

Members of External Reference Group
Directors of Education

2 February 2016

Dear Colleague

Future approaches to inspection and review: further information

I wrote to you in August with information about our plans to try out some new inspection and review models over the course of 2015-16. These are approaches which had been suggested to us or found favour during extensive engagement with stakeholders. You can find out more at [Future approaches to inspection and review](#). This letter is to give you an update on what has happened so far, and on our plans for this term and beyond.

In November/December 2015, we tried out two new approaches to inspection and review.

1. Short school inspection visits to a small sample of primary, secondary and special schools, nine schools in total. Five of the schools were given a two-week notification period, and four were given a two-day notification period. All nine of these shorter school inspection visits involved a small team of HMIs visiting the school for two and a half days. Inspectors had a specific focus on raising attainment and achievement, how the school is addressing the need to close the equity gap; and teaching, learning and assessment. The letters to parents have now been published for five of these schools, with others due for publication over the next few weeks. We have begun a process of formal evaluation, with school staff, parents and learners being invited to give us their feedback on the 'try-outs' to inform future plans.
2. A localised cross-sector thematic review relating to the senior phase curriculum. We worked in the Moray Council area and spoke with learners, parents and learning providers in a range of educational settings including secondary schools, community learning and development and Moray College. We evaluated how well senior phase pathways are supporting young people to achieve appropriate positive destinations. The report following this review is still in draft form. We are working with Moray Council and partners to evaluate the review process.

At a meeting in December 2015, our [External Reference Group](#) gave us some early feedback on 'try-outs' so far. Inspectors have also evaluated the 'try-outs'.

In late February/early March 2016, we are planning to inspect a small sample of primary schools with nursery classes, and secondary schools, in a way that allows us to try out the use of a range of quality indicators (QIs) from *How good is our school?* (4th Edition) and draft QIs from *How good is our early learning and childcare?* We shall invite each school to select an additional QI it wishes to be evaluated. The additional QI will be agreed between the headteacher and the Managing Inspector. All schools will have a notification period of two and a half weeks. We shall ask schools at the time of notification to submit their most recent Standards and Quality Report to support the discussion and agreement around the additional QI. The size of the teams will be dependent on the size of the school and the time spent in school will usually last from Monday lunchtime until Friday lunchtime. We shall be

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

T
F 0300 244 9443
E inspectionreview@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Textphone 01506 600236

This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as this will not connect.

www.educationscotland.gov.uk

Transforming lives through learning

inspecting jointly with the Care Inspectorate in some of the primary schools. Following these inspections, we shall publish a brief letter to parents but we shall not publish any quality indicator gradings using the 6-point scale.

Our Area Lead Officers will liaise with local authorities involved in this next round of 'try-outs'. Once again, we shall in due course seek stakeholder views on how well the 'try-outs' have gone and use this feedback to inform our future plans. In the summer term, we intend to try out some additional approaches, including a neighbourhood review. We shall be contacting you again soon to explore which local authority might be involved in the neighbourhood review. Based on this work throughout 2015-16, it is our intention to have new models for school inspection finalised in time for the beginning of session 2016-17.

As we have done throughout this consultation, we shall keep all stakeholders informed as this work progresses. If you have any particular questions or comments about these 'try-outs', please get in touch with us using the dedicated email inspectionreview@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alastair Delaney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alastair Delaney
Director of Inspection