

PRIMARY

INSPECTION GUIDANCE

January 2017

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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General information

This guidance is for the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) two-, three- and four- day inspections of primary schools. During the inspection, the inspection team will evaluate the following key areas:

1. Outcomes for learners;
2. Quality of provision; and
3. Leadership and management.

A key consideration will be the school's ability to demonstrate the **impact** of their processes of self-evaluation leading to improvement.

What happens during the inspection?

We will evaluate these three main aspects of the life and work of the school including the Nursery Unit/Learning Support Centre/Irish-Medium Unit/Reception provision, where applicable and reach an overall conclusion for overall effectiveness.

FOLLOWING NOTIFICATION OF THE TWO-DAY, THREE-DAY OR FOUR-DAY INSPECTION

The Reporting Inspector (RI) will contact the principal by telephone as soon as possible to discuss the following:

- the composition of the inspection team, arrange the date for the pre-inspection visit and confirm the dates of the inspection and the report-back arrangements;
- confirmation of the decision by the school to nominate a representative and to forward the name of this individual to the RI as soon as possible. It is expected that the principal will have discussed the role of the representative with the board of governors and agreed the identity of the representative before confirming the details with the RI on the pre-inspection day;
- the availability, on the ETI website, of the booklet [The Role of the Representative During Inspection](#), and the requirement that the representative completes and signs the Statement of Commitment and Understanding in **Appendix 1** of the booklet and presents to **RI on Day 1 of inspection**;
- the opportunity, on a four-day inspection only, for joint lesson/session/activity observation and the availability, on the ETI website, of the [Joint Lesson Observation Guidance](#);
- the availability of a base room from which the inspection team can operate;
- the distribution, without delay, of the teacher, support staff and parental/guardian letters regarding online questionnaires;
- the completion of the [Safeguarding Proforma](#) which should be verified and signed by the chairperson of the board of governors and the principal, and given to the **RI on the pre-inspection day**;
- the necessity to complete the [ETI Pre-Inspection Questionnaire for Governors](#) using the [Quality Indicators for use in the Self-evaluation of Governance](#)

available on the ETI website;

- the arrangements for the inspection of a Nursery Unit/Learning Support Unit/Irish-Medium Education Unit/Reception provision; and
- the documentation to be returned to Inspection Services Team (IST) and the documentation to be available for the pre-inspection visit. ([Appendix 1](#))

Please make the RI aware of any issue or event which you think may affect the school, or any of the staff, before or at any time during the inspection.

The ETI aims to provide an effective service guided by its principles, values and standards. During an inspection, the school has the opportunity to provide all of the evidence necessary for the inspection team to make its evaluations. Class visits will be completed and the final submission of evidence by the school will be:

- by lunchtime (1pm) on day 2 of a two-day inspection;
- by lunchtime (1pm) on day 3 of a three-day inspection; and
- by lunchtime (1pm) on day 3 of a four-day inspection.

In line with best practice, the ETI seeks to resolve any issues that may arise, as soon as possible, at the point of inspection. All schools are encouraged to work in partnership with ETI during the inspection by raising any issues or concerns, should they arise, as quickly as possible with the RI so that they can work to resolve any matters.

The ETI Complaints Procedure cannot be used to contest the professional evaluations of inspectors because their findings are unwelcome, because change is promised by the school at some time in the future, or because changes are made after an inspection.

PRE-INSPECTION DAY (illustrative purposes only)

9:15am – 10:30am	RI arrives at the school and meets with the principal to discuss the administration of the inspection, including the role of the representative, the arrangements (if the school wishes to participate) for any joint lesson/session/activity observation(s) on a four-day inspection and the times and arrangements for meetings. Principal to outline the strengths and areas for development in the outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management in school (Appendix 2).
10:45am – 12:30pm	RI reviews school documentation, e.g. school development plan (SDP) ¹ , associated action plans, relevant whole school evaluations and qualitative and quantitative performance data.
12:30pm – 1:00pm	Lunch.
1:00pm – 2:00pm	RI reviews Safeguarding Proforma and associated documentation and evidence.
2:00pm – 3:00pm	RI meets with principal to discuss SDP, school's data and Care and Welfare, and Safeguarding.
3:00pm – 3:15pm	RI plans the inspection.
3:15pm – 4:00pm	RI briefing meeting with teachers.

The following outlines are for illustrative purposes only and times are flexible.

OUTLINE OF A 2-DAY INSPECTION

Day 1	<p>Lesson observations</p> <p>Scrutiny of school's documentation</p> <p>Literacy/numeracy prompts with year 7 children</p> <p>Meetings with literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator with SENCO and designated teacher</p> <p>Meeting with principal and chair/nominated representative of the governors</p> <p>Team Meeting.</p>
Day 2	<p>Lesson observations</p> <p>Scrutiny of school's documentation</p> <p>Care and Welfare, and Safeguarding discussions with year 6 and/or 7 children</p> <p>Moderation meeting</p> <p>Oral report back.</p>

¹ School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/education-school-development-plans-regulations-northern-ireland-2010>

OUTLINE OF A 3-DAY INSPECTION

Day 1	Lesson observations Scrutiny of school's documentation Literacy/numeracy prompts with year 7 children Meetings with literacy co-ordinator and numeracy co-ordinator (SENCO to join either meeting) Team Meeting.
Day 2	Lesson observations Scrutiny of school's documentation Literacy/numeracy prompts with year 7 children Meeting with principal and chair/nominated representative of the governors Meetings with ICT co-ordinator and designated teacher Team Meeting.
Day 3	Care and Welfare, and Safeguarding discussions with year 6 children Scrutiny of school's documentation Moderation meeting Preparation of report Oral report back.

OUTLINE OF A 4-DAY INSPECTION

Day 1	Lesson observations Scrutiny of school's documentation Literacy/numeracy prompts with year 7 children Meetings with literacy co-ordinator and numeracy co-ordinator (SENCO to join either meeting) Team Meeting.
Day 2	Lesson observations Scrutiny of school's documentation Literacy/numeracy prompts with year 7 children Meeting with principal and chair/nominated representative of the governors Meetings with ICT co-ordinator and designated teacher Team Meeting.
Day 3	Care and Welfare, and Safeguarding discussions with year 6 children Lesson observations Scrutiny of school's documentation.
Day 4	Moderation meeting including the representative in the school Preparation of report Oral report back.

Inspection follow-up activity

If the school has been evaluated as having either a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement, inspection follow-up activity will be typically in the form of a sustaining improvement inspection (SII) around three years after the original inspection.

If the school has been evaluated as needing to address important areas for improvement, the ETI will engage in a formal follow-up inspection process and the follow-up will take place within 12 to 18 months.

If the school has been evaluated as needing to address urgently significant areas for improvement, the follow-up will take place within a two-year timeframe.

Additional guidance that follows in this document is provided for illustrative purposes only and may vary depending on the size and context of the school, emerging findings and evidence as the inspection progresses.

Documentation to be returned to Inspection Services Team (IST):

- Basic Information Sheet (BIS)

Documentation to be available for the pre-inspection visit:

- Current SDP, associated action plans and relevant evaluations.
- Completed ETI Safeguarding Proforma with relevant policies.
- The school's statutory assessment outcomes regarding the children's levels of progression in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT, including records of how they are reported in the board of governors' annual report and to parents.
- With regard to non-statutory assessment, if used by staff, schools are asked to provide **an analysis of the performance data** which they use to track the attainment and progress of all children and the **impact** of any additional targeted support.
- Appendix 4, all sections; Basic Information Sheet (BIS), teaching staff details, assessment information, governor details, in-service training.
- Copies of teachers' timetables including specialist and/or part-time teaching staff and timetables for SEN interventions.

Documentation to be available in the base room during the inspection:

- SDP and associated action plans.
- SEN register and details of the arrangements for SEN.
- Samples of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to show tracking of children's progress.
- SEN policy, literacy/numeracy policy, assessment policy and ICT policy.
- Whole-school scheme/planning/lines of progression for literacy/numeracy.
- Samples of year 2, 4 and 7 books left in base room (to include two samples of literacy, numeracy and WAU for high, average and low achieving children in each of these classes).
- Access to any e-portfolios of children's work across the curriculum/samples of children's progression in ICT across the key stages.
- Evidence of **self-evaluation** by literacy/numeracy co-ordinators (e.g. book scoops, lesson observations, co-ordinator's evaluations of teachers' planning).
- The school's analysis and use of data, statutory and non-statutory, at whole school, class and individual level.
- School Prospectus.
- Annual Report of the board of governors (most recent copy) and completed questionnaire from the board of governors.
- Years 6 and 7 class lists.
- Samples of children's assessment records and end-of-year reports to parents.

Documentation to be available in each classroom during the inspection:

- Teacher's planning file, including previous planning and evaluations of the learning and teaching.
- Class assessment information.
- IEPs including any evidence of tracking and reviews of progress.
- Books showing children's work across the curriculum (to include two samples each for high, average and low achieving children).
- Evidence of the children's use of and progress in ICT.

LEADERSHIP MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL ON THE PRE-INSPECTION DAY

Context

- The principal outlines briefly the context of the school and agrees with the RI the wording of the context paragraph for the final inspection report.
- Is the school involved in any shared education partnerships with other schools? Is there any evidence of the impact/benefit this is having on the children/community?

School development planning process

- How does the school ensure that self-evaluation is rigorous, effective and leads to improvement in the quality of the leadership and management, provision and the outcomes for all of the children?
- How are staff development needs identified/addressed?
- What is the quality of provision for learning in literacy and/or numeracy (which includes their application across other areas of learning)?
- Can the school outline the use of any additional effective and innovative strategies to raise standards and improve the quality of learning and teaching?
- How is good or better practice identified and disseminated?
- How is the school identifying and meeting the needs of all the children?
- What are the outcomes for the children in the school? How are the outcomes for the children tracked and monitored? Are there any differences in numeracy/literacy; gender, FSM, SEN patterns?

Quality of the Care and Welfare, and Safeguarding

- Discuss particular aspects within and issues (if any) emerging from the completed Safeguarding Proforma.
- How does the school's ethos reflect a culture of safeguarding vigilance? How do you know that all of your staff share the values held within your mission statement (SDP requirement 1)?
- What is the impact, on the outcomes for children, staff and parents, of the strategies used to promote (i) health and well-being (ii) child protection (iii) attendance, and (iv) good behaviour and discipline of the children (SDP requirement 2c)?
- What is the impact of the strategies used to manage and promote staff attendance, health and well-being (SDP requirement 2e)?

Financial management

- Is the school budget within a 5% deficit/surplus?
- How effectively is the management of the human, financial and material resources matched to the children's needs and priorities? For example, targeting social need (TSN), Looked After Children, Newcomers and Travellers.

MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL AND CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Purpose of the meeting

- The principal and the chair of the board of governors will outline:
 - the impact of the school development planning process on the outcomes for learners and on the quality of the provision;
 - the role of leadership and management, at all levels, to effect improvement; and
 - the effectiveness of the Care and Welfare, and Safeguarding procedures.
- The RI will provide feedback on the questionnaire returns.

Guidance for the meeting

- The meeting should last no longer than 45 minutes.
- The meeting will be attended by the principal, the chair of governors (or representative, however, not the teacher representative on the board of governors), the RI and another member of the inspection team.

Areas for discussion

The following discussion points are for guidance only and should not be considered as a prescriptive list. The inspection team will ask questions emerging from lines of enquiry.

Governance – strategic leadership and school development planning process

- What is your role in the school development planning process, including your involvement in identifying the priorities; monitoring the progress; and impact of the action plans?
- How well do the children perform academically, personally and socially? Are these outcomes good enough? How are children supported in overcoming barriers to learning e.g. attendance, behaviour, special educational or social and emotional needs? How does the school meet the additional needs of gifted, newcomer or traveller children?
- How do you, as a governing body, assure yourselves that all DE requirements regarding child protection and safeguarding are in place? What oversight do the governors have of policies and procedures, case recording and the impact on practice? Have there been any recent safeguarding incidents/issues: what did you learn from them?
- Can you provide an example of how the governors have provided support or challenge to the principal, staff or the school?
- How do you encourage positive working relationships at all levels? Is there sufficient regular contact between the board of governors, staff, children and parents?
- How do you plan in the short and longer term to ensure that the budget facilitates the needs of the children including accommodation?

Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B**
 ii. **School Reference Number:** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Primary**

B.

School Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Year 1 Intake				
Enrolments				
Primary				
Reception				
Nursery Unit				
Special Education Unit / Learning Support Centre (LSC)				
Irish-Medium Unit				

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection.

For previous years, it is the figure in the annual return to DE. .

The calculations at C and D are based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

C.

Name of Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment				
% School attendance				
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	Not available	Not available
FSME Percentage ¹				
No. of children on SEN register				
% of children on SEN register				
No. of children with statements of educational need				
No. of newcomer children				

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

- D. i. Number of teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

Primary	Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Education Unit/ LSC	Irish-Medium Unit

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): NI PTR:
- iii. Average Class Size:
- iv. Class Size (Range):
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**: a). Clerical support:
 b). Foundation Stage classroom
 assistant support:
 c). Additional hours of other
 classroom assistant support:
- vi. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age:
- vii. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2015/16 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-Medium schools):

English % Mathematics % Irish %

- viii. If there is a composite class with reception children in it, please indicate the numbers of children in the other year groups:

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3

- ix. Number of families in the school:

Section 2: Assessment information

With regard to the school's statutory and non-statutory assessment, you are asked to provide **an analysis of the performance data** which you use to track the attainment and progress of the children regarding English, mathematics, ICT and Irish. As almost all primary schools make use of C2K Assessment Manager, you may find it beneficial to select certain reports which are able to demonstrate the progress and attainment of the children who have been assessed at regular intervals.

ENGLISH

IRISH (in Irish-Medium schools)

MATHEMATICS

ICT

Section 3: Teaching Staff Details

Teacher*	Class taught	Number of children**	Room	Allowance grade	Special responsibilities	Qualifications	Total years service	Years in this school

* Please identify any substitute teacher with (S).

** If more than one-year group, please indicate composition of class.

Section 4: In-Service Training

Teacher	Courses attended during the last 2 years	Organising authority e.g. EA/College/RTU	Duration of course

Section 5: Governor Details

GOVERNOR ROLES AND TRAINING

Governor	Year appointed to board of governors	Specific roles and responsibilities (chair, vice-chair, sub-committees, child protection/ safeguarding, SEN etc...)	Details and dates of courses or training attended

PRIMARY INSPECTION

GUIDANCE
for
CO-ORDINATORS, TEACHERS
and **SUPPORT STAFF**

PRACTICALITIES

PRE-INSPECTION VISIT: The Reporting Inspector (RI) will make arrangements to visit the school prior to the first day of the inspection. The purpose of this visit is for the RI to meet with the principal and discuss the context of the school, the outcomes for the children and the school development planning process. The RI will arrange to meet with all of the teaching staff at the close of the school day to outline the inspection process and to address any queries they may have.

CLASS VISITS: Our aim is to obtain a comprehensive overview of the quality of the learning and teaching in the school. To facilitate flexibility in making the most effective use of our classroom visits, it will not be possible for us to provide timetables of our visits. Teachers, including part-time and substitute teachers, should expect typically, on average, one or two classroom visits during the inspection. During class visits, inspectors may engage with classroom assistants to discuss their role in supporting individual or groups of children. We will observe children at work and will engage with them at an appropriate opportunity during the lesson.

DOCUMENTATION TO BE AVAILABLE IN EACH CLASSROOM DURING THE INSPECTION:

- Teacher's planning file, including previous planning and evaluations of the learning and teaching.
- Class assessment information.
- Individual education plans (IEPs) including any evidence of tracking and reviews of progress.
- Books showing children's work across the curriculum (to include two samples each for high, average and low achieving children in literacy, numeracy and World Around Us (WAU)).
- Evidence of the children's use of and progress in information and communication technology (ICT).

JOINT LESSON OBSERVATIONS: Joint lesson observations are offered during four-day primary inspections and provide an opportunity for the principal or a designated observer to participate in a joint lesson/session/activity observation alongside an inspector. Further information and guidance is available on the ETI website, in the document Joint Lesson Observations.

TIMETABLE CHANGES: In exceptional circumstance we may request that you change the timing of a lesson on a particular day. A timetable change will only happen with the full agreement of the teacher. If you wish to make any changes, please inform us through the principal/representative.

DOCUMENTATION: We will look at the documentation currently in use and relevant to the inspection. The School Development Plan (SDP), school policies, curriculum planning and assessment documentation, performance data and any other relevant documentation for the areas being inspected should be made available in the base room.

CO-ORDINATORS: A time will be arranged to meet with the relevant co-ordinators (for example, literacy, numeracy, designated teacher, SENCO). The purpose of the meeting is

for the co-ordinator to demonstrate how targets are identified and how the impact of the subsequent actions is evaluated, and has led to improvement in the leadership and management, the quality of provision for learning and the outcomes for the children. (Appendix 5)

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING: Prior to the inspection, the designated teacher (DT), principal and chair of the board of governors should complete the ETI Safeguarding Proforma which should then be verified and signed by both the principal and the chair of governors. The completed proforma should be presented to the RI on the pre-inspection day with the relevant policies and evidence. A time will be arranged, during the inspection, to talk to the DT, principal and chair of the board of governors about the information contained in the completed Safeguarding Proforma. The discussion with the DT will centre on the nature and organisation of the safeguarding training for all staff and the preventative curriculum for safeguarding e.g. Anti-bullying, online safety, PDMU and RSE programmes.

QUESTIONNAIRES: All inspections look at the school's arrangements for safeguarding, particularly in relation to Department of Education (DE) Circulars. The ETI will collate the returns from the parental, support staff and teacher questionnaires. If requested, we will be available to meet with any member of, for example, the board of governors, the staff or the parents. The findings of the teacher, support staff and parent questionnaires will be shared with the principal and with the board of governors. At some time during the inspection, we will talk with a group of children from years 6 and/or 7. A member of the inspection team may visit the dining hall and the playground during break or lunch time to observe the children in a less formal setting and to engage with the supervisory staff regarding their role.

INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN'S PROGRESS: Assessment portfolios/folders/e-portfolios and any other significant assessment information, including the school's statutory assessment outcomes regarding the children's levels of progression in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT will contribute to our information base. This may also include records of interventions and progress made through small group or individual support led by classroom assistants.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN): The inspection team will evaluate the quality of the SEN provision, at whole school and class level, and the impact of intervention programmes and IEPs on the children's learning and well-being.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH TEACHERS: In most instances, at or towards the end of an observed lesson, the member of the inspection team will relay to the teacher the key strengths and any areas for improvement evident in learning and teaching. A further discussion may be arranged at the request of either the teacher or the member of the inspection team at a mutually agreed time. Throughout the inspection, we will meet with the principal/representative to provide emerging key findings on the quality of the outcomes for children, the quality of provision for learning and the leadership and management in the school.

ROLE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE: The school is invited to nominate a representative to liaise with the inspection team. This representative is usually the principal of the school and should be able to manage the inspection from the school's perspective. The RI will provide further information during the pre-inspection visit. Acceptance of this role is on a voluntary basis and schools are not obliged to nominate a representative. During the inspection, the RI, along with the inspection team, will keep the representative informed of the emerging

findings together with the underpinning evidence used to support the inspection team's evaluations. The RI will ensure that the representative is aware of any issues which are emerging, with a particular emphasis on any areas of the school's provision or work that may be at risk of an evaluation which is less than good. The representative will be invited to attend a team meeting at the end of each day of the inspection. At the moderation meeting, the final decisions on specific performance levels rest with the ETI inspection team. **The representative is required to keep the information confidential.** Finally, please make us aware, through the principal/representative, of any special events which may be taking place during the inspection, which you feel may affect your work or timetables.

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

ORAL REPORT BACK: The RI, accompanied by a colleague, will provide an oral report back, to the principal, vice-principal/senior teacher (where appropriate), chairperson of the board of governors and a representative(s) of the Employing Authority. We encourage those present at the report-back meeting to make a note of the key findings.

THE REPORT: The report will issue to the school and will be accessible from the ETI website.

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES: Guidance regarding follow-up procedures can be found in the document "What Happens after an Inspection" available on the ETI website.

PARTIAL/INCOMPLETE INSPECTIONS

In some instances, for example, inclement weather or unique circumstances, the ETI may not be able to complete all aspects of an inspection. These are dealt with by the ETI on a school by school basis, and it is important for the principal and the RI to stay in contact throughout the inspection process.

The underlying protocols adhered to by the ETI in these situations are:

- the ETI will endeavour to complete as much of the inspection as possible;
- the principal (or chair of the board of governors if the principal is unable to be involved) should liaise with the RI, including the provision of information around the extent of any issues;
- the ETI will require access to:
 - the SDP and all related school documentation including action plans and teachers' planning, whole-school policies for literacy, numeracy, ICT, special educational needs ,safeguarding etc.;
 - groups of children for the care and welfare, and safeguarding discussions; and
 - the children's written work;
- the ETI will publish a letter outlining the progress made on the inspection and any associated evaluations, including the adequacy of the school's arrangements for safeguarding; and
- the inspection will be completed, with little or no further notification to the school, as soon as possible after the issue has been resolved.

Further detail around the arrangements specific to individual schools will be provided through the RI.

MEETING WITH CO-ORDINATOR

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is for the co-ordinator to demonstrate how targets are identified and how the **impact** of the subsequent actions is evaluated, and has **led to improvement** in the leadership and management, the quality of provision for learning and the outcomes for the children.

Guidance for the meeting

- The meeting is designed to last no longer than **30 minutes**.
- The co-ordinator should provide relevant, supporting documentary evidence, selected from existing documentation and **signposted to relevant sections**.
- Other meetings with the co-ordinator are possible should either the inspectors or the co-ordinator request them during the inspection.

Areas for discussion

The following discussion areas are for **guidance only** and should not be considered as a prescriptive list. The inspection team will ask important questions emerging from lines of enquiry.

- How and why were these priorities identified, including the use of qualitative and quantitative data?
- How do you monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children?
- What are the improvements, because of the monitoring and evaluating, in learning/teaching/outcomes?
- How is the school targeting high, low and potential underachievement? How does the school know that target groups and intervention programmes are making a sustained difference to the children's attainment?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PRIMARY INSPECTION

1. Do we have to change our timetables if the RI asks?

The RI may need to agree changes with the school in order to gather information about a certain skill or line of enquiry, or to optimise the coverage of the inspection. It would be helpful if the school were able to accommodate these requests, although the ETI will try to minimise them.

2. Do I stop the principal release teacher or a part-time teacher/tutor coming to the school during the inspection days?

Inspectors need to see the school operating as it normally does; it would not be appropriate to make staff changes just for inspection.

3. I am a principal of a very small school with a full-time teaching commitment, and need to attend the meeting with the chair of the governors and the ETI. How will the ETI accommodate this meeting alongside the observation of my teaching?

The ETI understands fully the demands upon teaching principals during inspection. It is important that these issues are discussed early on with the RI, so that suitable arrangements may be made.

4. If a member of staff contacts the school close to the inspection to say that s/he is sick and cannot attend the inspection, what do I do?

Staff can be absent for a number of reasons. Please continue to make the school's normal cover arrangements but inform the RI as soon as possible via the Inspection Services Team before the inspection or in person during the inspection. Where a substitute teacher is employed, s/he should be informed that s/he will be observed by a member of the ETI team.

5. If I think the team has not seen something important, what do I do?

The RI will welcome any supporting evidence during the course of the inspection and within the timescale as indicated on page 4.

6. If we have something special scheduled in the school during the on-site inspection, should I let the RI know?

Yes, absolutely; please ensure that the RI is informed on the pre-inspection visit. The team will do their best to see the area that has been identified though it may not be possible for the inspectors to accommodate all requests. If the school or the RI feels that the event could have a detrimental impact on the process of the inspection, for example, it involves a proportionately large number of the children, then the RI and the principal should discuss this and determine the best course of action to ensure the effective running of the inspection from the school's viewpoint.

7. Will the evaluations be affected if I don't have statutory requirements in place?

Yes. Failure to meet statutory requirements, particularly in relation to care and welfare, and safeguarding, school development planning or curriculum provision will affect the outcome of the area under inspection and the overall effectiveness level for the school.

8. Do I choose the children for the inspection team to meet?

No. You will be advised by the RI of the children the inspectors will wish to meet. You will be asked to provide a list of the year 6 and/or 7 classes and the RI will choose randomly up to 8 children. If for any reason you think that a child should not attend the care and welfare, and safeguarding discussion, for example, due to a recent close family bereavement or serious illness, please discuss this with the RI. It is useful for principals to include a wide representative range of children; for example, children who are at Stage 5 on the Code of Practice, those who have recently joined your school or those who are newcomers to Northern Ireland. Please also indicate School- or Eco-Council members, if applicable.

9. Do I need to make sure that the team has a selection of children's books from all classes/learning areas for able, average and less able children?

Yes. Access to children's work is a critical part of the evidence base upon which evaluations on standards of work are made.

The teachers are requested to provide the team with a selection of books from each class – usually 2 or 3 from able, average and less able children. Please indicate on each pile which category the books belong. A range of literacy and numeracy books is useful; and, if you can also provide evidence of connected learning, for example, in the World Around Us (WAU), Music or Art and PE, this would be appropriate. In addition, you may wish to leave a selection of evidence from other media sources, for example, tablets, displays, project work, photographs and other digital media.

Samples of years 2, 4 and 7 books should be left in the base room (to include two samples of literacy, numeracy and WAU for high, average and low achieving children in each of these year groups).

10. Will the inspectors meet with all learning area co-ordinators?

The ETI team will meet with the core co-ordinators as relevant to the focus of the inspection including literacy and/or numeracy, the SENCO and the designated teacher for safeguarding and child protection. Depending on the size of the school, there may not be time to meet with other co-ordinators: the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators should be in a position to discuss standards and achievements and the special educational needs provision throughout the school. If there are curriculum teams in the school, it may be possible to arrange a group meeting. The RI will discuss this in detail and make arrangements with the principal at the pre-inspection visit.

Those invited to meet inspectors should be prepared to refer them to the most recent and relevant documentation and evidence of the impact of the School Development Plan on the quality of learning and teaching, and the outcomes which the children attain.