



Her Majesty's Chief Inspector blog on school inspection findings

When I was speaking at the Scottish Learning Festival in September last year, I highlighted to delegates that I was introducing a new approach to the Chief Inspector Report.

HM Inspectors have a key role gathering evidence and providing a professional view of quality and improvement in Scottish education system. I want to ensure that our scrutiny work continues to add value by making sense of the totality of the evidence they gather.

As stated in our Corporate Plan: 'Use the findings from scrutiny to support the identification of priorities for improvement in education at local, regional and national level and across all sectors of Scottish education.'

Rather than publishing a report every three to four years we will now publish a series of briefings and reports on inspection findings on an ongoing basis. This will take the format of an on-line web based resource designed to provide a range of professional learning materials which can be used by staff in schools and local authorities to support continuous improvement in practice.

We view our scrutiny work as being a crucial tool to support and promote improvement. We would urge you to reflect on your own practice and approaches and by comparing them to the key messages and evidence contained within our briefings and reports consider where you are on your journey to improve outcomes for learners.

This 'school inspections findings' briefing is the first in the series of briefings we will publish based on our inspection findings for session 2018-19. It provides summary findings for each of the quality indicators which are evaluated as part of inspections of schools.

You will see that our inspection evidence shows that schools are continuing to build on the key strengths in Scottish education. It is clear that **effective school leadership** is ensuring the need for change is well understood by the school community with strong buy-in to raising attainment and addressing the poverty-related attainment gap. Strategies to raise attainment include improving learning, teaching and attainment in literacy and numeracy with supporting and improving children's and young people's wellbeing being a high priority for schools.

Collaboration and participation in career-long professional learning are key drivers for improvement. Our evidence demonstrates that this is impacting well on staff developing a clearer understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school community as well as developing a shared understanding of standards through participation in moderation activities within and across schools.

Staff understanding and use of nurturing approaches is also developing well and having a positive impact on children's and young people's engagement and behaviour. Effective professional learning in inclusive practices is also leading to young people in secondary schools feeling included, respected and valued.

We are also seeing teachers and senior leadership teams demonstrating increasing confidence in using a range of data more effectively to plan for improvements, target support and put in place suitable interventions especially within literacy and numeracy to address gaps in attainment and achievement.

Learner participation continues to develop through a range of opportunities for children and young people to express their views and influence decision making through pupil councils, focus groups and committees. Increasingly, high-quality learner conversations encourage rich dialogue between teachers and children and young people is focusing on evaluating progress and agreeing areas for development.

In order to deliver sustainable improvement in our education system and achieve our national vision of excellence and equity we need to work together to address the following key challenges and areas for improvement:

1. [Achieving consistently high-quality learning and teaching within and across schools and sectors that empowers children and young people to lead and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.](#)

2. [Continuing to improve the reliability and validity of teachers' judgements of children's and young people's progress and achievement across all curriculum areas in the broad general education.](#)
3. [Further develop approaches to supporting children and young people to learn about all aspects of equality and diversity in progressive and relevant ways.](#)
4. [Further improve approaches to monitoring and tracking of children's and young people's progress, skills and attainment over time to support the analysis of trends, gathering evidence of the effectiveness of interventions in place to support children and young people and to monitor and evaluate the impact of change and improvement on outcomes for learners.](#)

As you consider our findings I would ask you to make full use of the challenge questions contained within the briefing to reflect on your own practice. These questions supplement those already contained in *How Good is Our School?* 4th edition and have been tailored to reflect areas of improvement identified through our school inspections last academic year. These questions are designed to promote discussion and support

your own approaches to self-evaluation as you identify priorities for improvement.

The 'school inspections findings' briefing is accompanied by a presentation, which summarises the key messages and is designed to be shared with teams and groups of professionals working at all levels across the system for discussion, debate and reflection. We have also signposted in our briefing examples of highly-effective practice, identified during the inspection process which have been developed into sketchnotes. Each sketchnote is accompanied by a blog from the establishment describing their practice. I hope by sharing 'what works' we can promote further improvement and collaboration across establishments.

I hope that this briefing, along with the briefings which will follow in coming months, will help educators across schools be aware of what is working well and what needs to improve nationally as a means of opening up discussions supporting continuous improvement.

GAYLE GORMAN
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of Education*

25 February 2020