

Briefing note for headteachers of schools and heads of early learning and childcare (ELC) settings

Please share this information with all staff

This note contains the following information

1. What are the key features of the inspection of my school or early learning and childcare setting?	2
2. What should I do in advance of the inspection?	4
Pre-inspection questionnaires	4
3. What should I expect on the first afternoon?	6
4. What happens from Tuesday onwards?	7
5. What engagement will staff and children have with the team?	8
6. What engagement will parents and carers have with the team?	9
7. What engagement will partners have with the inspection team?	9
8. What happens after the inspection?	10
Sector-specific Information	10
Senior Phase	11
Gaelic Sector	11
Independent Sector	12
Appendix 1 The PRAISE Framework	13
Appendix 2 Completing the self-evaluation summary form	14
Appendix 3 Documents to be provided in advance of inspection	17
Appendix 4a Key documents which can be provided during the inspection for the school ...	18
Appendix 4b Key documents which can be provided during the inspection for the nursery class/ELC setting	19
Appendix 5 Meetings required during the inspection week	20

1. What are the key features of the inspection of my school or early learning and childcare setting?

This briefing note has been designed to help you to prepare for the inspection. It describes the type of activities, which will take place during our time in your school/Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting.

The note provides answers for some of the questions you may have about the inspection. This is a guide and inspection activity may differ as we take account of your context.

Through inspection, Education Scotland aims to:

- provide assurance and public accountability;
- promote improvement; and
- inform the development of educational policy and practice.

We will take close account of the context and nature of the school/ELC setting. We will undertake inspection activities only as far as necessary to provide a robust evaluation. Our inspections and reviews are always proportionate. This means that we only seek the evidence that we need. As with all inspection models it also means that teams will observe a sample of lessons/carry out playroom observations; and meet with a sample of children and young people, parents and stakeholders. The inspection team will not cover all aspects of your school's/ELC setting's work. It is important that your staff are aware of this.

We recognise the challenges arising in leading continuous improvement while managing the impact of the pandemic. We recognise that many senior leaders have streamlined their approaches to strategic planning and prioritised areas that are likely to have the greatest impact on learners' experiences and outcomes. We have produced an [inspection advice note](#) which provides details on how HM Inspectors will reflect the COVID-19 context in inspections from August 2022.

Inspections are informed by the PRAISE framework ([Appendix 1](#)), which we use to help us establish and maintain positive relationships with all involved. We intend that all our discussions and engagements with you and your school/ELC setting are opportunities to share and develop thinking, and to learn from each other. Throughout the inspection, team members will involve you and your staff in professional dialogue, with the aim of supporting improvement.

Your own self-evaluation document is important. We will use this as the starting point of our inspection. This helps the inspection team to take account of the context and nature of the school/ELC setting.

Further information about our work is available from our [standards and evaluation framework](#).

You have been notified of the inspection in an email from the inspection administrator (IA) who is supporting the inspection. It will have informed you of the date of inspection and details of where to find further information from our website. Early learning and childcare settings, primary schools with a nursery class, all-through schools and independent schools will be informed at this stage if the inspection involves joint working with Care Inspectorate colleagues. Your notification email will also contain links to an online pre-inspection questionnaire and helpful tips on sharing the questionnaire links with your stakeholders. The closing date for completing the pre-inspection questionnaire will also have been shared with you in this email. The IA will follow up the notification email with a telephone/Teams call to you to discuss the

administrative arrangements, confirm you have the necessary information and respond to any immediate enquiries. The Managing Inspector (MI) will telephone you soon after this to arrange the inspection visit with you. It is important to highlight to the IA during the initial conversation any additional provision in your setting such as a special unit, and/or Gaelic Medium provision and learning of Gaelic within English Medium.

Your inspection will involve a visit lasting up to a week from a team of inspectors. The team may consist of a combination of HM Inspectors (HMI), a health and nutrition inspector (HNI), associate assessors (AA) and/or assistant inspectors (AI). If your setting offers Gaelic Medium Education, a specialist inspector will lead this part of the inspection. HM inspectors sample Gaelic Learner Education as part of the annual programme of inspection. This may be led by a specialist inspector. A lay member (LM) may join the team for a day. There may also be occasions where Care Inspectors will join the team. The MI will outline the inspection team to you and the exact dates that the team propose to visit your school during the first phone call/Teams meeting. The MI will discuss with you the meetings that require to be planned across the week and ask you to compose a draft activities schedule in advance of the inspection.

We recognise that schools and ELC settings are familiar with the quality improvement frameworks, [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Schools/ELC settings are continuing to use these quality frameworks and quality indicators (QIs) for their own self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Therefore, we will continue to use these frameworks as the focus for our inspections for session 2025-2026. Gaelic and English versions of our self-evaluation frameworks are available [here](#). In inspections of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner Education we will use the '[Advice on Gaelic Education](#)' to contextualise quality indicators to Gaelic.

Inspectors will use selected quality indicators (QIs) from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) (HGIOS? 4). These are:

- QI 1.3 Leadership of change
- QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

If you are an early learning and childcare setting or have a nursery class in your school, inspectors will use QIs from [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) (QIs in line with those from HGIOS? 4). These are:

- QI 1.3 Leadership of change
- QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- QI 3.2 Securing children's progress
- QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

These QIs will feed directly into the evidence base for the [National Improvement Framework](#).

The Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors is not articulated to total immersion. HM Inspectors will continue to use the 'Advice on Gaelic Education' to ensure that quality indicators are evaluated to take full cognisance of high-quality Gaelic Medium Education.

In addition, inspections will incorporate themes from other QIs to ensure we continue to capture the evidence we need to promote improvement and provide evidence to inform national policy development.

The themes we will explore during the inspection are the **Learning pathway** theme from **QI 2.2 Curriculum** for schools and the **Learning and developmental pathway** for the nursery class or early years setting and we will refer to **QI 2.7 Partnerships in evaluating the impact of parental engagement**. We will also continue to have a focus on safeguarding in every inspection.

We will not be asking schools/ELC settings to identify another QI as part of full model inspections. Instead, we want to continue to spend time listening and learning from settings and schools about their own current priorities and ongoing challenges as they continue to respond to the impact of the pandemic. We will use the time to support practitioners to continue to improve and focus on key priorities to aid recovery.

We will produce our Summary of Inspection Findings (SIF). It will summarise our findings from all the evidence gathered during the week of the inspection. This will include the Care Inspectorate's evidence where there is a shared inspection of the nursery class/ELC setting. Where there is a nursery class/ELC setting there will be a separate SIF. The main messages from the SIF will form the basis for our sharing of findings meeting at the end of the of the inspection.

We shall use what we learn about your school/ELC setting to produce a letter to parents and carers. The letter will indicate the strengths of the school/ELC setting and aspects which need to be improved. We shall provide a statement of the confidence we have in the school's/ELC setting's capacity to improve the quality of its own work and share evaluation grades for the four QIs. If we plan to undertake any further inspection activities this will also be outlined in the letter. After the inspection, we will return a draft of our letter to the school/ELC setting, local authority and chair of the Parent Council to provide an opportunity to check for accuracy.

The letter and SIF will be published on Education Scotland's website. In schools and settings offering Gaelic Medium Education, the letter will be available through the medium of Gaelic and English. The SIF and letter will have summarised findings on Gaelic, with the letter detailing a strength and a next step for improvement. The inspection letter will be published in Gaelic to meet the interests of speakers of Gaelic.

2. What should I do in advance of the inspection?

We aim to carry out inspections in a way that seeks to minimise burden on staff and keep paperwork required to a minimum. We will ask for your self-evaluation summary in advance of the inspection.

For advice on what to do in advance of the inspection, please read:

Appendix 2	Guidance on completing the self-evaluation summary form
Appendix 3	Documents to be provided in advance of the inspection
Appendix 4a	Relevant key documents which can be provided during the inspection
Appendix 4b	Key documents which can be provided during the inspection for the ELC setting, including nursery classes
Appendix 5	Meetings required during the inspection week

Please contact the inspection administrator should you require any clarification.

Pre-inspection questionnaires

An important aspect of the inspection is for key stakeholders to be given the opportunity to provide their views of the school/ELC setting. To gather the views of children and young people, parents, staff and partners we ask you to direct stakeholders to a pre-inspection questionnaire.

Within the email notifying you of the inspection, you will find links to an online survey which holds the pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspection administrator will make available a link for questionnaires through the medium of Gaelic. We welcome and encourage responses in Gaelic to our questionnaires. The links you will receive are set out below.

Learners

All learners in your school (P4 and above in primary schools) should be sent the survey link (Schools only).

If you don't already have existing arrangements in place for learners to complete questionnaires digitally you should consider how best this can be achieved in the context of your school. Please make sure that learners have privacy to complete the questionnaires. You should reassure young people that once they have completed the survey, no-one in the school will see their answers. Inspection team members will not discuss learners written responses unless there are health and wellbeing, safeguarding or child protection concerns. In such instances inspectors will discuss concerns with senior leaders as appropriate. Where required, those learners with additional support needs should be helped to complete the questionnaire, while respecting confidentiality.

Parents

All parents should receive the link to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Parents may complete a pre-inspection questionnaire for each of their children attending the school/ELC setting being inspected. The pre-inspection questionnaire asks parents to indicate if they shall be providing one response only or if they are providing one response for each of their children who attend the school/ELC setting.

As part of the inspection, members of the inspection team will meet with a range of stakeholders. Parents are asked within the pre-inspection questionnaire to indicate if they would like to meet with a member of the inspection team and, if so, to provide their contact details. The IA will contact parents to invite them to the meeting.

Staff

All staff should receive the link to the pre-inspection questionnaire. We have created pre-inspection questionnaires for the following broad groupings: practitioners, teachers, pupil support staff and school support staff. A questionnaire link will be provided for each staffing group.

Partners

We define partners within [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) to include all individuals or organisations that deliver learning and contribute to the life and work of the school/ELC setting.

They may include other agencies, health visitors, community learning and development services, colleges, universities, employers, third sector, community organisations and libraries. All those who work in partnership with your school/ELC setting should be sent the link to the pre-inspection questionnaire. This should include partners supporting Gaelic Education, as appropriate.

Distributing the links

You should use existing digital channels to inform these stakeholders of the inspection, the information that is available from our website and the appropriate link to the pre-inspection questionnaire. When sharing the links, it is important to include the date which all responses must be completed by. We usually refer to this as the date the survey will close.

Methods for sharing the links include: using internal email for staff/practitioners; adding the links to your website (remember to remove when the survey has closed) for parents and partners; include the information within a group call or newsletters for parents, staff/practitioners and partners; connect with learners through Glow.

You are best placed to know the most effective ways of communicating and engaging with your stakeholders to ensure that as many as possible have the opportunity to provide their views about your school/ELC setting. We have found that some schools/ELC settings have, in addition to sending the links digitally, provided parents with devices to complete the pre-inspection questionnaires. For example, schools invited parents to use the library and ICT suite facilities and another invited parents to complete the pre-inspection questionnaire during the Parents' Evening.

We recognise that schools/ELC settings will want to encourage as many of their stakeholders as possible to complete the pre-inspection questionnaire. To support this, the IA can provide you with a regular update on responses rates. Where, for example, the response levels are lower for a particular stakeholder group you may wish to send another communication which reminds and encourages more responses.

3. What should I expect on the first afternoon?

The team will arrive between noon and 12.30 pm on the Monday of the inspection week. The inspection team will gather together and have a brief team meeting. Before any inspection activity begins, the MI will meet staff at the end of lunchtime if possible, to introduce members of the inspection team, brief them on the inspection and answer any questions they may have. Attendance at this meeting is voluntary for staff. The MI will discuss this with you during an introductory phone call.

An introductory discussion, based on your completed self-evaluation summary, will take place at a convenient time in the afternoon and this should last approximately one hour. Please invite your quality improvement officer (QIO) or equivalent colleague from your local authority to take part in the introductory discussion. There is no need to prepare a presentation as the focus should be a discussion. The MI will chair this introductory discussion. The MI will invite you and your senior leadership team to outline your priorities for improvement, the progress you have made with them, along with the evidence of impact on learners so far and how you have arrived at the grades using the six-point scale.

It is important when setting out the context that you share aspects of practice and provision that are working well for all your learners in light of the pandemic, the main challenges the school/ELC setting continues to experience, and how you are overcoming these.

The MI and possibly some members of the team will join the introductory meeting while other team members may begin inspection activities. This could include visiting classes/playrooms or undertaking learning walks around the school/ELC setting, exploring learning on walls and talking with children and/or young people they meet in and around classes/playrooms. After the introductory discussion, we may break into smaller groups for more focused professional dialogue. For example, inspection team members may meet individual members of your team who are leading on aspects of your work such as raising attainment, learning and teaching or ensuring children's wellbeing at a strategic level. The MI will discuss with you the best way the inspection team can build on the information you send us in your completed self-evaluation summary paper and points raised at the introductory discussion.

The MI will discuss with you any meetings and specific activities that require to be arranged. These will build on what has been outlined in your self-evaluation and through the introductory discussion. Your help with these arrangements is greatly appreciated.

Activities will include visits to classes/playrooms, working with groups of learners and discussion of specific aspects of the school's/ELC setting's work with groups of children/young people or staff. Activities will be planned to reflect the range of practice highlighted in the introductory discussion. Members of the inspection team will wish to engage with learning across, in and beyond classrooms/playrooms. In addition to the inspection team selecting learning to observe, the MI may ask you to choose a sample of lesson observations for inspection team members to visit during the inspection.

Please remember that proportionality is one of our key principles of inspection and the inspection team cannot and does not aim to cover all aspects of your school's/ELC setting's work.

Discussions around planning activities may also include:

- a focus on particular groups of learners (for example, children with additional support needs, care-experienced children, those learning Gaelic);
- a focus on features of learning and teaching which are having a major impact on children's experiences and achievements;
- areas of the curriculum which are attempting to meet a range of needs; and
- aspects which link to priorities in the improvement plan.

4. What happens from Tuesday onwards?

Inspectors will undertake a wide range of activities over Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning, building on discussion at the introductory meeting. Inspection activities will typically include visits to classes/playrooms, working with groups of children and young people, reading key documentation and discussing specific aspects of the school's/ELC setting's work with groups of children and young people, staff and parents. At the end of each day, the MI will meet with you to reflect on the day and finalise arrangements or plan any further activity for subsequent days, as appropriate.

The inspection team often includes a lay member. If your inspection team includes a lay member, they will be in the school on the second day (most likely to be all day Tuesday), and

will meet with the Chair of the Parent Council, focus groups of parents and carers, children and young people, and support staff. In an independent school they will meet with the Chair of the Board of Governors/proprietor or a representative.

Health and Nutrition Inspectors join a selection of school inspections. If an HN Inspector is part of an inspection team visiting your school, you will be advised in the notification letter. HN Inspectors will join the team for one day in a primary, secondary, and special school unless otherwise agreed in advance. HN Inspectors undertake core inspection activities in relation to monitoring compliance with the statutory nutritional requirements of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 (HPN Act). If an HN Inspector is part of the inspection of your school, self-evaluation evidence, such as the monitoring record, will be required. This should relate to compliance with the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 and key duties of the HPN Act.

You should notify your school meals provider and/or any school aged care provider on school premises, will provide some of this information, which should also take account of areas where the nutritional regulations apply across the school day. In conjunction with your school meals provider, evidence should be provided. Please see appendix 4a for documentation to be submitted to the inspection administrator.

You are only required to provide to submit evidence if there is an HN Inspector is part of the inspection team. More information on the role can be found [here](#).

We have found discussion to be most effective when focus groups involve no more than eight people and last for a maximum of 45 minutes.

We will meet with you at the end of the inspection to share our findings and evaluations, outline the strengths and aspects for improvement we have identified, and discuss possible next steps with you. We suggest you involve one or more of your colleagues at the meeting, typically promoted members from your team. You should also invite your associated QIO or equivalent colleague from your local authority to this sharing of findings.

5. What engagement will staff and children have with the team?

Inspectors will meet with children and staff for discussions throughout the week.

The team will meet groups of children and young people for different purposes. For example, we may discuss with them any issues raised in the pre-inspection questionnaire or listen to how their views are sought and acted upon. In all lesson/playroom visits inspectors will aim to engage with children and young people.

For senior staff, engagement with inspectors will usually start with the introductory discussions after lunch on Monday. For some staff, this may begin on Monday afternoon with a classroom/playroom visit. However, all staff (teaching and non-teaching) will usually have the opportunity, at some point on Monday, to meet the inspection team, hear a short briefing, and ask questions about the inspection process.

Professional dialogue with staff takes place in a range of situations over the week, for example, during class/playroom visits, in focus groups, during voluntary discussion sessions and at the final sharing of findings. Teachers/practitioners are welcome to engage in professional dialogue with inspectors following a learning observation. Inspectors will try to do this during the observation where this is possible and does not impact on learning.

Alternatively, teachers are welcome to engage in discussion at another point during the week.

At the end of the first or second day, inspectors would like to meet with groups of staff for professional dialogue. The focus of the dialogue will be agreed with you following the introductory discussion. The MI will discuss with you the most appropriate format for the professional engagement session(s). This professional dialogue session is voluntary for staff. It should include staff delivering Gaelic Education, if appropriate.

Meetings will be arranged throughout the course of the inspection with selected members of the staff to discuss aspects of school/ELC setting improvement. During the period of the inspection, members of the inspection team, including the LM, may also meet with individuals and/or particular groups of support staff or members of the local community. Please take the opportunity to discuss potential individuals and/or groups with the MI. It is important that all engagement is seen as an opportunity to develop thinking further and to learn from each other.

The MI will invite you, or a nominated colleague (promoted or non-promoted), to accompany an inspector on one or more learning visits, to support professional dialogue about key features of learning and teaching. This is entirely voluntary.

6. What engagement will parents and carers have with the team?

Our inspections take the views of parents and carers into account, and seek to engage with them in a number of ways.

The inspection team will explore the role parents have in self-evaluation and school/ELC setting improvement. Members of the inspection team will meet the Chair of the Parent Council. Topics for discussion include the Parent Council's involvement in self-evaluation and its impact on supporting and improving the school.

When parents complete the pre-inspection questionnaire, they are asked to indicate if they would be willing to meet a member of the inspection team. The IA will then contact parents who have said they would be willing to meet the inspection team and confirm those who are able to attend. The IA will then arrange for a member of the team to meet the group at the agreed time(s) during the inspection. This could be in person or through virtual meetings. The focus of this discussion is to understand the role of parents in self-evaluation and school improvement and how parents are involved in their child's learning. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for a member of the team to have a meeting with individual parents and carers. Please discuss this with the MI if you believe it would add to the value or effectiveness of the inspection.

Following the inspection, the Chair of the Parent Council will receive a confidential draft of the letter for parents and carers. The chair is asked to confirm receipt of the letter, and invited to provide feedback, either through yourself, or through a direct response to the administrator.

7. What engagement will partners have with the inspection team?

It is important for the inspection team to understand how you work with your partners to deliver learning and contribute to the life and work of the school/ELC setting. We will ask you to arrange a meeting for members of the inspection team to meet with some of your partners to discuss this work. This meeting can either take place in person or virtually at a suitable time during the inspection.

During a secondary inspection an HMI from Community Learning and Development (CLD) will be a member of the team on Tuesday and Wednesday of the inspection week. The CLD HMI will focus on the school's approach to partnership working including community partners engaged in joint work with the school for example, youth groups, voluntary organisations, uniformed organisations and local charities.

During a secondary inspection an HMI from the post 16 sector will be a member of the team during the inspection week. The post 16 HMI will focus on the planning of the senior phase curriculum that takes into account national priorities such as Developing the Young Workforce. They will be interested to hear about the school's approaches to skills development and partnership working with colleges and employers.

8. What happens after the inspection?

The inspection team will share their findings, including grades of the QIs, and the Care Inspectorate grades if applicable, with you and your local authority officer before they leave the school/ELC setting. This will usually happen on the Friday morning (or Thursday afternoon in an ELC setting). The MI may also arrange to share high-level messages with staff. These messages will be based around the key strengths and areas for further improvement. We will not share QI grades with staff. This is because our findings and grades will go through a quality assurance process. You will want to share key messages with your school community and share the key strengths and aspects for development with your staff. As the grades will not have been through the quality assurance process at the point inspectors leave the school, we ask that you do not share them out-with the education authority and your senior team.

Once the key findings have been shared, the inspection team will leave your school/setting.

We aim to provide you with a confidential draft of the letter for parents and carers, usually within ten working days of the end of the inspection. This draft letter will provide a statement of the confidence we have in the school's/ELC setting's ability to improve the quality of its work. It will highlight key strengths and aspects for improvement and indicate the evaluations for the four focus QIs. It will also inform parents and carers of what Education Scotland will do as a result of the inspection, for example, any intended further inspection or engagement. In addition to yourself, the local authority and Chair of the Parent Council will receive the draft letter. You, the Chair of the Parent Council and the local authority will be asked to provide any comments or suggested amendments within one working week of its receipt. When finalised, the letter, including grades, will be published online as part of a range of information which includes analyses of questionnaire returns. Where a school has a nursery class, we will include information on this class within the letter to parents including the grades of the QIs from [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Where a shared inspection has been undertaken with the Care Inspectorate, we will also publish their grades. We aim to publish the letter within ten working weeks from the end of the inspection. Where relevant, the MI will discuss with you and the local authority any proposal for continuing engagement with the school.

You and the local authority or in the case of independent schools, the Chair of the Board of Governors/proprietor will receive a copy of the draft SIF after it has been through our quality assurance process. We ask that you check it for accuracy and return your response within one working week to the MI.

It will then be published on the Education Scotland website alongside the letter to parents. The Care Inspectorate grades will be published on the Care Inspectorate's website. If there is no plan or commitment to a further inspection the inspection is complete.

Sector-specific Information

More detailed sector-specific information can be found [here](#).

Early learning and childcare settings

We want to support the setting to improve, and HM Inspectors will focus on the quality of children's learning and achievement. We will have a particular focus on how the setting helps children to develop their skills and understanding in early literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, enabling them to access the highest possible learning within a broad general education and beyond.

Care Inspectorate

Some inspections are undertaken by both the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. Where a shared inspection takes place, this will be carried out by inspectors from both the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland.

Where a shared inspection takes place in your setting the evaluations of both organisations will be included in the inspection report and the final letter to parents. The Care Inspectorate will evaluate against a selection of quality indicators from "A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare". When using this framework Care Inspectorate inspectors will select a small number of quality indicators to inspect against. The core quality indicators for inspection are:

- 1.1 Nurturing care and support
- 1.3 Play and learning
- 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities
- 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well
- 4.3 Staff deployment

Senior Phase

For secondary school inspections or all through schools with secondary senior phase stages, Inspectors will engage in discussions about how you are using **Insight** to support school improvement. Inspectors will also have a statistical summary report (SSR), based on data from Insight, to support professional dialogue. We aim to share this with you during the week prior to inspection.

Education Scotland has a data sharing agreement with Scottish Government in order to access the data contained within the SSR. As a result of this agreement, we are required to follow appropriate procedures to share the SSR with establishments. We require a signed inspection protocol prior to sharing the SSR and the Director of Education for your local authority will have signed this in advance of the inspection. This protocol will be forwarded to you.

Please note that the SSR can only be sent to a gsx secure address or in a secure zipped file. If you do not have a gsx account, you will require a software download to access.

The MI will explain this to you further in the introductory telephone call and our statistics team will provide support should it be required to ensure that you can access the SSR. The SSR should be held in accordance with the conditions outlined in the inspection protocol and destroyed within a year of the completion of the inspection.

Gaelic Sector

When inspecting provision, we will use the same national quality indicators (QIs) and themes as we do for English medium (EM) provision. In a provision that has English and Gaelic Medium Education within the same school/setting, we will evaluate the quality of the provision jointly using QIs. In standalone Gaelic Medium provisions, QIs will be used to evaluate and grade each school/setting. [Education Scotland's Advice on Gaelic Education](#) provides additional, Gaelic-specific advice to complement [How good is our school? 4th edition](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#)

In advance of the inspection, we appreciate that the school/setting will make available to us some documentation. Other documentation will be made available to us during the inspection week. In a provision that has English and Gaelic Medium Education, there is no need for separate documentation. However, we would appreciate Gaelic Medium Education being reflected within the documentation. For example, it will be useful to include evaluative comments on Gaelic Medium Education in the summary self-evaluation paper alongside those for English Medium. HM Inspectors will use the summary self-evaluation paper as a basis of their discussion with staff. We will invite the headteacher/manager and their team to outline their priorities for improving Gaelic Medium Education, the progress thus far and evidence of impact on learners.

We also inspect Gaelic (Learners) and will make an evaluative comment on children and young people's experiences, progress and attainment in Gaelic language and culture. The MI will discuss with you how best to organise evaluative activities for Gaelic Medium and/or Learner Education involving children and young people, staff, parents and partners. In line with our commitments in our Gaelic Language Plan, we make an active offer to use Gaelic with speakers of the language when specialist inspectors are taking forward the inspection. HM inspectors' Advice on Gaelic (Learners) education may be found [here](#).

Independent Sector

Independent schools are open to inspection by Education Scotland in the same way as those maintained by education authorities. However, Education Scotland is equally mindful of the variety of independent schools, the legislative framework that underpins the independent sector in Scotland and the widely differing nature of provision that can be found. More information can be found [here](#).

Appendix 1 The PRAISE Framework

Best Practice Framework for Education Scotland inspections and reviews

The Framework is based on data gathered from: representative samples of experienced inspectors from Education Scotland and heads of organisations that have been inspected; and feedback from post-inspection questionnaires.

The following principles were identified as underpinning best practice.

Purpose – being clear about the overall purpose of the inspection and retaining this throughout. Creating a shared agenda with staff in the organisation and amongst members of the scrutiny team.

Relationships – building and maintaining constructive relationships throughout the process as the basis of a high-quality inspection/review.

Awareness – maintaining a high level of awareness of the context in which staff are operating, of their feelings and reactions to the process and of the inspector's own approach and its impact.

Information gathering – careful inquiry to gather and analyse evidence. Retaining an objective stance, testing assumptions and assimilating data before evaluating.

Sharing information – communicating thoroughly throughout the process to prepare and inform staff. Encouraging staff to be open in providing their perspective and providing appropriate feedback as the inspection/review progresses.

Enabling – treating people with respect, engaging them in professional dialogue, recognising their efforts and providing feedback in a constructive way to encourage ownership and learning to take place.

Appendix 2 Completing the self-evaluation summary form

Please return the completed form six working days before the inspection.

Please use this document to highlight key aspects of the school's work as a starting point for discussion with the inspection team. You are asked to focus on the three key self-evaluation questions from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) p.9 and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) p.5 (where appropriate) and consider how you triangulate your evidence to ensure your evaluative judgments are robust.

Please ensure information provided is clear and concise, using bullet points to indicate high level evaluative messages. This can then be the focus of the discussion at the scoping meeting.

Stakeholders should know the school's strengths and areas for improvement from the school's arrangements for self-evaluation. The self-evaluation summary paper should be shared with relevant stakeholders so that they are aware of what the school has submitted.

Self-evaluation Summary Form

How well are you doing? What's working well for your learners?	How do you know? What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?	What are you going to do now? What are your improvement priorities in this area?	How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOS?4/HGIOELC? six-point scale?
QI 1.3 Leadership of change (Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community; Strategic planning for continuous improvement; Implementing improvement and change)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment (Learning and engagement; Quality of teaching; Effective use of assessment; Planning, tracking and monitoring)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion (Wellbeing; Fulfilment of statutory duties; Inclusion and equality)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement (Attainment in literacy and numeracy; Attainment over time; Overall quality of learners' achievement; Equity for all learners)			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Choose an item.
QI 2.2 Curriculum: theme 2 Learning pathways			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 2.7 Partnerships: theme 3 Impact on children and families (parental engagement only)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.

Self-evaluation for ELC settings and schools with a nurse class

How well are you doing? What's working well for your learners?	How do you know? What evidence do you have of positive impact on learners?	What are you going to do now? What are your improvement priorities in this area?	How would you evaluate this QI using the HGIOS?4/HGIOELC? six-point scale?
QI 1.3 Leadership of change (Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community; Strategic planning for continuous improvement; Implementing improvement and change)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment (Learning and engagement; Quality of teaching; Effective use of assessment; Planning, tracking and monitoring)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion (Wellbeing; Fulfilment of statutory duties; Inclusion and equality)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 3.2 Securing children's progress (Progress in communication, early language, mathematics, health and wellbeing; Children's progress over time; Overall quality of children's achievement; Ensuring equity for all children)			
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Choose an item.
QI 2.2 Curriculum: theme 2 Learning pathways			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.
QI 2.7 Partnerships: theme 3 Impact on children and families (parental engagement only)			
Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Click here to insert text	Choose an item.

Appendix 3 Documents to be provided in advance of inspection

Please email only the following items to the Administrator prior to the inspection. Unless specified, **please return them at least six working days before the inspection.**

	Item	✓
1	The most recent and previous annual reports which you issued to parents and carers, on the standards and quality of the school/nursery class/ELC setting's work. Return as soon as possible please after the initial email notification.	
2	The current and previous school/ELC setting improvement plans.	
3	Names of all teaching/practitioners and other staff, and details of their responsibilities. Please indicate any job-sharing arrangements.	
4	School, class and visiting teachers' timetables and those of partner agencies such as EAL teacher and CLD workers.	
5	Information about how all children's and young people's achievements (including attainment) are gathered and tracked.	
7	A draft meetings schedule agreed after initial discussion with MI.	
8	Complete practitioners qualifications form and return (for any school with a nursery class or ELC setting)	
9	Completed self-evaluation summary form (see Appendix 2)	
10	You should complete the child protection and safeguarding self-evaluation form but it must be handed to the MI at the beginning of the inspection in hard copy format. Please do not email this form.	

Appendix 4a Key documents which can be provided during the inspection for the school

If available, please provide the following information in the HMI base on Monday of the inspection week. There is no requirement to share in advance.

Item	✓
Location plan/map of the layout of the school (one for each member of the team please).	
Information about children's progress/performance over time and any available benchmarking data.	
Samples of children's work in literacy and numeracy, across learning, from each class (primary stages only).	
Samples of moderation activities and resultant impact on progress/overall attainment.	
Information about your curriculum, for example curriculum overview, details of partnerships to enhance the curriculum.	
Brief details of any out-of-class activities, after-school care and supported study initiatives.	
Sample agendas and minutes of pupil council, parent council and staff meetings.	
Examples of school communications with parents and the wider community e.g. newsletters, prospectus, parent handbook.	
If your school inspection team includes a Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI), please provide a cycle of menus and nutritional analysis. Your catering service provider will have this.	
If your inspection team includes a specialist HM Inspector for Gaelic Education, please provide details of your Gaelic provision, including progress and attainment, curriculum and immersion, improvement plan for Gaelic and how you promote Gaelic with parents and their families.	

We may require access to the following confidential documents during the inspection week. These should only be made available at times when the inspection team is in school.

Access to records of complaints, bullying incidents, accidents, administration of medicine.	
Access to pupils' progress records (PPRs).	
List of children with additional support needs and brief details of support provided. Details of children with regular/long-term absence.	
List of children who are care experienced.	
Access to Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs).	
List of children on shared placements where relevant.	

Appendix 4b Key documents which can be provided during the inspection for the nursery class/ELC setting

If available, please provide the following information in the HMI base on first day of the inspection week. There is no requirement to share in advance.

Item	✓
Number of children on roll, including a note of those who attend other settings or who attend on a full-time basis and funded two-year-olds where appropriate.	
Completed safeguarding and child protection form (to be handed to MI on the first day of the inspection week).	
Detailed information used by the setting to monitor and evaluate children's progress, including the quality of learning and teaching.	
Evidence on children's progress.	
Examples of the setting's planning for learning.	
Outline of arrangements for contacts and visits with other early learning and childcare settings and other educational establishments at points of transfer.	
Brief details of any wraparound care or after-school care.	
Sample of agendas and minutes of Parent Council/Playgroup/Board of Governors meetings and staff meetings.	
Details of staff registration with other professional bodies such as Scottish Social Services Council and General Teaching Council of Scotland where applicable.	
If your inspection team includes a specialist HM Inspector for Gaelic Education, please provide details of your Gaelic provision, including progress, curriculum and immersion, planning priorities for Gaelic and how you promote Gaelic with parents and their families.	

We may require access to the following confidential documents during the inspection week. These should only be made available at times when the inspection team is in school.

List of children with additional support needs and brief details of support provided. Details of children with regular/long-term absence.	
List of children who are care experienced.	

Appendix 5 Meetings required during the inspection week

The MI will discuss with you the composition of the inspection team, the days each of the team members will be in attendance and the meetings that will be required during the inspection. They will send you a template to complete in advance, asking you to add details of the meetings, attendees and allocated rooms. As the team respond to findings during the week and work with you to gather evidence, there are likely to be ongoing adjustments.

The meetings that will be needed include*:

Monday

- Whole-staff briefing (voluntary for staff).
- Introductory meeting to discuss self-evaluation.
- Meeting with senior member of catering staff (if an HNI is present in the inspection team).
- Possible one-to-one meetings to start discussions with **members of the senior team** responsible for particular aspects of the work of the school.

Tuesday

- Meetings with parent groups (administrator will identify parents from pre-inspection survey returns).
- Possible meeting(s) with Chairperson of the Parent Council (depending on day LM is present).
- End of day: professional dialogue groups.

Tuesday or Wednesday

- Meetings with groups of children (can be agreed at the start of the inspection week).
- One-to-one meetings with members of the senior team or appropriate staff (timings can be agreed at the start of the inspection week). This will include meetings with the relevant person responsible for, attainment and achievement, monitoring and tracking, closing the poverty related gap, learning and teaching, assessment, improvement planning and leadership.
- One-to-one meeting with child protection coordinator to sign off the completed safeguarding form.
- One-to-one meetings with literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing coordinators (or member of staff responsible for these aspects) (timings can be agreed at the start of the inspection week).
- Meetings with partners.

Please note that for the meetings to be effective, there should be no more than eight people invited to any one meeting. Meetings should be planned for around one hour. Where it is likely to involve the same member of the inspection team, please leave around 15 minutes between meetings to allow the writing up of notes.

Wednesday or Thursday

- Meetings with partners. This will be dependent on your school's local community and how you engage with them to deliver your curriculum.

Friday

Discussion of findings (timing to be agreed with MI).

* Please note that this is provided as a guide only and the MI may wish to make changes to this depending on circumstances.