

Briefing note for headteachers of secondary schools being inspected from August 2016

Please share this information with all staff

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1. What are the key features of the inspection of my school?

This briefing note has been designed to help you to prepare for the inspection. It describes the kinds of activities which will take place during our time in your school. The note provides answers for some of the questions you may have about the inspection.

Through inspection, Education Scotland aims to:

- promote improvement and successful innovation to enhance learners' experiences and achievements, and
- provide assurance to stakeholders.

We take close account of the context and nature of the school. We undertake inspection activities only as far as necessary to provide a robust evaluation.

Inspections are informed by the PRAISE framework (Appendix 1), which we use to help us establish and maintain positive relationships with all involved. We intend that all our discussions and engagements with you and your school are opportunities to share and develop thinking, and to learn from each other. Throughout the inspection, team members will involve you and your staff in professional dialogue, with the aim of supporting improvement.

The administrator supporting the inspection will have already sent your notification email informing you of the date of inspection, where to find further information from our website which includes this briefing note and the online survey links and helpful tips on sharing the survey links with your stakeholders with the closing date of the survey. The administrator will then follow up with a call to you to discuss the administrative arrangements, confirm you have the necessary information and respond to any immediate enquiries.

Further information about our work is available from our [Principles of inspection and review](#).

Your inspection will involve a visit lasting up to a week from a team comprising of inspectors, and usually a Lay Member (LM). The Managing Inspector (MI) will outline the team to you soon during the first phone call to you.

Inspectors will use selected quality indicators (QIs) from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) (HGIOS? 4). These are:

- QI 1.3 Leadership of change
- QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement
- QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

The first three of these QIs will feed directly into the evidence base for the [National Improvement Framework](#).

- A further QI will also be chosen by the school. This could, for example, demonstrate areas for improvement recently undertaken in the school which you would like to explore in more depth with the inspection team. The inspection team will not assign an evaluation using the six-point scale to this QI.
- In addition, inspections will incorporate themes from other QIs to ensure we continue to capture the evidence we need to promote improvement and provide evidence to inform national policy development. These themes will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant.

- From August 2016, we will include the **Learning pathways** theme from **QI 2.2 Curriculum** and we will refer to **QI 2.7 Partnerships in evaluating the impact of parental engagement**.
- We will also continue to have a focus on safeguarding in every inspection.

We shall use what we learn about your school to produce a letter to parents and carers. The letter will indicate strengths of the school and aspects which need to be improved. We shall provide a statement of the confidence we have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. We will also let you know of any further inspection activities we will undertake as continuing engagement with the school.

At the end of the inspection we will produce our Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF). It will summarise our findings from all the evidence gathered during the week of the inspection. The main messages from this will form the basis for our sharing of findings meeting at the end of the week of the inspection. Sometime after the inspection we will return a draft of our SIF to the school and the education authority to provide an opportunity to check for accuracy. We will then publish the SIF on our website.

Inspectors will engage in discussions about how you are using **Insight** to support school improvement. Inspectors will also have a statistical summary report (SSR), based on data from Insight, to support professional dialogue. The SSR will be shared with you prior to the inspection on the understanding that it will be used within your school and education authority for self-evaluation, professional reflection and benchmarking purposes only. You will be asked to sign and return a form which you will receive from our statistics team as soon as possible so that the SSR can be sent to you. Please note that the SSR can only be sent to a gsx secure address or in a secure zipped file, which may require a software download to access. The MI will explain this to you further in the introductory telephone call and the statistics team will provide support should it be required to ensure that you can access the SSR.

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

For advice on what to do in advance of the inspection, please read:

Appendix 2	Guidance on completing the self-evaluation summary paper
Appendix 3	Documents to be provided in advance of inspection
Appendix 4	Relevant key documents which can be provided during the inspection
Appendix 5	Meetings required during the inspection week

Please contact the administrator should you require any clarification.

3. What should I expect on the first afternoon?

The team will arrive between noon and 12.30 pm on the Monday of the inspection week. The inspection team will gather together and have a brief team meeting. Before any inspection activity begins, the MI will meet staff at the end of lunchtime if possible 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. The MI will discuss this with you during an introductory phone call.

An introductory discussion, based on your completed self-evaluation summary, will take place at a convenient time after your lunch break and should last approximately one hour. Please invite your Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) or equivalent colleague from your local authority to take part in the introductory discussion. Please do not prepare a presentation. The MI will chair this introductory meeting. S/he will invite you and your team to outline your priorities for improvement, the progress you have made with them, along with the evidence of impact on learners so far. You should think in advance about the main points you wish to make in relation to these areas to the inspection team and include information on:

1. how well your school is raising attainment and achievement and making progress in closing the equity gap;
2. learning, teaching and assessment;
3. important features in the leadership of change; and
4. the agreed additional QI

The MI and the headteacher will meet at some point on Monday afternoon to discuss your approaches to safeguarding.

The MI and some members of the team will join the introductory meeting and other team members will begin inspection activities. The MI will discuss possible approaches with you, prior to the inspection, to use the Monday afternoon as productively as possible, including a start to visiting classes. 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 MI will discuss the options with you prior to the inspection. **Please remember that proportionality is one of our key principles of inspection and the inspection team cannot and does not aim to cover all aspects of your school's work.**

The introductory discussion is likely to involve planning further for activities on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning, including visits to lessons, working with groups of young people, and discussion of specific aspects of the school's work with groups of young people or staff. Activities will be planned to reflect the range of practice highlighted in the introductory discussion. Members of the inspection team will wish to engage with learning across, in and beyond classrooms.

The team will prioritise its activities for the remainder of the inspection, drawing on these introductory discussions, responding to key features of the school and its context. The MI will discuss with you any meetings that require to be planned or arrangements that need to be made for the Tuesday and Wednesday, and will agree a programme with you. Your help with these arrangements is greatly appreciated.

Discussions around planning activities might also include:

- a focus on particular groups of learners (for example young people with additional support needs such as looked after and accommodated young people);
- a focus on features of learning and teaching which are having a major impact on 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 an inspector and/or the LM. The inspection 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 LM's deployment time. The administrator will inform you of the days the LM will be in school.

4. What happens from Tuesday onwards?

Inspectors will undertake a wide range of activities over Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday if this is required, building on discussion at the introductory meeting on the Monday. Inspection activities will typically include visits to classes, working with groups of young people, reading key documentation and discussing specific aspects of the school's work with groups of young people and/or staff.

- The **Lay Member** will usually be in the school either Monday afternoon/Tuesday morning or all day Tuesday to meet parents.
- The **Health and Nutrition Inspector** will usually be in school from Monday lunchtime to Wednesday afternoon.
- During the inspection, an **HMI from community learning and development (CLD)** will be a member of the school inspection team for three days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). However, please note there is no inspection of the learning community at the same time as your inspection as may have happened in previous inspection models.

We shall meet with you at the end of the inspection which could be on Thursday or Friday to share our findings and evaluations, outline the strengths and aspects for development we have identified, and discuss possible next steps with you. We suggest you involve one or more of your colleagues at the meeting, typically promoted members from your team. You should also invite your associated QIO or equivalent colleague from your local authority to this sharing of findings.

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

Inspectors will meet with young people and staff for discussions throughout the week.

The team will meet groups of young people for different purposes throughout the week. For example, we may discuss any issues raised through the pre-inspection questionnaire or listen to their thoughts on how their views are sought and acted upon. The MI may also offer a drop-in session for young people to speak to inspectors individually or in small groups should they want to take up this opportunity.

For senior staff, engagement with inspectors will usually start with the introductory discussions after lunch on Monday. For some staff, this may begin on Monday afternoon with a classroom visit. However, all staff (teaching and non-teaching) will usually have the opportunity, at some point on Monday, to meet the inspection team, hear a short briefing, and ask 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, during voluntary discussion sessions and at the final discussion of findings. Meetings will be arranged with selected members of the school staff to discuss aspects of school improvement. During the period of the visit, members of the inspection team, including the LM, may also meet 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 MI. It is important that all engagement is seen as an opportunity to develop thinking further and to learn from each other.

The MI may invite you, or a nominated colleague (promoted or non-promoted), to accompany an inspector on one or more learning visits, to support professional dialogue about key features of learning and teaching. However, this is entirely voluntary.

There can be various **voluntary opportunities for staff to meet with the inspection team**. The MI will discuss with you the most appropriate format for professional dialogue sessions at the end of Tuesday. In discussion with the MI you should suggest two or three groups of staff to meet with a member(s) of the inspection team. This could be, for example, working groups taking forward aspects of the school improvement plan or staff leading on aspects identified in the opening discussion on Monday. Some members of the inspection team will be available at the end of Tuesday for a drop-in session 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 their work that they wish to share with us.

6. What engagement will parents and carers have with the team?

Our inspections take the views of parents and carers into close account, and seek to engage with them in a number of ways.

We will explore the quality and impact of the school's partnership with parents and carers. The LM usually meets the Chairperson of the Parent Council. Areas covered by the LM are likely to include the Parent Council's impact on supporting and improving the school, the role of parents and carers in their children's learning, and communication with the school. An inspector will also meet with the chairperson just before or just after the LM and may discuss issues that have arisen from the pre-inspection questionnaire, whilst strictly safeguarding the confidentiality of individual questionnaires. We are interested in the approaches the school is using to increase parental engagement in their children's learning.

When parents and carers complete our survey, they are asked to indicate if they would be willing to meet a member of the inspection team, usually the LM. The administrator supporting the inspection will contact those parents who have indicated that they would like to meet with the inspection team to confirm arrangements. The administrator will, throughout the inspection be a key point of contact for you, liaise with the school regarding the arrangements for the meetings, for example, times and locations.

The administrator will also share the list of parents and carers attending the meeting with you. At other times the school might wish to ask the LM or other members of the inspection team to meet another group of parents and carers for a particular purpose. It may be appropriate to have meetings with individual parents and carers. Please discuss this with the MI if you believe it would add to the value or effectiveness of the inspection.

Following the inspection, the Chair of the Parent Council will receive a confidential draft of the letter for parents and carers. S/he is asked to confirm receipt of the letter, and is invited to provide feedback, either through yourself, or through a direct response to the administrator.

7. What happens after the inspection?

As stated previously in this note, the inspection team will share their evaluations with you before they leave the school. These evaluations will subsequently be quality assured. As they will not have been through the quality assurance process at the point inspectors leave the school we ask that you do not share them out-with the education authority and your senior team until you receive the draft letter. You should however, share the high level messages with your school community and share the key strengths and aspects for development with your staff.

We aim to provide you with a confidential draft of the letter for parents, usually within ten working days of the end of the inspection. This draft letter will provide a statement of the confidence we have in the school's ability to improve the quality of its work, and will highlight key strengths and aspects for improvement. It will also inform parents and carers of what Education Scotland will do as a result of the inspection, for example in terms of any intended continuing engagement. You, the Chair of the Parent Council and the education authority will be asked to provide any comments or suggested amendments to the draft letter within one working week of its receipt. When finalised, the letter, including evaluations, will be published online as part of a range of information which includes analyses of questionnaire returns. We aim to publish the letter within ten working weeks from the end of the inspection. Where relevant, the MI will discuss with you and the local authority any proposal for continuing engagement with the school.

You and the local authority will receive a copy of the SIF after the letter is published. We ask that you check it for accuracy and make a return within one working week to the MI if possible. It will then be published on the Education Scotland website alongside the letter to parents. If there is no plan or commitment to further inspection or other continuing engagement, the inspection is complete. However, the Education Scotland Area Lead Officer will discuss the inspection with the local authority and will continue to monitor the school's progress as part of their on-going liaison activities.

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 on completing the self-evaluation summary paper

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

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 school? \(4th edition\)](#) p.9 and consider how you triangulate your evidence to ensure your evaluative judgments 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.

Self-evaluation summary for secondary schools: Self-evaluation summary: Click here to enter text., Click here to enter text.			
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 HGIOS?4 six-point scale?
QI 1.3 Leadership of change Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community Strategic planning for continuous improvement Implementing improvement and change			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment Learning and engagement Quality of teaching Effective use of assessment Planning, tracking and monitoring			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion Wellbeing Fulfilment of statutory duties Inclusion and equality			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement Attainment in literacy and numeracy Attainment over time Overall quality of learners' achievement Equity for all learners			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Additional QI: Click here to enter text.			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
2.2 Curriculum: theme 2 Learning pathways			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

2.7 Partnerships – theme 3 Impact on learners

The impact of parental involvement on improving and young people's learning.

Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text.

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Click here to enter text.

Appendix 3 Documents to be provided in advance of inspection

Please email **only** the following items to the administrator prior to the inspection. Unless specified, please return them at least **six working days** before the inspection.

	Item	✓
1.	The most recent and previous annual reports which you issued to parents and carers, on the standards and quality of the school's work. Return as soon as possible please after the initial email notification.	
2.	The current and previous school improvement plans.	
3.	Names of all teaching and other staff, and details of their responsibilities. Please indicate any job-sharing arrangements.	
4.	Names of any partners involved in supporting young people, including times when they may be in the school. Examples could include support agencies such as educational psychologist, speech therapist, EAL teacher, business partners supporting the curriculum, staff closely involved in health and wellbeing.	
5.	School, class and visiting teachers' timetables.	
6.	Your completed self-evaluation summary paper (Appendix 2)	
7.	Completed meetings pro forma.	

Appendix 4 Relevant key documents which can be provided during the inspection

If available, please provide the following information in the HMI base on Monday of the inspection week. There is no requirement to share in advance.

Item	✓
Whole school timetables (one for each member of the team please).	
Location plan/map of the layout of the school (one for each member of the team please).	
Year group lists of learners.	
Completed safeguarding child protection form (to be handed to MI on the first day of the inspection week).	
Information used by the school to monitor and track young people's performance, including wider achievements.	
Information about young people's performance over time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance in national examinations and any available benchmarking data. • performance in the broad general education across the curriculum, including performance in literacy and numeracy. 	
Information about current moderation work and moderation activities over the last two years.	
Access to pupils' progress records (PPRs).	
Outline of arrangements for contacts, visits and sharing information on young people's achievements and learning needs at points of transfer.	
List of all young people requiring additional support and brief details of support provided.	
List of young people who are looked-after at home and away from home.	
Details of young people with regular/long-term absence.	
Any available details from SDS about sustainability of young people's destinations on leaving school.	
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 the learning pathways in your curriculum e.g. curriculum overview, choice information, details of partnerships supporting the curriculum.	
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.	
If your school inspection team includes a Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI), please provide a cycle of menus and nutritional analysis. Your catering service provider will have this.	
A sample from different year groups of reports for parents regarding young people's progress/learning.	

Examples of school communications with parents and the wider community e.g. newsletters, prospectus, parent handbook.	
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- * Please note that confidential documents should only be made available at times when the inspection team is in school.

Appendix 5 Meetings required during the inspection week

The MI will discuss with you the meetings that will be required during the inspection week. S/he will send you a template to complete in advance of the inspection week, asking you to add details of the meetings, attendees and allocated rooms. As the team respond to findings during the week and work with you to gather evidence, there are likely to be on-going adjustments.

The meetings that will be needed include:

Monday

- Whole staff briefing (voluntary for staff).
- Introductory meeting to discuss self-evaluation.
- Possible meeting(s) with Chairperson of the Parent Council (depending on day LM is present).
- Meetings with parent groups (administrator will identify parents from pre-inspection survey returns) (depending on day LM is present).
- Meeting with senior member of catering staff (if HNI is present).
- Possible one-to-one meetings to start discussions with **members of the senior team** responsible for particular aspects of the work of the school.

Tuesday

- Meetings with parent groups (administrator will identify parents from pre-inspection survey returns).
- Possible meeting(s) with Chairperson of the Parent Council (depending on day LM is present).
- End of day: professional dialogue groups, drop-in session for staff.

Tuesday or Wednesday

- Meetings with groups of young people (can be agreed at the start of the inspection week)
- One-to-one meetings with **members of the senior team** (timings can be agreed at the start of the inspection week). This will include meetings with the relevant person on, for example, attainment and achievement, monitoring and tracking closing the gap, learning and teaching, assessment, improvement planning, leadership.
- One-to-one meeting with child protection coordinator to sign off the completed safeguarding form.
- One-to-one meetings with numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing coordinators (or member of staff responsible for these aspects) (timings can be agreed at the start of the inspection week).
- Meetings with partners.
 - Community partners, for example CLD manager, community planning/development officer, Third sector organisations, community council and any relevant local groups benefitting from young people' involvement. This will be dependent on your school's local community and how you engage with them to deliver your curriculum.
 - Employability for example relevant person from SDS, college, local businesses, local or school Opportunities for All team
 - Health and well-being partners, for example school counsellor, school nurse, school sports coordinator.
 - Meeting(s) with group of class teachers.
 - Meeting(s) with group of faculty heads/principal teachers.

Please note that for the meetings to be effective, there should be no more than eight people invited to any one meeting. Meetings should be planned for around one hour or the length of a school period. Where it is likely to involve the same member of the inspection team (e.g. LM) please leave around 15 minutes between meetings to allow the writing up of notes.

Friday

Discussion of findings (timing to be agreed with MI).