance, the RI will continue to promote the ETI's core principles of openness and transparency and maintain good working relationships with the senior management and staff.

What do I do if a problem arises?

It is important that any concerns or issues are dealt with promptly and sensitively. In most circumstances an issue can be resolved at an informal level. In the first instance you should raise any issue with the RI as soon as possible. In the unlikely event that the concern is about the RI, then this should be raised with the DRI in the first instance. The RI/DRI, working with any member of the team as appropriate, will work to resolve the matter as soon as possible, preferably during, or immediately following the inspection.

If it has not been possible to resolve your concerns informally, you may decide to make a formal complaint. A link to the ETI Complaints Procedure⁴⁵ is provided within the inspection notification letter.

Will all teachers be visited during the inspection?

All teachers may not be visited during an inspection. Much depends upon the size of the school and also the subjects being inspected. Equally some teachers may be observed on more than one occasion, by different inspectors, depending on the focus of the inspection and the subject/area taught. Class visits can take place up until the lunchtime of the third day of the inspection.

⁴⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/role-representative>

⁴⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/Comp-Procedure>

What feedback will teachers receive?

The inspector will have a brief discussion with the teacher at the end of the lesson, or, if it is not convenient at this time (for example the inspector only stays for one lesson out of a double), at the earliest opportunity after the lesson. This will outline those aspects of the lesson which went well and also any areas for improvement that need to be considered. This feedback will typically be short as the inspectors do not want to hold up the next lesson.

What happens if there are student teachers undertaking teaching practice in the school during an inspection?

The ETI acknowledges the significant role which post-primary schools play in the development of student teachers by hosting periods of school experience and thanks them for their professionalism in so doing. In order not to disrupt this important element of their education, the ETI do not inspect student teachers in the classroom during school inspections; they should therefore be permitted to continue their teaching practice uninterrupted before and during any inspection.

What feedback will the heads of department or co-ordinators expect to receive at the end of the inspection?

Before the end of lunchtime on day three of the inspection, the HoD/subject co-ordinator along with a member of the senior leadership team will have a professional dialogue with the subject specialist inspector. The inspector will highlight the strengths and discuss any areas for improvement. Normally, the inspector will report an overall performance level for the subject/area of focus.

Will inspectors visit provision delivered by other providers in the area learning community, such as other schools or a further education college?

Yes. It is important to inform staff from other providers who come into the school that they may be visited by an inspector. It is also important to inform pupils from other schools who attend your school that an inspection is taking place and that inspectors may visit classes.

How do I request the postponement of an inspection?

Inspections are only postponed in the most exceptional circumstances. The chair of the board of governors can write to the Chief Inspector requesting the postponement of an inspection. The Chief Inspector will consider this request and provide a prompt written response to the chair.

If the principal of the school is absent during the inspection period, does the inspection still go ahead?

Yes, in almost all circumstances the inspection will go ahead as planned.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): SIIIs, BMIIs and MIIs

The principal is absent, for example, on sick leave. Will the inspection go ahead?

Yes the inspection will proceed with the members of senior staff who are available.

My school is planning a trip on the day of the inspection. What should I do?

If the trip involves only one or two classes, then the inspection will proceed. If the whole school or the majority of classes are not on school premises for most of the day then the inspection may be rearranged. If agreed, the IST will inform the RI and further dates will be arranged.

I have several members of staff or a senior leader/middle leader absent from school for the period of the inspection. What do I do if the RI chooses their area of responsibility/subject as a focus for the inspection?

The ETI would recommend that a school does not ask any member of staff who is absent to come into school for the duration of the inspection. The principal and other senior staff members should be aware of the actions taking place in the organisation to promote improvement and the RI will discuss these with the staff who are available.

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My school has a learning support unit and/or Irish-medium unit. Will the unit be included in the inspection?

In all likelihood, the line(s) of inquiry chosen from the SDP will impact on the work of the whole school, including units; therefore, the unit(s) should expect to be included in the inspection.

What documentation do senior and middle leaders need to have available for the inspection?

Throughout the inspection, there will be on-going professional dialogue between the members of the school community and the inspection team. One or more of the senior or middle leaders may be asked to meet with the RI or member of the inspection team on the afternoon of the first day of the inspection to explain more fully the actions that have been taken to bring about improvement for the pupils. The staff involved may wish to bring evidence of action plans, evaluations, performance data, classroom observations and/or pupils' work to the meeting, but this is at their discretion. Please note that the information provided should be the recent or current work of the staff involved.

What documentation do teachers need to have available for the inspection?

Teachers should make available their long-term and medium-term planning including schemes of work. Individual education plans (IEPs) or personal learning plans (PLPs) should also be made available and any class performance data. The inspector may wish to see the pupils' work in books, files, or other formats. Teachers do not need to identify and set aside pupils' books prior to the inspection - the

inspector will review the work of the pupils while in the classroom. If required to provide evidence to support the lines of inquiry, the inspector may ask for additional evidence of pupils' work to be brought to the base room for further inspection.

Do I need to send any documentation to the RI in advance of the inspection?

No, the inspectors will look at the documentation on arrival in the school and throughout the inspection. It is worth noting that the inspectors will be in the school for two days only and the school should highlight the most relevant information to be looked at by the inspectors.

The safeguarding proforma is not completed or is partially completed. Will this affect the outcome of the inspection?

The care and welfare of the pupils is paramount, therefore, if the school cannot demonstrate with first-hand evidence that all the requirements for safeguarding have been completed by the school, this will be reflected in future inspection arrangements. Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the line of inquiry may change to that of safeguarding. This may trigger a six-week follow-up visit with the issue of a standard safeguarding letter and will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

How many lesson observations will there be?

The RI, in discussion with the principal, will choose the lessons which best demonstrate the impact of the actions taken to bring about improvement. This may be in one subject area or within one key stage or across subjects and key stages, depending on the line(s) of inquiry.

There are short-term temporary teachers in school. Will their work be observed?

The work of any teacher, except a student teacher, in school during the inspection may be observed. Please let the RI know if the school has beginning or Early Professional Development teachers and the name of the teacher tutor.

Will each teacher receive feedback on their lesson after a lesson observation?

In line with the normal practice during inspection, the inspector will have a brief discussion with the teacher before leaving the room or if this is not convenient, at an arranged time later in the day. The inspector will discuss the main strengths of the lesson and any area(s) identified for improvement. The collated evidence of the standards of learning and teaching will be provided to the principal at report back.

Should more serious issues arise from observations of learning and teaching, the inspector will discuss these with the principal and the teacher at the soonest available time before the oral report back.

I have a staff meeting planned for the first day of the inspection. Will I postpone it?

The RI may need to speak with the principal and some of the key staff during the afternoon of the first day. Do not postpone your staff meeting but in consultation with the RI, consider if the agenda can be ordered to facilitate any meetings required by the RI.

Who can attend the oral report back on day two?

The oral report back will be relatively short and will indicate future inspection arrangements. The key messages will be provided to the principal, a representative from the employing authority (if available) and chair of governors (if available) who in turn may inform the school community of the outcome. Outcomes remain confidential to the school until the report is published. This will be approximately six weeks after the inspection takes place.

What if the chair of the board of governors is not available for the oral report back?

If the chair of the governors is not available then the deputy chair or a designated member of the governing body may attend. The feedback may go ahead without a governor representative, but principals should ensure that the governing body are aware of the date and nature of the inspection taking place and the outcome.

Post-Primary Documentation (available on the ETI website)

Hyperlinked documentation required for post primary four-day inspection:

- [the Summary Evaluation Proforma](#);
- [the Safeguarding proforma](#)⁴⁶;
- [Pre-inspection Questionnaire for Governors](#);
- [the Role of the Representative](#); and
- [the Joint Lesson Observation](#) (if relevant) guidance.

Hyperlinked support material available for all types of post-primary inspections/self-evaluation

- [Information for Parents/Guardians](#)
- [Inspection Self-Evaluation Framework](#)
- [Inspection Self-Evaluation Framework for Governors](#)
- [Learning Insight Profile \(LIP\)](#)
- [What Happens after an inspection](#)
- [Complaints Procedure](#)

Guidance for the inspection of Independent Schools can be accessed on the ETI website at: <https://tinyurl.com/Ind-Sch-Insp-Guidance>.

⁴⁶ Required for all inspections.

POST-PRIMARY Inspection Guidance

September 2019

