

School Inspections: support and advice for chairperson of Parent Council

**Primary School Inspections (includes
those schools with a nursery and those
inspected with the Care Inspectorate)**

This note explains the following:

- 1. What are the key features of the inspection?**
- 2. What happens before the inspection?**
- 3. What happens during the inspection?**
- 4. What happens after the inspection?**

1. What are the key features of the inspection?

As chairperson 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 chairperson 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) and possibly one of the other team members, will try to arrange to meet with you on the Tuesday of the inspection, to allow for a full discussion of your views.

2. What happens before the inspection?

You will receive:

- a copy of the notification letter to the headteacher;
- a copy of the pre-inspection questionnaires we use to collect views from staff; parents and carers; and children/young people if applicable; and
- the name and contact details of the Managing Inspector (MI).

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.

You will also receive a copy of the letter which is issued to all parents and carers. This letter explains what the team will be doing during the inspection, and the groups of people they will meet. Depending on the size of the school roll, some/all parents and carers will also receive a paper copy of a confidential questionnaire to complete. Parents and carers who do not receive a questionnaire as part of the defined sample can request a copy to complete and return directly to Education Scotland. We notify parents and carers that you, the chairperson of the Parent Council, will be invited to meet with a team member – usually the Lay Member, and/or another member from the inspection team as appropriate.

Parents will receive a letter notifying them of the inspection and explaining the arrangements for meeting with a team member.

We also ask a sample of children/young people from P4-P7/S1-S6, and all teaching and non-teaching staff, to complete a confidential questionnaire.

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.

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 questionnaires with the headteacher.

The Lay member 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 Lay Member 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 questionnaires to parents and carers. Individual comments made in discussions and on questionnaires 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 copy for your comment, via e-mail if available, usually within ten working days following the inspection. We also send a copy to the headteacher and the education authority. 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 if you wish. 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.

We aim to publish the letter from the inspection, on the Education Scotland website, within ten working weeks of the end of inspection; the Inspection Administrator will e-mail a copy of 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 EA for an accuracy check before publication. We also publish a statistical summary of the responses to questionnaires where applicable on the Education Scotland 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 this new type of inspection, to take into account as we develop our approaches to inspection and review.