

Briefing note for headteachers/managers of early learning and childcare settings

Please share this with all staff

1. Introduction

By now, you will be aware that an inspector or inspection team will soon visit your early learning and childcare setting. The team is looking forward to working with you and your colleagues. Inspection is about improvement. To this end, we will engage in professional dialogue throughout the inspection that will be mutually beneficial. Inspectors use a best practice set of principles which encourages them to carry out inspections in a constructive and positive manner. This is called the PRAISE framework and details are included in Appendix 2.

Your inspection administrator will be in touch very soon to confirm that you have received all the materials 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 visit, and to outline the kinds of activities which will take place during the inspection. It aims to answer some of the questions you may have regarding the inspection.

The link below will take you to our Principles of Inspection and Review document:

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/index.asp>

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

[Arrangements for inspecting schools in Scotland](#)

We aim to provide assurance to stakeholders and to promote improvement and successful innovation. This will enhance children's experiences and lead to better outcomes for their learning.

We want to support the early learning and childcare setting to improve. To do so, inspectors will focus on the quality of children's learning and achievement. We will have a particular interest in how the early learning and childcare setting helps children to develop their skills and understanding in early literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, enabling them to access the highest possible learning within a broad general education and beyond.

We will use the Quality Indicators (QIs) from *How good is our early learning and childcare?* and will be publishing evaluations. The Managing Inspector (MI) will share his or her thinking with you during the sharing of findings about evaluations based on the new QIs.

The QIs we will be trying out from HGIOELC?:

QI 1.3: Leadership of change;

QI 2.3: Learning, teaching and assessment;

QI 3.1: Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion; and

QI 3.2: Securing children's progress.

In addition we would like to invite you to nominate and agree with the MI an additional QI from any section of How good is our Early Learning and Childcare? for use during your inspection. There will be no published evaluation for this QI. To help us with this discussion and support us in agreeing an additional QI, can you please **send your most recent Standards and Quality Report** electronically to the inspection administrator?

We will also focus on themes from other QIs: learning and development pathways from 2.2 Curriculum and impact on children and families from 2.7 Partnerships. There will be no evaluations published for these themes. We will continue to seek information regarding the effectiveness of arrangements for safeguarding and child protection.

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

Please check Appendices 1, 3 and 4 for advice on what to do in advance of the inspection. Please **send your most recent Standards and Quality Report** electronically. Your inspection administrator will offer further guidance if needed.

3. What should I expect on the first morning?

The team will arrive for the start of the day Tuesday morning. The opening discussion will take place at a convenient time following a brief introductory meeting with staff as available. The opening discussion or scoping meeting provides an important opportunity for us to learn from each other and build on the information you will send us in your self-evaluation summary paper. Guidance on requirements for the self-evaluation summary paper is contained at Appendix 1. You do not need to prepare a presentation as the discussion will focus on what you have already written. You may wish to involve other members of staff to join the team at some point on Tuesday morning. However, please remember that time is short and we want to make best use of the time available.

Please invite your link officer or equivalent colleague from your authority to take part in this discussion. Your MI will be happy to chair this initial meeting. She/he will invite you and, where appropriate your team, to explain the key improvements you have been making and the progress you have made, including the impact on children's learning. You may also wish to highlight why you selected your possible areas for focused attention as set out in the self-evaluation summary paper. The team will discuss with you areas for focused attention to help prioritise their activities over the next few days.

The opening discussion is likely to involve planning for activities for Tuesday morning onwards. These will include visiting playrooms to see episodes of children's learning, engaging with children or discussing specific issues with parents/carers or staff at a suitable time. These will be chosen to reflect the range of practice highlighted in the opening discussion. This will allow members of the team to engage with learning across the early learning and childcare setting. You, or a nominated colleague, may

wish to accompany an inspector on one or two of these visits, to allow ongoing professional dialogue about key features of learning and teaching.

Discussions around planning activities might also include:

- gathering evidence of the way in which all stakeholders contribute to improvement across the setting and the impact their involvement has brought about;
- a focus on features of learning, teaching and assessment which are having a major impact on children's learning;
- how the setting supports and develops children's health and wellbeing, inclusion and equality;
- a focus on the progress being made by particular group of children (for example, children with additional support needs, those who had different patterns of attendance or those who are more vulnerable, including those who are looking after);
- parents/carers and their involvement in the early learning and childcare setting; and
- aspects which link to the 'choice' QI agrees prior to inspection beginning.

Towards the end of the afternoon, the MI will meet staff to talk with them about the choice QI and their contribution to improvement in their setting.

4. What's next?

Inspectors will engage in a programme of activities over the course of Tuesday, Wednesday and into Thursday. These activities are designed to provide us with information related to the set and choice QIs and themes as well as offer opportunities to support the early learning and childcare setting to improve. Inspectors will share the findings of the inspection when ready to do so, usually on Thursday afternoon/ Friday morning. This timescale will be regularly reviewed throughout the course of the inspection and its conclusion mutually agreed by all parties involved. It will be helpful if your link officer or equivalent colleague from your authority is present when we share our findings

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

Inspectors will engage with children and staff throughout the week. Dialogue will continue during playroom visits and, where possible, at a voluntary session for staff at an agreed time on Tuesday for discussion and sharing information. Where possible, there will be an opportunity for you to join team discussions to hear what the team has learned and plan for the next set of activities. It is important that all engagement is seen as an opportunity to move thinking on and learn from each other. Inspectors will talk to parents as they bring or collect children from the setting. A meeting time will be arranged for parents to meet as a group.

6. What happens after the inspection?

We aim to provide you with a draft copy of a letter for parents outlining our findings within seven working days of the end of the inspection. This letter will also contain Education Scotland QI evaluations. At the same time, the education authority will receive a draft copy of the letter. You and the education authority will be asked to provide any comments or suggested corrections to the letter during the following week. The Education Scotland Lead Officer for Early Learning and Childcare Inspections may contact the education authority to discuss the draft letter and, where necessary, any

matters about continued engagement with the setting. We will publish the letter within eight working weeks of the end of the inspection on both of our websites. The summary of inspection findings (SIF) document will also be published. You and your authority will have an early view of a confidential copy of the SIF to comment upon in advance of publication

If there is no need for additional support for improvement visits, the inspection process will be complete.

You, your staff, the chairperson of the Parent Group/Playgroup and parents, can access video clips, *A Guide to School Inspection*, at the following hyperlink:

<http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/resourcesandcpd/hmie/inspectiondvd.asp>

Appendix 1:

Please return the completed paper within 5 working days before the inspection

Self-evaluation Summary:

Please use this document to highlight key aspects of the school's work as a starting point for discussion with the inspection team. You are asked to focus on the three key self-evaluation questions from How Good is our *Early Learning and Childcare (2016) p3* and to consider how you triangulate your evidence to ensure your evaluative judgements are robust. Please keep the information as clear and concise as possible using bullet points to indicate high level evaluative messages which can then be teased out during discussion at the start of the inspection. 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.

Inspection of **insert name of establishment**

Insert name of council Council

SEED No: **Insert SEED number**

Headteacher:

Insert Date:

Quality Indicators from How good is our Early Learning and Childcare?	How well are you doing? What's working well for your learners?	How do you know? What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?	What are you going to do now? What are your improvement priorities in this area?	How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOELC? six-point scale?
1.3 Leadership of Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the ELC setting and its</i>				

<p><i>community</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strategic planning for continuous improvement</i> • <i>Implementing improvement and change</i> 				
<p>Quality Indicators from How good is our Early Learning and Childcare?</p>	<p>How well are you doing? What's working well for your learners?</p>	<p>How do you know? What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?</p>	<p>What are you going to do now? What are your improvement priorities in this area?</p>	<p>How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOELC? six-point scale?</p>
<p>2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning and engagement</i> • <i>Quality of interactions</i> • <i>Effective use of assessment</i> • <i>Planning, tracking and monitoring</i> 				
<p>Quality Indicators from How good is our Early Learning and Childcare?</p>	<p>How well are you doing? What's working well for your learners?</p>	<p>How do you know? What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?</p>	<p>What are you going to do now? What are your improvement priorities in this area?</p>	<p>How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOELC? six-point scale?</p>

<p>3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wellbeing</i> • <i>Fulfilment of statutory duties</i> • <i>Inclusion and equality</i> 				
<p>3.2 Securing children's progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in communication, early language, mathematics, health and wellbeing • Children's progress over time • Overall quality of children's achievement • Ensuring equity for all children 				
<p>Quality Indicators from How good is our Early Learning and Childcare?</p>	<p>How well are you doing?</p> <p>What's working well for your learners?</p>	<p>How do you know?</p> <p>What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?</p>	<p>What are you going to do now?</p> <p>What are your improvement priorities in this area?</p>	<p>How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOELC? six-point scale?</p>

Additional QI – please specify				
2.2 Curriculum: Theme 2: Learning and Development Pathways				
2.7 Partnerships: Theme 3: <i>Impact on children and families.</i>				

Appendix 2: 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 3: Documents to be provided

Please send **ONLY** the following items (electronically if possible) to your inspection administrator prior to the inspection.

	Item	✓
1.	A copy of the most recent and previous annual letter you issued to parents on the standards and quality of the early learning and childcare setting's work. (If applicable)	
2.	A copy of the current and previous early learning and childcare setting improvement plan.	
3.	A copy of your summary paper for Tuesday's discussion.	
4.	Names of all practitioners, and details of their responsibilities. Please indicate any job-sharing arrangements.	
5.	Arrangements for any visiting staff and support agencies such as educational psychologist, speech therapist, EAL teacher.	
6.	Complete staff qualifications template and return.	
7.	Completed safeguarding/child protection pro forma should not be sent electronically but should be filled in and handed to the MI at the beginning of the inspection	

Items 6 and 7 will be sent to you by your inspection administrator.

Appendix 4: Documents to be provided

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

	Item	✓
1.	Number of children on roll, including a note of those who attend other settings or who attend on a full-time basis.	
2.	Detailed information used by the early learning and childcare setting to monitor and evaluate setting and children's performance, including the quality of learning and teaching.	
3.	Available evidence on children's progress and wider achievements.	
4.	List of children with additional support needs and brief details of support provided. Details of children with regular/long-term absence.	
5.	List of looked-after and looked-after and accommodated children.	
6.	Sample of children's progress records.	
7.	Sample of letters for parents regarding children's progress in their learning.	
8.	Examples of early learning and childcare setting's communications with parents and the wider community, eg newsletters, prospectus, parent handbook.	
9.	Any guidance for practitioners and a staff handbook (if available).	
10.	List of professional learning carried out during the last session and planned for this session.	
11.	Examples of the early learning and childcare setting's planning.	
12.	Outline of arrangements for contacts and visits with other early learning and childcare settings and other educational establishments at points of transfer.	
13.	Brief details of any wraparound care or after-school care.	
14.	Sample of agendas and minutes of Parent Council/Playgroup/Board of Governors meetings and staff meetings.	
15.	Brief details of any established/regular contacts with individuals or organisations in the local community.	
16.	Access to records of complaints, bullying and racial incidents, accidents, administration of medicine and fire log.	
17.	Details of staff registration with other professional bodies such as Scottish Social Services Council and General Teaching Council of Scotland where applicable.	