

Meeting	Stakeholder Forum: School inspection framework and models
Date	23/01/2025
Time	10:00-11:30
Venue	Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Members of the Stakeholder Forum are as follows:

Organisation	Name	Attendance
Inspectorate: Head of Inspection	Louise Turnbull (LT)	Apologies
Inspectorate: Strategic Director	Patricia Watson (PW) CHAIR	✓
Inspectorate: Head of Inspection	Lesley McEwing	Apologies
Inspectorate: HM Inspector	Fraser Forsyth	✓
Inspectorate: Project Officer	Isabella Morrison MINUTES	✓
General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)	Victoria Smith	Apologies
The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) Scotland	Rod McCready Mike Corbett	Apologies ✓
Association of Directors of Education	Lyndsay McRoberts	Apologies
School Leaders Scotland	Kirsty Ayed	✓
Comann nam Pàrant	Magaidh Wentworth	✓
Bord Na Gaidhlig	Jennifer McHarrie	Apologies
Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES)	Barbara Coupar	Apologies
Children in Scotland	Chris Ross	✓
Scottish Government	Judith Tracey	✓
Scottish Government	Tracy Manning	✓
Non-executive Education Scotland Board Member	John Fyffe	✓
Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)	Christina Fleming	✓
Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA)	Seamus Searson	✓
Association of Headteachers and Deputes in Scotland (AHDS)	Greg Dempster	✓
Education Scotland	Heather Robertson	✓
Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES)	Paul McWatt	✓
Association of Headteachers and Deputes in Scotland (AHDS)	Tim Wallace	✓
Education Scotland	David Burgess	✓

Welcome and apologies

The Chair (PW) welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a round of introductions. Apologies were noted.

Previous meeting

Members confirmed that they are content with finalising the minutes shared from the previous meeting.

Overview of progress since last meeting

PW shared a PowerPoint presentation and provided an update on progress. This detailed stakeholder engagement across Local Authorities (LAs), children and young people (CYP) engagement workshops, Young Advisors Office of Commissions in CYP in Scotland and staff recently engaged in inspection activity. The Post-16 and CLD teams have also initiated engagement with young people. Discussion points:

- Members queried if engagement with teaching staff would be wider due to a small number of schools inspected in the past two years relative to the number of schools in Scotland.
- There was also query as to whether this engagement was to gather views on inspection activity or the system and frameworks currently in place. A member of the HMI project team was able to confirm that invitations have been sent to groups online for headteachers and separate groups for classroom teachers. This has started with those recently involved in inspection, however, there is planned engagement for a wider group of teaching staff. Those unable to attend meetings/workshops, there is a QR code with a link to a Microsoft form. This is open ended to gather views from as many as possible. There is an aim to provide a summary of teacher view by the end of February 2025.
- Members want to ensure that messaging to support staff is clear and that they are invited to engagements. Members also noted that support staff may face barriers with an online form and suggest a focus group from support staff already signed up to engagement elsewhere. PW confirmed that the team will consider this and would welcome additional opportunities to hear their views.
- Members queried how views and feedback are being categorised and what quality assurance is in place. HMI provided an overview of the approach which has been used across all engagements. This approach has been designed to ensure consistency in engagement and allow for a robust analysis of views gathered. PW confirmed that the project team have established an approach to deliver the same presentation and prompts to ensure that engagement is grouped around the main themes. Questions may evolve and be refined along the process which aligns with the stakeholder engagement approach. Opportunities have been coming through from a wide range of stakeholders. Different members of the inspectorate project teams have been involved in different stakeholder groups to ensure engagement is broad and thorough.

Next steps:

- Aim to provide feedback from teachers.
- Reach out to PLL and/or Curriculum Improvement Cycle around use of provocations to support engagement

Key themes arising so far through engagement

PW shared a PowerPoint presentation and provided an update on the key themes that are arising so far.

Discussion

PW invited members for their thoughts on the engagement process and the views gathered from engagement thus far:

Challenging current frameworks and models

- Members queried what challenge and provocations are being made to ensure that open question answers are not based on the current system. Open questions and blank page discussions are strongest when there is opportunity to extend thinking beyond what is currently in place. HMI confirmed that this will be brought to the project team to consider if more structure is needed to ensure that there is not a belief that we have bias or leading questions. Members would also like to hear more from research– look at international approaches to scrutiny, beneficial to hear more about implementing innovative change

Inspection grades

- Members noted that the measures that schools are judged on is a snapshot of attainment, current measures of schools success are outdated and can promote unhealthy competition. Noted that the narrative is more important. Members interested to hear about the mixed feedback surrounding grading as this is contradictory to their own experiences and the voices from their organisations. Suggestion that HGIOS is unyielding and we could look at Estyn in how they conduct inspection activity.
- Inspectorate need to look at a broader range of issues that come during inspection. A school can get a good inspection report, however, this may come at the cost of teaching staff who work long stressful hours to achieve this. Experiences of those in the school are not currently captured and not reflective of real world context.
- Inspection reporting can be viewed as reductive as focus is on the grades

Decision making

- Members wonder who has responsibility for decision making using the mixed opinions regarding notifications and inspection grades as an example of divided opinion.
- The purpose of this forum needs to be clarified as some feel that decisions could be made in this forum based on the feedback gathered from stakeholders or if the purpose is to provide critical challenge.
- Members would welcome an opportunity to have deep discussions in person.

Scrutiny and improvement

- Members compared inspection scrutiny to LA scrutiny. Despite recent positive experience of inspection, the LA approach is qualitative and focuses on continuous support which is more beneficial to the school and LA. Suggest opportunity to create a collaborative approach or ensure that inspections are qualitative. Forum membership seem to be in agreement that the narrative is more important than grades.
- Query if the system is ready for complex change. Feedback already suggests that change should be built on what is already in place.
- Should inspections be more risk based rather than routine as it is easy to fall into a compliance model.
- School notifications will inevitably cause stress, however, staff wellbeing is an issue, regardless of notification or not as the preparation for inspection is stressful. Once the inspectors are in school, this feels more supportive, however, the build up to the inspection week does cause stress/anxiety.
- How can continuous improvement be supported when a school is not due for inspection and what would the role of the LA and the inspectorate be, where does responsibility lie.
- Lots of feedback from those in school that there is pressure to hide school issues and have things implemented very quickly that they haven't been doing in reality. Inspectors may be led down a misleading path and school staff can feel resentful that some issues in the school don't get picked up due to the desire for a positive grade at SLT and LA level. Members have had chats about the severe pressure coming up to inspection and the pressure to make the school appear different to inspectors than the reality.
- *Members wonder what inspection would look like for denominational settings and how we ensure we have the expertise and training to undertake evaluative activities in denominational settings. Ensure this is considered in framework developments. Members were reassured that stakeholder engagement was wide ranging and included through the lens of the denominational sector. LT also advised that there is engagement with national multifaith groups as part of stakeholder engagement.

Children and young people

- Engagement with CYP may be best held with adults they trust and have relationships with or the inspectors take the time to get to know these CYP groups. Also applied to inspection activity, inspectors need to build relationships and rapport to get an accurate depiction of the school. The

change from HGIOS3 to HGIOS4 was a focus on leadership, for the next iteration in terms of children's rights approach, the approach could be extended explicitly to CYP. Lay Members in the younger age group may provide valuable insight with young people engagement groups.

- Ensure that a rights based approach is fully embedded in the inspection process. A suggestion to do this would be ensuring the Lundy model of child participation is used to gather feedback from CYP.

PW thanked all for their discussions and will seek to clarify the purpose of this forum. PW confirms that we need to look closely at feedback and ensure thorough analysis. Potential risk in developing frameworks at one time, however, there is also huge potential synergy.

Next steps: Consider scheduling an in person meeting for the members of this forum.

TOR – Comments and finalised Version

Invite any final comments in the coming weeks so that we can finalise the TOR by February forum.

AOB and date of next stakeholder forum

The next meeting is planned for **27th February 2025 at 10am, via Microsoft Teams.**

Summary of next steps:

- Aim to provide feedback from teachers.
- Consider scheduling an in person meeting for the members of this forum.
- Reach out to PLL and/or Curriculum Improvement Cycle around use of provocations to support engagement

Meeting end.

*27/02/2025: Updated.