

Principles of inspection and review



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Contents

1.	<u>Introduction</u>	1
2.	<u>What is HMIE?</u>	1
3.	<u>What are our core values?</u>	2
4.	<u>What do we inspect and review?</u>	2
5.	<u>What is our relationship with other scrutiny bodies?</u>	3
6.	<u>What are the purposes of inspection and review?</u>	4
7.	<u>What are the principles of inspection and review?</u>	5
8.	<u>What do these ten principles mean in practice?</u>	7
	<u>Appendix 1 – Information about Inspectors of Education</u>	13
	<u>Appendix 2 - What is the legal basis for inspection and review?</u>	14
	<u>Appendix 3 - An overarching framework for evaluating the quality of services and organisations</u>	16
	<u>Appendix 4 – HMIE Complaints</u>	17
	<u>Appendix 5 – Our PRAISE best practice guidance</u>	18

1. Introduction

This document tells you about the principles which HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) is committed to following in the design and implementation of our inspection and review frameworks. The principles have been developed in the context of Scottish Government policy on scrutiny improvement¹ and in line with the UK Cabinet Office principles for inspection bodies² and for better regulation³. The inspection and review frameworks cover all the different sectors of education and children's services provision which HMIE works in. They are in line with frameworks set up with other partners such as Audit Scotland for scrutiny of local authority services. The ten principles have been approved by HMIE's Management Board which includes independent members. These principles provide a key point of reference to inform the development of any new approaches to inspection or the review of any of HMIE's existing approaches. Beneath this set of principles, HMIE will develop and maintain a set of more specific inspection and review guidance which describes how we work in particular sectors or areas of provision. These show how our general inspection and review principles are being put into practice in the particular sector/area concerned. The full set of inspection and review frameworks will be placed in the relevant sector/area sections of the HMIE website as they become available. We have in place a range of mechanisms by which we evaluate and monitor our performance against these ten principles of inspection and review.

If you have any queries about this document please contact enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 01506 600 200.

[Back to Contents](#)

2. What is HMIE?

HMIE is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government⁴. As an Inspectorate, we contribute towards achieving the Government's overall purpose and its strategic objectives of creating a smarter, healthier, wealthier and fairer, greener and safer and stronger Scotland. We do this by promoting sustainable improvements in standards, quality and achievements for all learners in Scottish education through first-hand, independent evaluation. The Senior Chief Inspector is the senior professional adviser to Scottish Ministers on education. Appointment to the post of HM Inspector is subject to approval by Her Majesty at a sitting of her Privy Council, hence the term Her Majesty's Inspector of Education. Staff who are recruited as HM Inspectors of Education are highly qualified, have had successful professional experience in education and a proven track record in a significant leadership role (see Appendix 1).

[Back to Contents](#)

¹ *The Crerar Review*, page 21: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/82980/0053065.pdf>

² <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/opsr/documents/pdf/policy.pdf>

³ <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/brc/publications/principlesentry.html>

⁴ Executive Agencies are bodies established within the Civil Service to deliver designated functions on behalf of Ministers whilst exercising a high degree of operational independence in how they carry them out in practice.

3. What are our core values?

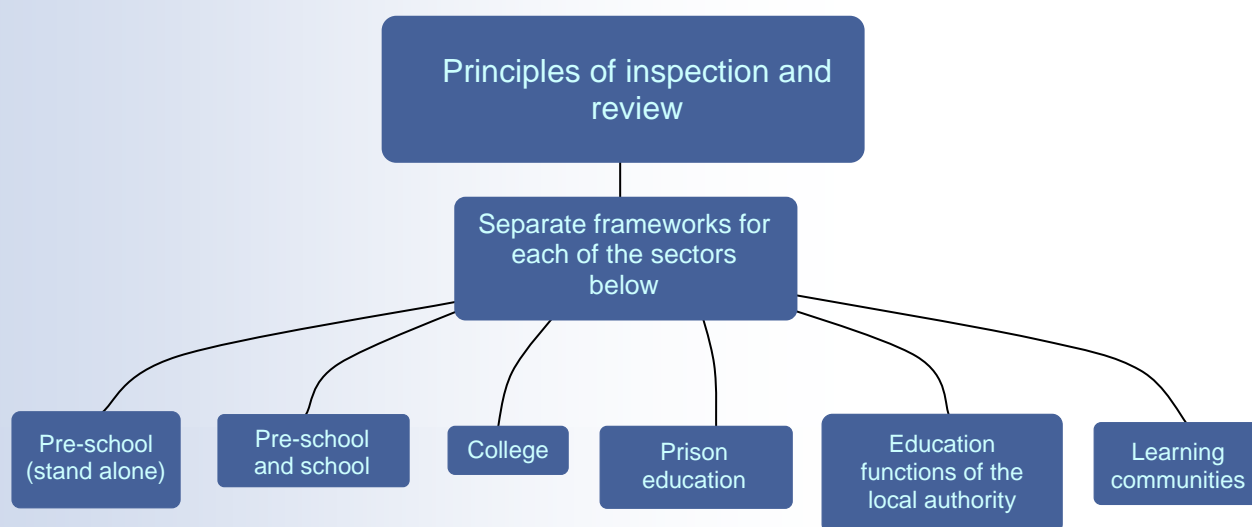
HMIE’s core values are: integrity; honesty; objectivity and impartiality. These values inform all of our work and are important touchstones to help us maintain and demonstrate our high standards.

[Back to Contents](#)

4. What do we inspect and review?

Our powers to inspect establishments and services are set out in a range of pieces of legislation, which are detailed in Appendix 2. We inspect and review in the following sectors or areas of provision as set out in the diagram below:

- early-education centres;
- primary schools, including those with nursery classes;
- secondary schools;
- special schools, including residential special schools and secure accommodation services;
- independent schools, including independent boarding schools and special schools;
- colleges;
- learning communities;
- education functions of the local authority;
- grant-funded national voluntary organisations (at the request of Scottish Government);
- teacher education in teacher education universities;
- prison education (at the request of HM Inspectorate of Prisons); and
- education and training through voluntary services.



[Back to Contents](#)

5. What is our relationship with other scrutiny bodies?

‘Scrutiny’ is a process of review that focuses on the effectiveness of the strategic delivery of services. Scrutiny bodies, including other inspectorates and regulators, investigate the delivery of services and highlight effective practice or weaknesses in provision. They can hold key officials, such as the Chief Executive, to account for decisions and policies and make suggestions for improvement.

HMIE works closely with a number of other inspectorates and regulators including the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and the Social Work Inspection Agency. This partnership approach covers the scheduling and participation in inspection such as the inspection of nursery and pre-school provision as well as joint tasks. While these informal arrangements for collaboration have been working well the *Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act, April 2010*⁵ has introduced a duty of cooperation which requires close cooperation between those scrutiny bodies listed in the Act. The listed authorities include among others, HMIE and two new bodies introduced by the Act, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) and Health Improvement Scotland (HIS).

HMIE plays a key role in the Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) process coordinated by Audit Scotland. This work is mostly about sharing the information each scrutiny body knows about local authorities with the other scrutiny bodies to create an assessment of each local authority. This risk assessment is then used to plan the work that each scrutiny body will do with each local authority.

We use information gathered from our establishment and service-level inspections to inform this process, with other information we have about education provision. Our involvement in the SRA process will include the principles outlined in this document.

[Back to Contents](#)

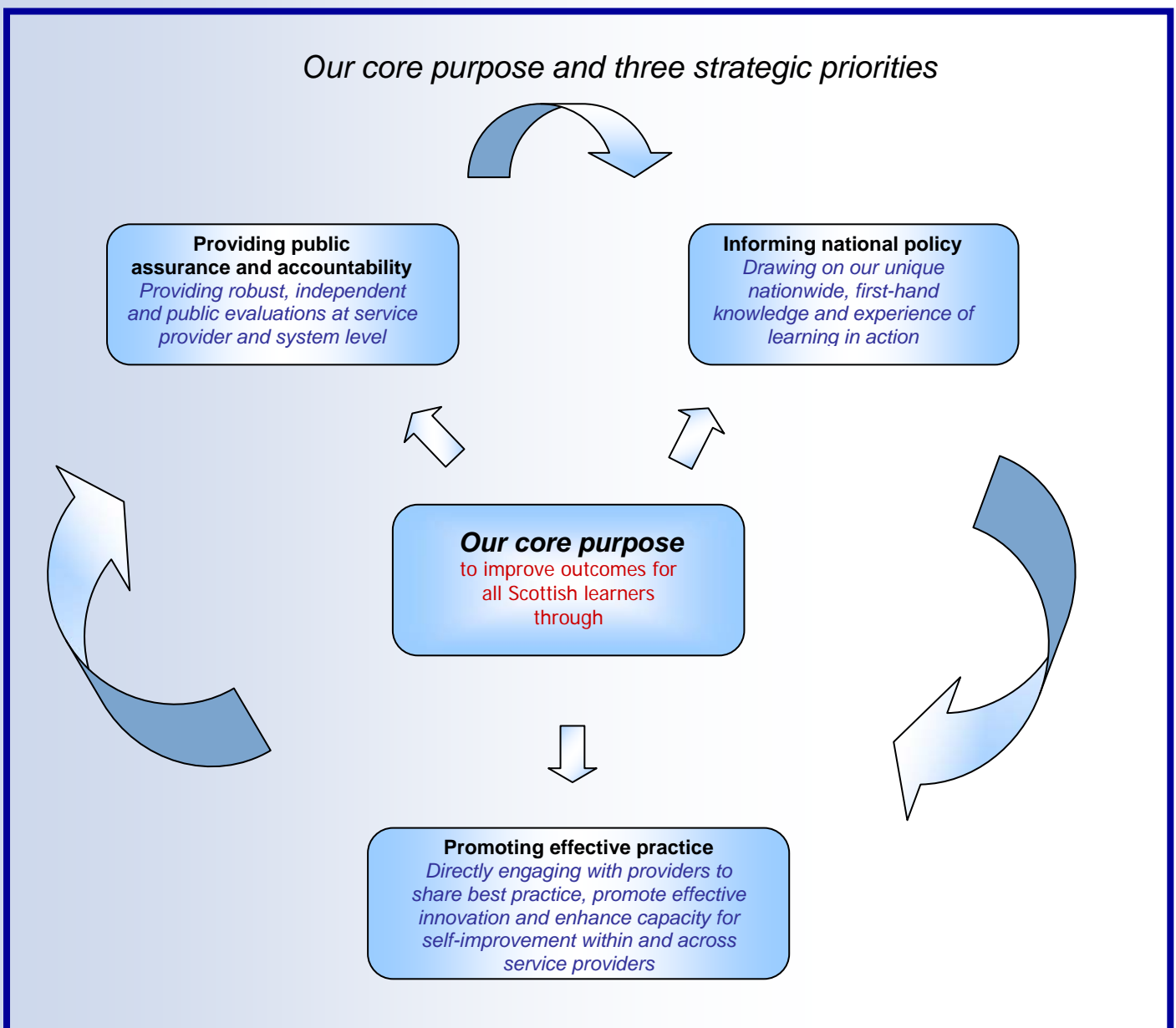
⁵ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2010/asp_20100008_en_1

6. What are the purposes of inspection and review?

Inspections and reviews are designed to serve our core purpose 'to improve outcomes for all Scotland's learners'. This is achieved through our three strategic objectives to:

- provide independent assurance and accountability to the users of education services regarding the quality of provision and outcomes achieved;
- provide a solid base of evidence drawn from professional evaluations of 'front line practice' to inform national policy development on education and children's issues; and
- promote the adoption of effective practice and assisting providers to increase their capability to self-evaluate and drive their own improvement.

These are set out in the diagram below.



When designing an inspection and review framework, we ensure that it helps to meet our core purpose and all three strategic objectives in an effective and efficient way. We aim to get the best out of our work by making sure that all three strands work together to promote improvement in an understandable and consistent way.

[Back to Contents](#)

7. What are the principles of inspection and review?

Our approaches to inspection and review have increasingly focused on the ability of an establishment or service to evaluate itself (which is referred to as 'self-evaluation'). We use its findings to take forward its plan to improve. We focus on the impact of the establishment or service on users and the quality of leadership and management in helping staff to achieve the best outcomes for users. We observe and evaluate practice at first hand and gain a view of what learners or other users experience.

Our inspection principles are built into the design of every specific inspection and review framework. Each of these is informed by the [over-arching framework for self-evaluation](#) (Appendix 3), which is altered for the type of provision or service being delivered in the sector involved.

The rest of this paper provides further information on the ten principles.

[Back to Contents](#)

Our ten underpinning principles



8. What do these ten principles mean in practice?

Independence, impartiality and accountability

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- listen carefully to the views of service providers and users but reach our own professional, evidence-based judgements;
- ensure an independent focus on raising educational standards, stimulating improvement and supporting the delivery of national and local outcomes;
- provide impartial and professional evaluations of the quality of educational provision in ways which give Scottish Ministers and users of our services assurance, accountability and a high degree of confidence in our work;
- establish clear standards and criteria against which establishments/services can be evaluated;
- maintain an objective stance, testing assumptions, checking evidence and building up a picture of provision before evaluating;
- apply inspection and review frameworks to allow us to report clearly on the quality of provision nationally and where appropriate, to national reporting systems;
- ensure that staff in establishments are aware of our feedback, comments and complaints policy (Appendix 4) which sets out how establishments or individuals can respond to their inspection or review and what will happen with their complaint;
- have clear lines of accountability to Ministers and the public; and
- comment impartially on the influence, impact and outcomes of policies to Scottish Ministers and users of services.

Having all learners or users at the heart of inspection and review

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- give priority to the experiences of all learners and users and evaluate how their learning needs and entitlements are being met;
- give priority to the interests and health and wellbeing of all learners and the outcomes they achieve;
- listen to and act upon the feedback from learners, users and other relevant stakeholders during inspections and reviews;
- report the findings of inspection and review in ways that are clear, concise and meet the needs and expectations of the users; and
- develop ways to increase the involvement of learners or users in all inspection and review models in line with our duty in legislation to have a substantial focus on and involvement of service users.

Equality and diversity

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- model good practice in challenging discrimination and promoting equality, leading to positive outcomes for all children, young people and adult learners;
- be aligned to legislative requirements and subscribing to the Scottish Government's schemes for Disability⁶, Gender⁷ and Race⁸ Equality 2008-2011, and taking account the *Equality Act, October 2010*⁹;
- seek information and views from a diverse range of learners, participants, staff and communities;
- look at the extent to which the establishment or service identifies key groups who may experience barriers to learning and progress, and take action to meet their needs;
- explore how the establishment or service responds to the requirements of equalities legislation; and
- identify good practice in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity and disseminate that good practice within and across sectors.

⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/DES2008>

⁷ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/12114733/0>

⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/28092741/0>

⁹ http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx

Transparency and mutual respect

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- give priority to building relationships and being open about our processes and evaluations;
- involve staff being inspected or reviewed appropriately in the inspection or review process to ensure that our work and evaluations are transparent ;
- base our inspections and review on frameworks that support self-evaluation and have been developed in partnership with key stakeholders;
- promote professional dialogue about the data which helps us to reach judgments about performance; and
- provide clear and well-evidenced evaluations and public accounts of our findings to inform stakeholders about the quality of provision in the establishment or service.

Observing practice and experiences directly: focusing on outcomes and impact

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- gather and analyse evidence based on first-hand experience of learners and/or users of services, interacting directly with learners, staff, parents, carers and other stakeholders;
- engage in dialogue with practitioners about the quality of learning and teaching we have observed;
- review the outcomes for all learners and focus on those who are underachieving; and
- continuously review how to achieve greatest impact from the knowledge of effective practice which is gained through inspections, reviews and other tasks.

Building on self-evaluation

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- start by understanding the establishment or service's self-evaluation;
- work with staff in establishments or services to identify key themes from self-evaluation which will help to focus inspection or review activity;

- specifically assess the effectiveness of the establishment/service's self-evaluation arrangements and, where we believe these are of good quality, place added reliance on the evidence produced by the establishment/service itself to streamline the inspection process; and
- report on the effectiveness of the establishment or service's self-evaluation and its capacity to improve.

Partnership working with the users of our services and other providers/scrutiny bodies

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- work constructively in partnership with providers in designing our frameworks and to develop consistency through shared protocols, training and agreed ways of working;
- actively seek to develop and enhance, where appropriate, joint activity which puts into practice our 'duty to cooperate' with other audit, inspection and regulatory bodies as laid out in the *Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act, April 2010*;
- inspire confidence in those being inspected/reviewed through partners working together in a joined-up, consistent way;
- ensure that activity is founded upon and responsive to professional engagement; and
- follow the [PRAISE framework](#) (Appendix 5) to ensure that all inspections and reviews are conducted in a positive, professional and constructive manner.

Improvement and capacity building

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- give priority to supporting improvement through constructive professional dialogue;
- promote a learning approach in order to learn from the knowledge and experience of others and share our knowledge and experience;
- encourage staff to share their innovative and highly effective practice and promote innovation during inspection and review activity;
- where appropriate, identify recommendations for improvement;

- make a professional judgment about an establishment's or service's capacity to improve and provide assurance or intervene in cases of weak service provision;
- continue to engage in follow-through activity to support improvement where necessary;
- train and include current serving practitioners (eg associate assessors) in inspection/review teams as a way of spreading knowledge and skills in evaluation across the education and children's services workforce; and
- seek to bring about improvement in standards and quality through supporting government policy-making with our evidence and advice.

Proportionality, responsiveness and assessment of risk

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- work in a targeted way to devote more resources to working with those establishments/services (or areas/aspects of provision) which are judged to be highest risk in terms of their potential adverse impact on learners or users;
- apply more proportionate, responsive and risk-based approaches in order to provide public assurance and report confidently on the quality of provision nationally at appropriate intervals;
- gather enough intelligence on a sector or a balanced sample of provision within the sector to report on best practice;
- make effective use of inspectors'/reviewers' and staff/provider's time during inspection and review;
- place the minimum necessary demands on providers that we are inspecting/reviewing prior to, during and after inspection and review and give the shortest appropriate notice of inspection and review to help avoid excessive preparation;
- ensure that the size of teams takes account of the nature of the establishment or service; and
- incorporate approaches to following through on inspections and reviews that are appropriate and proportionate to the seriousness of the specific weaknesses identified for cases where HMIE is not confident that the establishment or service can make any improvements necessary without further HMIE involvement.

Best value

This means that in all our inspection and review frameworks we will:

- promote best value in our inspections and continually review them to ensure they are efficient and effective and take action to modify or stop them if they are no longer necessary;
- continually review our approaches to ensure that we help others to benefit more fully from the most effective practice that we find, in ways that will have the greatest impact;
- reconfigure our resources to promote sustainability and concern for the environment;
- deliver benefits in proportion with costs, including those being inspected or reviewed and take corrective action where the evidence suggest improvements can be achieved; and
- seek out and capitalise on opportunities to work together with other scrutiny bodies, organisations and agencies on shared and cross-cutting themes in the interests of greater cost effectiveness.

[Back to Contents](#)

Appendix 1: Information about Inspectors of Education

All inspectors must have:

- a relevant degree, with first or second class Honours, or have other means to demonstrate achievement of an equivalent standard;
- an appropriate professional qualification for the delivery of education or training;
- successful professional experience in education; and
- proven success in a significant leadership role.

Duties and Responsibilities

All Inspectors undertake a programme of inspections or reviews across all education sectors or services for children. They inform parents, schools, colleges and other providers of education and the Scottish Ministers about standards and quality in education and services for children. They provide professional policy advice to the Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Government and others, and are engaged in a wide range of tasks which are intended to support improvement.

Management, organisation and staff development

Inspectors are expected to take on other substantial responsibilities as part of their role. Some, known as District Inspectors, carry particular responsibility for liaison with particular education authorities. Every college has a nominated College Inspector who liaises with the college and engages in evaluative, support and developmental activity. Others, known as Lead Inspectors, take the lead in aspects such as the primary curriculum or standards and quality in further education or child protection. There are others, known as National Specialists who will have responsibilities for areas such as asylum seekers, anti-bullying, autism or a subject or curriculum area. An experienced Inspector can expect, in any one year, to carry responsibilities such as:

- being a member of a significant number of inspection and review teams, including acting as the Managing Inspector for a number of those inspections or reviews;
- taking national responsibility for the work of HMIE in a particular area;
- responding to requests for policy advice in their area/s of expertise and responsibility;
- taking part in tasks such as monitoring the impact of the Teaching Profession for the 21st Century Agreement, supporting *Curriculum for Excellence* or contributing to the work of the Scottish Government; and
- being a member of a number of national working groups and committees.

They also participate in extensive continuing professional development, targeted to meet their needs and those of HMIE.

Appendix 2: What is the legal basis for inspection and review?

Our powers to inspect the range of establishments and services above are set out in a range of pieces of legislation. Detailed information about the legislation and relevant web links are set out below.

Schools and pre-school

HMIE's powers to inspect educational establishments and services for children are set out in legislation. These are set out in the ***Education (Scotland) Act 1980, section 66:***

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1980/cukpga_19800044_en_1

The ***School Education (Ministerial Powers and Independent Schools) (Scotland) Act 2004***, gave new powers of Scottish Ministers in particular circumstances to require action by schools and education authorities (EAs). It provides Scottish Ministers with powers to direct EAs and the managers of grant-aided schools to take specific action to secure improvement following inspections by HMIE.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004/asp_20040012_en_1

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 (ROCA) required HMIE and the Care Commission to collaborate in matters relating to the regulation and inspection of school care accommodation services, secure accommodation services and day care of children which is to any extent provided in the form of an educational activity. The provisions of this Act have been repealed and substantially re-enacted in the *Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010* which comes into force on 1 April 2011. This Act establishes two new scrutiny bodies, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) and Health Improvement Scotland (HIS). SCSWIS will take on the existing responsibilities of the Care Commission and SWIA along with responsibility for leading the joint inspection of services to protect children.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2001/asp_20010008_en_1

School care accommodation services

Within the 2001 ROCA (see above), HMIE and the Care Commission were also to collaborate in the inspection of school care accommodation services which include residential special schools and boarding provision in Independent schools.

Nutrition standards

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000) set out the role of HMIE in monitoring the implementation of the Scottish Nutrient Standards for school lunches. This is taken forward by health and nutrition inspectors as part of inspection teams.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2000/asp_20000006_en_1

Colleges

HMIE conducts its **reviews of colleges** and carries out its wide range of other quality enhancement activities in colleges on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council under the terms of the ***Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005***, section 13.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050006_en_1

Local authorities

The ***Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000)*** brought new statutory powers to HMIE to inspect the education functions of local authorities, including community learning and development (and hence the work of learning communities) and educational psychology services.

Child protection

The ***Joint Inspection of Children's Services and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Act 2006*** made provision for the carrying out a programme of joint inspections of services to protect children and young people led by HMIE. As a result of the government's response to the 'Crerar Review' of scrutiny bodies in Scotland responsibility for leading this programme of inspections will pass to the new body, Social Care and Social Work Inspectorate Scotland (SCSWIS), in 2011. Under the terms of the ***Public Sector Reform (Scotland) Act 2010*** HMIE will have a duty to cooperate appropriately in the with SCSWIS in the continued delivery of this programme, albeit not longer in the lead.

<http://childpolicyinfo.childreninscotland.org.uk/index/news-app?story=4329&category=11>

Teacher education in Teacher Education Universities

Paragraph 21 of the ***Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)*** gives the Secretary of State the power to call for the inspection of education and training provided by institutions within the higher education sector and states that such inspections shall be made by HM Inspectors or other persons appointed by the Secretary of State for the purpose.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/30/contents>

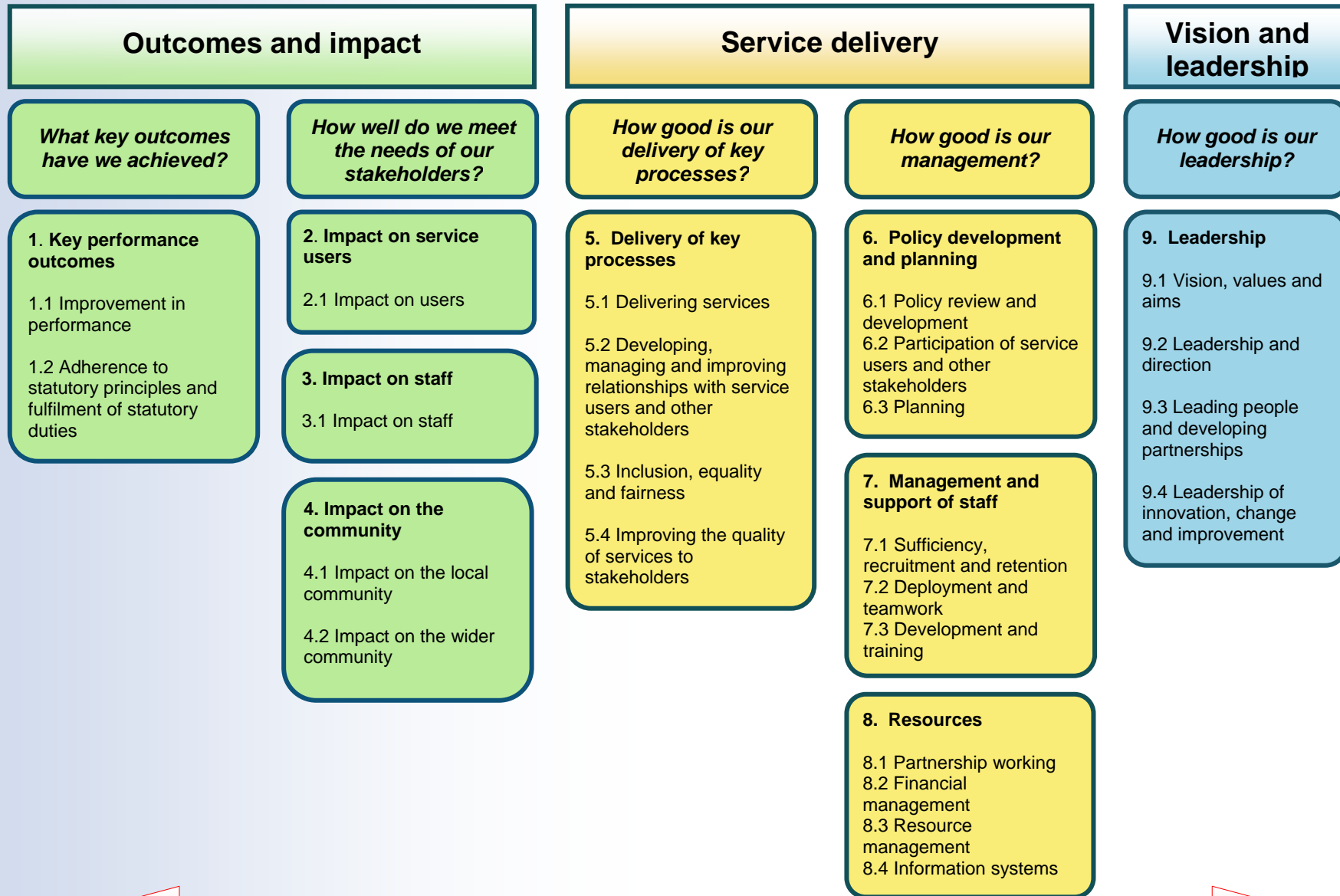
Prison education

Inspection of Learning, Skills and Employability (LSE) provision within Scottish prisons is the responsibility of the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland. HMIE contributes to the LSE inspection process and the overall report written by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

[Back to Contents](#)

Appendix 3: An overarching framework for evaluating the quality of services and organisations
 (A framework for evaluating the quality of services and organisations, HMIE, 13 March 2006)

Adapted from: A framework for evaluating the quality of services and organisations - 13 March 2006



← *What is our capacity for improvement?: How good can we be?* →

Appendix 4: What to do if you would like to comment on, compliment, or complain about the work of HMIE

- Our aim is to help improve standards, quality and learners' achievements in education and contribute to the wellbeing of the people of Scotland. We are committed to providing high quality services. One of the ways we can continue to improve is by listening to you. Your comments, positive and negative, and complaints help us to recognise high-quality work as well as to improve the services we provide.
- We welcome your views about the quality and impact of our work. Any suggestions you may have help us to improve the services that we provide. If you are pleased with what we have done, please let us know and we shall pass this on to the relevant members of staff. If you have a concern or complaint about our work, please also contact us. Even if you do not want to register an official complaint, your feedback may help us to deal with something we would otherwise overlook.
- All of our inspection and review reports include details of how you can contact a Chief Inspector or Director. Alternatively, you can contact our Complaints Manager, Business Management Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA, telephone 01506 600258/9.

You can find out more about our Complaints Procedure¹⁰ by visiting our website.

[Back to Contents](#)

¹⁰ <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/generic/complaints>

Appendix 5: Best Practice Framework for HMIE inspections and reviews

During inspections and reviews, inspectors aim to put HMIE's core values into practice, and to establish and maintain positive relationships at all times.

Our Best Practice Framework (PRAISE) is based on HMIE's core values and sets out detailed advice for inspection teams on how to conduct themselves in inspection and review. It provides descriptions of behaviours which are consistent with HMIE's core values, clustering them into guidance for reflection and self-evaluation by individuals and teams under the headings as shown below.

Purpose – being clear about the overall purpose of the inspection/review 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 – communication thoroughly throughout the process to prepare and inform staff. Encouraging staff to be open in providing their perspective and sharing findings as the inspection/review progresses.

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

Inspection and review works best when it is conducted in the spirit of partnership. HMIE use the PRAISE framework to guide behaviour and help inspectors and reviewers to develop positive working relationships with those who are being inspected or reviewed. In the most successful inspections and reviews, HMIE find that staff, adults and young people with whom they come into contact:

- view the inspection or review as a catalyst for further improvement;
- engage with inspectors and reviewers to enable them to conduct their visits in an open and constructive way;
- provide the information which will enable inspectors and reviewers to report accurately, fairly and reliably; and
- work with inspectors and reviewers to minimise disruption and bureaucracy.

[Back to Contents](#)