

# SPECIAL SCHOOL Inspection Guidance

September 2017

## GENERAL INFORMATION: Sustaining Improvement Inspection

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
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CSE





## GENERAL INFORMATION: Sustaining Improvement Inspection

### Background

After a school has been evaluated through inspection, by the ETI, as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement, or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement<sup>1</sup>, ETI will monitor the school's continuing action to sustain and effect improvement; a sustaining improvement inspection (SII) will be used for this purpose.

Typically, schools that were evaluated as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement will receive a SII three years after their last inspection; however, there may be occasions when ETI deem a different model of inspection to be more appropriate.

The SII gives the school the opportunity to demonstrate to ETI that it continues to act effectively to sustain and effect improvement through its school development planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes. The model enables ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The inspection will typically be conducted by the DI as RI wherever possible, and an Associate Assessor (AA). The inspection will take place over two days. The AA normally attends for one day. The RI will keep the principal updated on the arrangements as the inspection progresses.

At the beginning of the SII, the RI, in discussion with the principal, will identify one or two area(s) of focus linked to the priorities identified in the SDP.

The area(s) of focus must be substantive and, in the case of a school previously evaluated as capacity to identify and bring about improvement<sup>2</sup>, may include confirming that any area for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection has been addressed.

During the SII, there will be a scrutiny and discussion of a specific sample of school self-evaluation documents as part of the school development planning process and of first-hand data<sup>3</sup> analysis related directly to the area(s) of focus. This will include the

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1 *In inspection reports prior to July 2015, the equivalent overall effectiveness outcome was denoted by outstanding, very good or good.*

2 *Prior to 2015 the equivalent overall effectiveness conclusion was denoted by good.*

3 *C2K are **not** engaged in the sustaining improvement inspection: any data must be supplied by the school.*

school's evaluation of: outcomes for pupils; the quality of provision; and leadership and management at all levels. Typically, this will involve discussions with relevant staff members and be informed by lesson observations. The purpose of the lesson observations is to provide the school with an opportunity to present first-hand evidence of the impact of improvement work. The SII will include a review of safeguarding.

### What is the focus of a sustaining improvement inspection?

While the ETI will focus on priority areas of development and the school's evaluation of safeguarding, ETI's prime interest lies in the strength and effectiveness of the school's capacity to effect and to sustain improvement. The purpose of reviewing the area(s) of focus is to determine the extent to which the school is able to illustrate the impact of how its teachers and leaders (supported and challenged by its governors) use first-hand evidence to reflect on, evaluate and act to sustain and bring about improvement in their own practice. It is this **capacity for self-evaluation leading to improvement which ETI will inspect and report upon primarily.**

### How will a sustaining improvement inspection work?

#### Notification

- Schools will receive telephone and email notification two working days prior to the SII<sup>4</sup>.
- Further guidance on the inspection process will be provided by the IST at the time of notification.
- Where possible, the RI will also make contact with the principal of the school by telephone prior to the commencement of the inspection; this should enable any queries to be clarified.
- The principal should inform the chair of the Board of Governors that the SII is taking place and make arrangements for the report back at the end of day two, at approximately 3:30pm.
- If available, a base room should be provided for the inspection team.
- The [Complaints Procedure](#) is available on the ETI website.

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<sup>4</sup> There may be occasions, for example, school/public holidays where the notification period will be more than two days.

## The inspection

The following inspection activities may take place over the course of the inspection.

- On the first morning, the RI, in discussion with the principal, will identify and agree the area(s) of focus linked to the priorities identified in the SDP. Normally, evaluation of the area(s) of focus will lead to an analysis of: learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; actions to address any issues identified during the last inspection; and outcomes for pupils.
- At the meeting the RI and principal will discuss:
  - the outcomes for pupils, including the data trends since the last inspection;
  - how the SDP priority areas were identified;
  - the key staff involved and their role throughout the school development planning process;
  - the on-going monitoring and evaluation strategies used to measure and evaluate the impact of actions to effect improvement;
  - the school's evaluation of how successful it has been in effecting improvement in the pupils' learning and attainment; and
  - the safeguarding proforma.
- The agreed areas should demonstrate to the ETI the capacity of the school to effect continued and sustained improvement or its capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
- The RI will agree a programme for the inspection with the principal; this programme, however, may change as the inspection activity progresses.
- The school should make available existing documentation relating to relevant aspects of development work, a copy of the SDP, teachers' planning, available data and pupils' work.
- In addition, the school should provide a copy of the completed safeguarding proforma signed and dated by the chair of the board of governors and the principal; any issues identified will be followed up by the RI.
- Lesson observations will be selected through discussion between the principal and the RI; the school may wish to identify particular sessions that best demonstrate the improvements in learning and teaching.
- The RI will scrutinise the schools internal and external data.

- The RI will scrutinise the documentation, including the school's internal and external performance and the quality of the pupils' work.
- The RI will arrange meetings with key staff, including the principal, members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders as necessary.
- The RI will present an oral report to the principal and chair of the board of governors<sup>5</sup> (if available) at the conclusion of the inspection.

### The quality of arrangements for safeguarding

ETI's role is to inspect, validate, evaluate and report, based on the first-hand evidence available during inspection on aspects (c) and (e) of the Schedule to the School Development Plan Regulations (2010). Where there is insufficient first-hand evidence to make an evaluation, ETI triangulates and reports the school's evidence of assurance that safeguarding reflects the relevant guidance.

Schools should monitor and review safeguarding and welfare at least annually. They are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI proforma.

- The ETI child protection/safeguarding proforma is a key piece of evidence and is designed to help schools establish the extent (ideally on an annual basis) to which they comply with child protection/safeguarding requirements and how their arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding pupils.
- The completed proforma (signed and dated by the chair of the board of governors and principal) will indicate to the RI the extent to which the school (based on its own annual review) reflects or reflects broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education and Section 2(c) School Development Planning Regulations (2010).
- Schools should note that the signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by ETI as record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.
- Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the area of focus may change to that of safeguarding. If the school does not provide evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education, the ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

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<sup>5</sup> Or another representative of the governors if the chair is unavailable.

### Documentation

There is no requirement for the school to create additional documentation for the inspection. The key documents required will be:

- the SDP and associated action plans;
- a list of staff and classes;
- a copy of the completed child protection/safeguarding proforma signed and dated by the chair of the board of governors and the principal;
- long-term (whole-school) and medium-term (year group or class) planning;
- most recent data from public examinations;
- performance data (qualitative or quantitative data) which forms part of the development plan evaluation and review process, indicating that the actions taken are leading to improvement for the pupils, including interventions for individuals or small groups of pupils;
- individual education plans or personal learning plans;
- teacher timetables and any intervention groups; and
- samples of work which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes for pupils.

Typically, the SII will last for two days. The following is an illustration of the activities where the full two days are required. On all inspections, the RI will agree the timetable with the principal (and this may include a shorter duration):

#### Day one (illustration):

Day one	Activity
9 am	Team arrival; introductions.
Period one onwards	Initial meeting with the principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review SDP for area(s) of focus.</li> <li>• Completed safeguarding proforma provided to the RI.</li> <li>• Queries clarified.</li> <li>• Timetables obtained to select observations.</li> </ul> Lesson observations/scrutiny of relevant documentation. Meetings with teachers/leaders as required, e.g. senior leaders/middle leaders/designated teacher/literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator. <sup>6</sup>
After school	Brief update meeting with the principal.

#### Day two (illustration):

Day two	Activity
Morning	Brief meeting with principal to confirm arrangements for day/address any issues or concerns arising from previous day. Lesson observation as required. Scrutiny of documentation/class visits as required. Meetings with senior/middle leaders.
Afternoon	Report writing.
After school	Report back to the principal and chair of the board of governors or representative of the board of governors (if available) at 3:30pm approximately. (15-30 minutes maximum)

The RI will discuss arrangements for meetings and the oral report back<sup>7</sup> with the principal as the inspection progresses. The short report will reference the outcome of original inspection, the area(s) of focus, key findings, the evaluation of safeguarding at the time of the SII and a conclusion as detailed below.

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the guidance co-ordinator should be taken to mean co-ordinator or head of department/year/key stage, etc

<sup>7</sup> The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.



## The report

If the school continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or capacity to identify and bring about 'improvement in the interest of all the learners', then ETI will report accordingly. If during the SII, the ETI identifies an area for improvement which the school has the evident capacity to address, it will report accordingly. The outcome of the SII will inform the timing and extent of future inspection activity.

If the school does not demonstrate sufficiently to ETI that it has sustained its high level or capacity for improvement, and/or if performance has declined, the ETI will report accordingly and the school's next full inspection will be brought forward with an appropriate degree of urgency commensurate with the degree of risk determined by ETI.

Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the focus may change to that of safeguarding. This may include identification of an area related to safeguarding in circumstances where the RI deems it necessary to report on such issues, for example, where a safeguarding disclosure<sup>8</sup> is made to a member of the ETI team by a member of staff or a pupil or there are obvious breaches of on-line safety. This may trigger a six week follow-up visit.

## Conclusion

In the case of a school evaluated as **outstanding or very good** in the last inspection:

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity<sup>9</sup> for sustained improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

**Or**

[Insert name of school] has not demonstrated sufficiently a high level of capacity for sustained improvement; this will be reflected in the future arrangements for inspection of the school.

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<sup>8</sup> If a disclosure is made the RI will follow the procedures outlined in 'Safeguarding of Pupils, Young People and Vulnerable Adults: A Code of Good Practice for Members of Inspection Teams'.

<sup>9</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as outstanding/very good/good will be evaluated as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement/capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

In the case of a school evaluated as **good** in the last inspection:

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

**Or**

[Insert name of school] has not demonstrated sufficiently the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils; this will be reflected in the future inspection arrangements for the school.

The arrangements for safeguarding will also be reported on. If arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory, reference will be made to a six week follow-up visit.



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