

Briefing note for headteachers of All-through schools

Please share this with all staff

1. Introduction

By now, you will be aware that an inspection team will soon visit your school. The team is looking forward to working with you and your colleagues. Inspectors use a set of principles which supports them to establish and maintain positive relationships during inspections. This is called the PRAISE framework and details are included in Appendix 1. Throughout the inspection, inspectors will engage you and your staff in professional dialogue with the aim of supporting improvement.

Your Inspection Administrator (IA) will be in touch very soon to confirm that your inspection box has all the paperwork you will need and to check if you have any immediate questions. This briefing note has been designed to help you to prepare for the inspection and to outline the kinds of activities which will take place during our time in your school. It sets out to answer some of the questions you may have as the inspection gets underway.

Please click on the link below which will take you to our Principles of Inspection and Review document:

[Education Scotland Principles and Frameworks - Inspection and Review](#)

The following link will take you to arrangements for inspecting schools in Scotland.

[Arrangements for inspecting schools in Scotland](#)

Throughout its inspections, Education Scotland aims to provide assurance to stakeholders. We also aim to promote improvement and successful innovation to enhance learners' experiences and achievements. Inspections also contribute to National Performance Framework (NPF) reporting.

We shall have a particular interest in how the school is developing and assessing children's and young people's skills and understanding in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. Strong provision in these three important areas enables children and young people to benefit from the best possible learning within the broad general education and beyond.

We no longer look in detail at four subject departments, as in previous inspection models. We shall however ensure that inspection team members with particular subject expertise have professional dialogue with relevant staff wherever possible.

We shall use what we learn during our time in school to evaluate the school's capacity to improve and to answer the following questions.

- How well do children and young people learn and achieve?
- How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?
- How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

These three key questions (above) will be answered clearly in the letter to parents and will be followed by text which explains our answers. At the end of the letter we shall provide an expression of confidence in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. We shall also indicate any continuing engagement activities planned for the school. You will find information about continuing engagement at the following link <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/about/principles/continuingengagement/index.asp>.

In providing answers to the three key questions, inspectors will use the following quality indicators from *The Child at the Centre* (second edition) (where there is a nursery class) and *How Good Is Our School?* (third edition) to support evaluations of the school's work and provide information on how the school can improve. In doing so, they will take account of the context and nature of the school and children's and young people's needs. They will also be using the Inspection Advice Note taking account of updated expectations relating to Curriculum for Excellence that was issued to all education authorities in June 2015. It can be found at this link [Inspection Advice Note 2015-16](#) and a paper copy has been included in your notification pack.

Inspectors will engage in discussions about how you are using *Insight* to support school improvements. Inspectors will also have a statistical summary report (SSR) and curriculum area and subject summary report (CASCA), based on data from *Insight*, to support professional dialogue. A copy of the SSR will be shared with you on the understanding that it will be used within your school and education authority for self-evaluation, professional reflection and benchmarking purposes only.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

- 1.1 Improvements in performance
- 2.1 Learners' experiences

How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?

- 5.1 Curriculum
- 5.3 Meeting learning needs

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

- 5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation

2. What should I do in advance of the inspection?

Please check Appendices 2, 3, 4 and information that came with the questionnaires for advice on what to do in advance of the inspection. Your Inspection Administrator and the Managing Inspector (MI) will offer further advice.

3. What should I expect on the first afternoon?

The team will arrive between 12.00 and 12.30 on Monday. The opening discussion will take place at a convenient time after your lunch break and will last approximately 1.5 hours. Your Managing Inspector will discuss with you in advance the best way to plan the afternoon so that we learn from each other and build on the information you will send us in your self-evaluation summary paper. Guidance on completion of the self-evaluation summary paper is contained at Appendix 2. You do not need to prepare a presentation as the discussion will focus on what you have written in your self-evaluation summary paper. You may wish to involve other members of staff and perhaps invite some children and young people to join the team at some point during the discussion. For example, you might ask a few children and young people from different stages to discuss with the team the kind of work they are leading. However, please remember that time is short and we want to make best use of the time available. Please invite your Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) or equivalent colleague from your authority to take part in the opening discussion. Your Managing Inspector will chair this initial meeting. He/she will invite you and your team to outline your priorities for improvement, how these have been arrived at through self-evaluation, and the progress you have made with them, along with the evidence of impact on learners so far. Some of these may become 'areas for focused attention' (see Appendix 2).

Please remember that the inspection team cannot and does not aim to cover all aspects of your school's work. Based on the opening discussion, and in line with the principles of proportionality and responsiveness, the team will begin to prioritise their activities over the week.

The opening discussion is likely to involve planning for activities on Tuesday and beyond, including visits to lessons, working with groups of children and young people, and discussion of specific aspects of the school's work with groups of children and young people or staff. Activities will be planned to reflect the range of practice highlighted in the opening discussion. Members of the inspection team will wish to engage with learning across and outwith the school. The Managing Inspector will invite you, or a nominated colleague (promoted or unpromoted), to accompany an inspector on some of these activities, to support professional dialogue about key features of learning and teaching.

Discussions around planning activities might also include:

- a focus on particular groups of learners (for example children and young people with additional support needs such as looked after and accommodated children and young people);
- a focus on features of learning and teaching which are having a major impact on children's and young peoples' experiences and achievements;
- areas of the curriculum which are attempting to meet a range of needs; and
- aspects which link to priorities in the improvement plan.

We shall usually invite the Chair of your Parent Council, as the parental nominee, to talk to our Lay Member (LM). The team will consider his/her views as we plan our inspection activities. This meeting may take place on either Monday afternoon or

Tuesday depending on the Lay Member's deployment time. The Inspection Administrator will inform you of the days the Lay Member will be in school.

After the opening discussion, we may break into smaller groups for more focused professional dialogue. For example, inspection team members may meet individual members of your management team who are leading on aspects of your work such as curriculum, learning and teaching or meeting learning needs at a strategic level. The Managing Inspector will discuss the options with you prior to the inspection.

At the end of the day on Monday, the Managing Inspector will meet staff to introduce members of the inspection team, brief them on the inspection and answer any questions they may have. Attendance at this meeting is voluntary for staff.

4. Tuesday onwards

Inspectors will undertake a range of activities over the course of the week. These are designed to provide us with information to answer the three key questions (see above) and offer opportunities to support the school to improve. The programme of activities will be informed by the opening discussion on Monday. It will involve class visits (including the nursery class where there is one), meetings with staff, children and young people, and reading key documentation. Some members of the team such as the Lay Member, Health and Nutrition Inspector and an inspector from community learning and development are in the school at different times in the course of the week. Details are as follows:

- The Lay Member will usually be in the school either Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning or all day Tuesday to meet parents.
- The Health and Nutrition Inspector will be in school from Tuesday morning to Thursday lunchtime. S/he will discuss their findings with you before leaving.
- During the inspection, an HMI from Community Learning and Development will be a member of the team for two days. This will normally be Tuesday and Wednesday.

As part of the inspection team, the HMI from Community Learning and Development will evaluate the contribution of the school to its community and the school's approach to partnership working. This will include partnerships delivering various aspects of the curriculum. S/he will also consider partnership approaches to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The following should be included in the programme for the two days:

- Meeting with the headteacher/senior members of staff regarding partnership work. It would be helpful if this was on the first day so that the inspector can get an overview of the school's approach;
- Meeting with local Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff;
- Meeting with teaching staff involved in partnership working;
- Focus group of young people;
- Focus groups of partners.

These meetings should be organised as follows:

- **Health and wellbeing:** A selection of partners supporting young people across the school. This will be conducted jointly with the Health and Nutrition Inspector.
- **Community partners:** for example youth groups, voluntary organisations, uniformed organisations, housing associations, local charities. This will be dependent on your school's local community and how you engage with them to deliver your curriculum.
- **Employability:** These could be Skills Development Scotland, colleges, local businesses, etc.

It is suggested that the above meetings should have **no more than eight people and last for up to an hour.**

The managing inspector will brief you on the meeting requirements for the Lay Member, the Health and Nutrition Inspector and the Learning Community Inspector and will send you a schedule to complete in advance of the inspection.

Once we are confident we have sufficient evidence, we shall meet you to share our findings using the three key questions listed above as the basis for dialogue. We shall also share our evaluations of the five quality indicators. Since the end point of the inspection is flexible, the sharing of findings may take place on Thursday afternoon or on Friday morning. The Managing Inspector will keep you informed so you can confirm the meeting time with any education authority representatives who might wish to attend. We would encourage you to have one or more of your colleague(s) at the meeting, typically members of your senior management team.

5. What engagement will staff, children and young people have with the team?

Inspectors will engage with children, young people and staff throughout the week. The team will meet different groups of children and young people for different purposes. For example we may discuss any issues from the inspection questionnaire or listen to how their views are sought and acted upon.

For members of the senior team, engagement will start with attendance at the opening discussion after lunch on Monday. For all other staff, it will begin at the end of the day on Monday when team members will meet staff (both professional and support staff are invited to attend) and answer questions about the inspection process. Professional dialogue takes place in a range of situations over the week, for example, during class visits, in focus groups, or at the voluntary session for staff at the end of the day on Tuesday, and the final discussion of findings. Meetings will be arranged with selected members of middle management to discuss aspects of school improvement. During the week, members of the inspection team, including the Lay Member, may also meet formally and informally with individuals and/or particular groups of support staff or members of the local community. Please take the opportunity to discuss potential individuals and/or groups with the Managing Inspector. There may be an opportunity for you to join one of the inspection team's discussions. It is important that all

engagement is seen as an opportunity to move thinking on and to learn from each other.

In small schools the Managing Inspector works on his/her own and arrangements for discussion will be planned flexibly around the teaching commitments of the headteacher.

At the end of the inspection, the Managing Inspector will ask how you plan to share the main messages with staff, parents, children and young people and members of the community.

Voluntary meetings with staff and the inspection team

The Managing Inspector will discuss with you the most appropriate format for the professional dialogue sessions at the end of Tuesday. This may involve groups of staff and a member(s) of the inspection team meeting to discuss topics of interest, for example: aspects of Curriculum for Excellence; developments being taken forward by working groups; practice that the inspection team should be aware of and, if possible, observe; or features identified in the opening discussion on Monday by the school and the inspection team. The Wednesday lunchtime drop-in session provides another opportunity for individual members or small groups of staff to meet with members of the inspection team. The purpose of these sessions is to talk on an individual basis to a member of the team about features of your work that you wish to share with us.

6. What engagement will parents have with the team?

The Lay Member will look at the impact of the school's partnership with parents. He/she will meet with the Chair of the Parent Council and will discuss the impact of the Parent Council in supporting the school and its improvement, as well as issues like the role of parents in their children's learning and communication with the school. In consultation with the Managing Inspector, the Lay Member may also take the opportunity to discuss with the Chair of the Parent Council any issues that have arisen from the parental and pupil returns to the Education Scotland questionnaire.

When parents complete the questionnaire, they are asked to indicate if they would be willing to meet a member of the inspection team, usually the Lay Member. They will be able to select from a number of possible time slots. The Inspection Administrator from Education Scotland will consider the most popular time(s) and contact the school to confirm the time(s) and place(s) for the meeting(s) of parents. The Inspection Administrator will then contact parents who have said they would be willing to meet the inspection team and confirm those who are able to attend. They will then arrange for the Lay Member to meet the group at the agreed time(s) during the inspection, usually Monday afternoon and/or Tuesday morning. The Inspection Administrator will also share the list of parents attending with you. At other times, the school might wish to ask the Lay Member or other members of the inspection team to meet another group of parents for a particular purpose. It may be appropriate to have meetings with individual parents.

At the end of the inspection, the Chair of the Parent Council will receive a confidential copy of the draft letter for parents and will be asked to provide any feedback on the

sections most relevant to parents. This can be done either through the headteacher or through a direct response to the Inspection Administrator. In all cases, the Chair of the Parent Council will be asked to confirm that he/she has received the letter and to indicate whether he/she has comments to make. After publication, the Chair of the Parent Council will also receive a confidential copy of the detailed Record of Inspection Findings (RIF). This will allow him/her, in close consultation with the headteacher, to share the main messages and background to inspection findings with the parent body to assist in supporting improvement in the school.

7. What happens after the inspection?

We aim to provide you with a draft copy of the letter for parents, usually within seven working days of the end of the inspection. This draft letter which will answer the three key questions, expresses our confidence in the school's ability to improve the quality of its work and highlights the key strengths of the school. The letter will not include evaluations of quality indicators on the six-point scale. This information will be sent to you in a separate document and will be published online as part of a range of information, including outcomes of the questionnaires. At the same time, the education authority and Chair of the Parent Council will receive a draft copy of the letter. You, the Chair of the Parent Council and the education authority will be asked to provide any comments or suggested corrections to the letter within one working week of receiving it. The Education Scotland Area Lead Officer will engage with the education authority about the inspection as part of his/her on-going liaison activities. Where necessary, the Managing Inspector and the Area Lead Officer will discuss with you and the education authority any issues about further inspection or other continuing engagement with the school.

We shall publish the letter within ten working weeks of the end of the inspection. You and the education authority will receive a copy of the Record of Inspection Findings three working days after the letter is published and the Chair of the Parent Council will receive a copy of the Record of Inspection Findings within five working days. If there is no further inspection or continuing engagement, the inspection process will then be complete.

Appendix 1: The PRAISE Framework

Best Practice Framework for Education Scotland inspections and reviews

The Framework is based on data gathered from: representative samples of experienced inspectors from Education Scotland and heads of organisations that have been inspected; and feedback from post inspection questionnaires.

The following principles were identified as underpinning best practice:

Purpose – being clear about the overall purpose of the inspection and retaining this throughout. Creating a shared agenda with staff in the organisation and amongst members of the inspection/review team.

Relationships – building and maintaining constructive relationships throughout the process as the basis of a high quality inspection/review.

Awareness – maintaining a high level of awareness of the context in which staff are operating, of their feelings and reactions to the process and of the inspector's own approach and its impact.

Information gathering – careful inquiry to gather and analyse evidence. Retaining an objective stance, testing assumptions and assimilating data before evaluating.

Sharing information – communicating thoroughly throughout the process to prepare and inform staff. Encouraging staff to be open in providing their perspective and providing appropriate feedback as the inspection/review progresses.

Enabling – treating people with respect, engaging them in professional dialogue, recognising their efforts and providing feedback in a constructive way to encourage ownership and learning to take place.

Appendix 2: Guidance for the self-evaluation summary paper

Please return the completed paper 6 days before the inspection

In consultation with your authority, please provide a summary of no more than three pages of A4 which illustrates, under the three key questions in the letter:

- the key strengths of the school; and
- areas for development and next steps.

Your staff will know the school's strengths and areas for development. However, you may wish to share the self-evaluation summary paper with staff so that they are aware of what the school has submitted.

In your self-evaluation summary paper please tell us how you promote success for all and also how the school (including the nursery class if appropriate) is taking Curriculum for Excellence forward. This completed paper will act as the basis of discussions with the team on Monday afternoon including the selection of 'areas for focused attention'.

Context of the school

(eg aims, and distinctive features, roll, area served; basic structure/terminology of stages; overall management structure. Please include relevant aspects of the nursery class.)

How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

(You may wish to summarise overall approaches to encouraging personal achievement and improving attainment, including performance in national examinations and the impact of key partnerships. You should refer to the relevant QI themes for learners' experiences and improvements in performance. You may wish to include outcomes around health and wellbeing.)

Existing Strengths

Priorities for future development

How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?

(You may wish to refer to the GIRFEC agenda and partnership working. You should refer to the relevant QI themes for curriculum and how well learners' needs are being met. In particular please refer to the Inspection Advice Note for 2015-16 in relation to the curriculum.)

Existing Strengths

Priorities for future development

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

(You may wish to include approaches to and the impact of self-evaluation; the

improvement planning process and current priorities for CLPL; and leadership for learning including engagement with parents and key partners. You should refer to the Inspection Advice Note 2015-16 in relation to the improvement through self-evaluation.)

Existing Strengths

Priorities for future development

How do you ensure equality and inclusion and promote diversity across the school?

You may wish to refer, for example, to

- *Have staff had training on equality and diversity?*
- *How effectively does the school promote education for diversity and equality across all aspects of the curriculum?*
- *To what extent is the school successful in ensuring that culture and language, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and additional support needs are not barriers to participation and achievement?*

What would you suggest as possible areas for focused attention by the inspection team?

We are interested in one or more aspect(s) of the school's work which might serve as examples of how the school has brought (or is bringing) about improvement: how did you identify the aspect(s) for improvement?; how do you plan and implement the improvement?; what has been the impact?

Appendix 3: Documents to be provided

Please send **ONLY** the following items (electronically if possible) to your inspection administrator prior to the inspection. These should be returned 6 working days before the inspection.

	Item	✓
1.	A copy of the most recent and previous annual report you issued to parents on the standards and quality of the school's work.	
2.	A copy of the current and previous school improvement plan.	
3.	Names of all teaching and other staff, and details of their responsibilities. Where applicable please provide details of qualifications for nursery staff. Please indicate any job sharing arrangements.	
4.	School, class and visiting teachers' timetables and support agencies such as educational psychologist, speech therapist, EAL teacher.	
5.	Staff responsible for/closely involved in health and wellbeing, including catering staff and key partners.	
6.	Information about how children and young people's achievements (including attainment) are gathered and tracked.	
7.	Self-evaluation summary paper.	
8.	Completed safeguarding/child protection proforma.	
9.	Completed meetings schedule.	

Your inspection administrator or managing inspector will send the pro forma for 8 and 9 to you by email.

Appendix 4: Documents to be provided

Please provide the following information in the HMI base on Monday of the inspection week. **THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT TO SEND THIS IN ADVANCE.**

Item	√
Achievements	
Information used by the school to monitor and evaluate school and children's and young people's performance, including wider achievements.	
Access to pupils' progress records (PPRs).	
Information about children and young people's performance over time, including performance in national examinations and any available benchmarking data.	
Support for children and young people to develop and learn	
Outline of arrangements for contacts, visits and sharing information on children and young people's achievements and learning needs at points of transfer.	
List of children and young people with additional support needs and brief details of support provided. Details of children and young people with regular/long-term absence.	
List of children and young people who are looked-after at home and away from home.	
Access to records of complaints, bullying and racial incidents, accidents, administration of medicine.	
Brief details of any established/regular contacts with individuals or organisations in the local community.	
Information about your curriculum e.g. curriculum overview, course choice information.	
Improvement	
Any guidance for teachers and/or staff handbook (if available).	
List of professional learning activities carried out during the last session and planned for this session.	
Sample of agendas and minutes of Parent Council meetings, pupil council meetings and staff meetings.	
Information used by the school to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching.	
Health and Wellbeing	
If your school inspection team includes a health and nutrition inspector, please provide a cycle of menus and nutritional analysis.	

Communication	
A sample from different stages/ year groups of reports for parents regarding children's and young people's progress/learning.	
Examples of school communications with parents and the wider community e.g. newsletters, prospectus, parent handbook.	

Please also provide the following information:
 Copies of school timetables
 Copies of a plan of the school building(s).