

Briefing note for Chair of Parent Council of primary, primary and nursery class, special and secondary schools being inspected from August 2016

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1. What are the key features of the inspection?

As Chair of the Parent Council, you will be interested to know that Education Scotland will shortly be inspecting your child's school¹. Following a two and a half week notification period, a team of inspectors will visit your school. The inspection team may include HM Inspectors from Education Scotland, and team members from schools and other educational organisations.

In all inspections, gathering the views of parents and carers is important to us. We consider your views carefully, as a key part of the evidence we gather. We are particularly interested in what you, as Chair of the Parent Council, think about the school and how it is doing and how well the school engages with parents in children's learning. A member of the team (usually the Lay Member (LM)) and possibly one of the other team members, will try to arrange to meet with you on the Monday or Tuesday of the inspection, to allow for a full discussion of your views.

2. What happens before the inspection?

Once the headteacher has received their notification, the administrator who supports the inspection will contact them to discuss the administrative arrangements.

The headteacher is asked to let the learners, staff, parents and partners know about the inspection and share with them, the link to the online survey which we use to gather their views of the school.

The information we receive is confidential to the inspection team. We do not tell anyone else where our information comes from, unless there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of individuals.

Part of the online survey process is to invite parents and carers to attend a meeting with the inspection team during the course of the inspection week. The administrator will contact parents and carers directly to invite them to meet with the team. The administrator will liaise directly with the school regarding arrangements which includes meeting with you as the Chair of the Parent Council.

For more information about the inspection and the online survey, please visit our [About inspections and reviews](#) pages on our website or speak to the administrator.

3. What happens during the inspection?

The headteacher provides a briefing for the inspection team on the first day of the inspection. The headteacher summarises how well he/she thinks the school is doing, its strengths and areas for development, any improvements that have taken place, and the differences these have made for children/young people. The inspection team will look at key aspects of the work of the school, taking account of its context and any additional support needs of its children/young people. Inspectors will have discussions with children and staff, observe learning, and may also work with groups of children/young people to explore their learning and progress. We also discuss a statistical summary of the responses to the survey with the headteacher.

¹ Where this note states "school", it also refers to early years and child care settings. Where it uses the term "headteacher", it includes heads and managers of these early years and child care settings.

The LM will usually arrange to meet you on the Tuesday of the inspection. Discussions usually last for around 30-40 minutes and focus on:

- how well the school works in partnership with parents and carers;
- the involvement of parents and carers in the school improvement plan;
- examples of how parents and carers work with the school to support children's/young people's learning; and
- how well the school consults with the Parent Council and parents and carers.

This meeting forms a key part of the evidence we gather about the school, and will be considered as part of the overall inspection evidence. We will be interested to hear about the difference the Parent Council has made to the school, and what you think the school does well.

The LM will also meet with a group of parents and carers. These discussions form another important part of the evidence we gather about the school, to complement the survey of parents and carers. Individual comments made in discussions and on the survey are confidential.

4. What happens after the inspection?

We prepare a draft letter, providing a brief summary of the main strengths and areas for development from the inspection. We send you a confidential draft for your comment usually within ten working days following the inspection. We also send the draft to the headteacher and the education authority or Board of Governors, as appropriate. This draft letter is sent to you in strict confidence and you should not share it with anyone else, other than discussing it with the headteacher or education authority or Board of Governors, as appropriate. You are invited to comment on how the draft letter identifies the strengths of the school from a parental point of view. You are also asked to highlight any important parental concerns. Your comments will be considered, in confidence, along with those invited from the headteacher and education authority or Board of Governors, as appropriate.

We aim to publish the letter from the inspection, on our website, within ten working weeks of the end of inspection; the administrator will email the publication letter to you. We will publish a fuller document called the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) which we will send to the school and education authority or Board of Governors, as appropriate, for an accuracy check before publication. We also publish a statistical summary of the responses to the survey where applicable on our website, except in the case of very small schools where individual members of staff, parents and carers and/or children/young people might be identified.

The Parent Council will wish to consider the outcomes of the inspection, for example by discussing these at a future meeting of the Parent Council, and normally engaging with the headteacher.

We hope this note provides you with all the information you need about the inspection. However, you can find further information about inspections at www.educationscotland.gov.uk.

We would also welcome feedback on your views of the inspection, to take into account as we develop our approaches to inspection and review.