

20 April 2016

Members of External Reference Group  
Directors of Education

Dear Colleague

### **Future approaches to inspection and review: further information**

I wrote to you in August, and again in February, with information about how we are trying out some new inspection and review models over the course of 2015-16. You can find out more at [Future approaches to inspection and review](#). This letter is to give you a further update on what has happened so far, and on our plans for this term and beyond.

As you know, in November/December 2015, we tried out two new approaches to inspection and review: short school inspection visits to a small sample of primary, secondary and special schools, nine schools in total, with some having a two-week notification period, and others a two-day notification period; and a cross-sectoral thematic review relating to the senior phase curriculum in the Moray Council area. The report on the thematic review will be published very soon.

Then in February/March 2016, we inspected a small number of primary schools with nursery classes, and secondary schools, trying 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?* This model involved inviting the schools to select one of the QIs to be evaluated. The letters following these inspections will be published soon.

During 2015-16, we have also tried out new 'place-based' inspections in the community learning and development sector, and have been working with key stakeholders on our approaches to reviewing colleges; careers information advice and guidance; and modern apprenticeships.

We have continued to engage with stakeholders to shape and evaluate these new approaches, including a further meeting of our External Reference Group in late March. As part of our evaluation strategy, we invited school inspectors from the Netherlands to join 'try-out' inspection teams in two schools in March. The Dutch inspectors focused on our approaches to gathering evidence and on the quality of professional dialogue. Their feedback on our work, which they are due to share with us later this term, will be very helpful as we finalise our new approaches to school inspection to be used from August 2016.

During the period April to June 2016, we shall be trying out some further new approaches as follows.

- Following a positive response by stakeholders to our two-day notice 'try-outs' in November 2015, we are planning six additional inspections of primary schools in May and June 2016 with a notification period of two days.

- In the week beginning 6 June 2016, inspectors will try out a 'Neighbourhood Review' in Angus Council. This is a cross-sectoral review involving a secondary school and its associated educational establishments and partners. This review will not focus on individual establishments but rather on how well learners progress through their education. The theme of this inspection will be transition.
- We shall inspect a small number of free-standing early learning and childcare settings using the new QIs from *How good is our early learning and childcare?*

Our Area Lead Officers will liaise with the local authorities involved in this next round of 'try-outs'.

Based on all our consultations, 'try-outs' and evaluations so far, a writing team is currently working on final plans for new models of school inspection to be used from August 2016 onwards. Our External Reference Group will meet again in late May, and details of new models will then be shared with all stakeholders in June.

If you have any particular questions or comments about any of our work on new inspection models at this stage, please get in touch with us using the dedicated email [inspectionreview@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:inspectionreview@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Alastair Delaney  
Director of Inspection