



# **School inspections are changing: Shape What's Next**



## **1. Introduction**

We're reviewing how school inspections work in Scotland - and we want your views. This consultation is a key part of our system-wide review. It will help us strengthen inspection as a driver of improvement and public assurance about the quality of education.

Your feedback will shape how we make inspections fairer, more transparent, and more focused on what matters most for children and young people.

## **2. What is the review doing?**

We're reviewing how school inspections work in Scotland and we're putting people's voices at the heart of that process. In the first phase of the review, HM Inspectors engaged with over 1,300 adult stakeholders. This included senior leaders, teachers and other staff that work in schools. We also engaged with local authority staff, professional associations and staff working in national education bodies. Our engagement has included:

- over 25 engagement sessions with a range of education practitioners.
- four national online events involving around 550 teachers and practitioners.
- a questionnaire – with 169 submissions received.
- the establishment of a Stakeholder Forum with representation from different parts of the education system representing teachers, local authorities, children, young people and parents.

We asked broad questions about what works well in current school inspection models, where challenges or unintended consequences exist, and how these could be overcome.

We also engaged directly with children and young people as well as organisations which represent their views:

- HM Inspectors have met with over 500 children and young people from different types of schools across Scotland
- Young people helped us design workshop materials to make sure we asked the right questions.

Children and young people told us some of the things about school and inspection that are important to them.

Our initial engagement shows that people have a range of views about inspection. For example, there are differing and varied opinions about the use of grades and how often school inspection should happen. These insights have shaped the development of this public consultation.

During the first phase of the review, the focus of engagement was aimed largely at the education sector. This consultation aims to explore key areas in more depth, and to ensure reach beyond the education sector, including from parents and carers. We want to ensure a wide range of views and experiences are represented and contribute to shaping how school inspection evolves in the future.

### **3. What is the purpose of school inspections?**

The Education (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent on 6 August 2025 and is now an act of the Scottish Parliament.

The [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#) sets out the purposes of inspection:

- recognising effective practice adopted by relevant educational establishments,
- promoting improvement in the quality of education in Scotland, including by—
  - (i) supporting relevant educational establishments to improve by—
    - (A) identifying areas for improvement,
    - (B) establishing where support may be required to make improvements,
    - (C) sharing effective practice,
  - (ii) sharing evidence to inform the development of education policy
- providing assurance to the public that the quality of education provided in relevant educational establishments is being assessed and that establishments are being held to account accordingly.

Further details about the package of measures set out in legislation can be found in the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#).

#### **4. We want your views**

To fully understand what's working in the current inspection system, and where improvements could be made, we want to hear your views. The consultation invites people to think about aspects of the school inspection process.

The areas that we would like you to consider cover the following themes:

1. People involved in inspection
2. Inspection frequency and selection
3. Use of grades in inspection
4. Notification of inspection
5. Pre-inspection
6. Design and content of a school inspection framework
7. Reporting on the outcome of inspections
8. Inspecting nursery classes
9. Inspection follow-up

#### **5. Who can complete the consultation surveys?**

Everyone, including children and young people can complete the consultation. We especially want to hear from those with experience of inspection and from those with an interest in how inspection works: children, young people and adult learners, parents/carers, teachers, practitioners, leaders and managers.

A dedicated version of the consultation, '**School inspections are changing: shape what's next: the views of children and young people**', has been designed to be age-appropriate and accessible for children and young people. Secondary school-aged young people may also choose to complete the wider education and public survey, rather than the children and young people version.

Running alongside the online survey, we are continuing to engage with children, young people, and education partners to explore key themes in more depth.

## 6. Where do I find the survey?

We are inviting responses to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space.

The wider survey, **School inspections are changing: shape what's next'**, can be accessed here:

<https://consult.gov.scot/education-scotland/school-inspections-are-changing>



The children and young people survey, **'School inspections are changing: the views of children and young people'** can be accessed here:

<https://consult.gov.scot/education-scotland/school-inspections-are-changing-cyp>



You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. **The survey will close on Wednesday, 26 November 2025.**

## **7. Accessibility**

If you are not able to complete the survey but want to share your thoughts, we also welcome alternative formats. This is particularly important for contributions from children and young people. Please use the question template provided on the consultation hubs on Citizen Space. If you would prefer to respond to the consultation in an alternative format, please send your submission to the following email address: [SchoolInspectionConsultation@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:SchoolInspectionConsultation@educationscotland.gov.scot)

## **8. Privacy and Data Use**

Please note: you are not required to provide your name or any personal information that will identify you. The 'About You' section in the online survey includes optional demographic questions to help us understand the range of people and perspectives taking part in this consultation. This consultation is being conducted in accordance with data protection laws and ethical research standards.

If you chose to respond to this consultation in a different way (not through the Citizen Space website), you can also complete the optional 'Respondent Information Form'.

All respondents should be aware that Education Scotland is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and must consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation.

## **9. What happens next?**

After the consultation closes, all online survey responses and any alternative submissions will be analysed along with a range of other available information and evidence.

A report summarising the findings of this consultation will be published.

These findings will inform our next steps. These will be shaped by what we have heard through this consultation, ongoing engagement and the priorities of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.

Separate impact assessments will be carried out as appropriate and published in due course.

## 10. Need help?

For further information on how we handle your response, please see **our privacy policy**.

The purpose of inspection is set out in the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#).

If you have any other questions, comments or complaints about how this consultation has been conducted please contact:

[SchoolInspectionConsultation@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:SchoolInspectionConsultation@educationscotland.gov.scot)