

Supplementary guidance:

identifying and writing
case studies of
effective practice

Autumn 2017

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult community learning
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people
- ▲ teacher education and training
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
- ▲ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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What is the purpose of this supplementary guidance?

To provide updated guidance for inspectors on identifying and writing case studies of effective practice.

For whom is it intended?

Inspectors of maintained and independent schools, non-maintained settings and Post 16/FE.

From when should it be used?

September 2017.

Supplementary guidance

The key Estyn documents that guide inspection activity are the inspection guidance handbooks for each sector. However, we also produce supplementary guidance to help inspectors to consider specific aspects of education and training further.

The supplementary guidance documents set out some key principles, considerations and resources for inspectors. They relate to all sectors that Estyn inspects, unless they state that they are for a specific sector. They expand on certain aspects of education/training (e.g. the inspection of literacy) or on ways of conducting inspections (e.g. the use of learning walks) or specific inspection arrangements (e.g. guidance on inspecting church schools).

The supplementary guidance documents do not aim to be comprehensive. Inspectors are not required to work through them exhaustively when covering any specific aspect on an inspection. However, inspectors may find them useful when responding to specific emerging questions that arise during inspections or when they wish to reflect or investigate further.

The supplementary guidance documents may help providers gain an understanding of Estyn's inspection arrangements. They may also be helpful to providers in evaluating specific aspects of their own provision.

Our inspection work is based on the following principles:

- Inspectors will approach inspection with a positive mindset to ensure it is the best possible professional learning experience for the staff in each provider
- Inspectors will take a learner-focused approach to inspection
- Inspectors will always focus strongly on the quality of teaching and learning
- Inspectors will seek out well-considered innovative practice
- Inspectors will tailor the inspection activities according to the circumstances in each provider as far as possible
- Inspectors will be agile and responsive to emerging findings and will use the increased range of inspection tools and approaches available
- Inspectors will consider everything in the inspection framework, but will only report on the key strengths and weaknesses within each provider

Case studies of effective practice

Estyn is committed to identifying and disseminating effective practice in schools/providers in order to ensure that all providers can benefit from the excellent work of others. Over recent years, Estyn has published best practice case studies on its website to encourage schools/providers, leaders, managers and staff to access them for training and development purposes and to set high professional standards. From September 2017, Estyn will extend this approach to include case studies of interesting or innovative practice that inspection teams consider to be worthy of sharing or emulation by others.

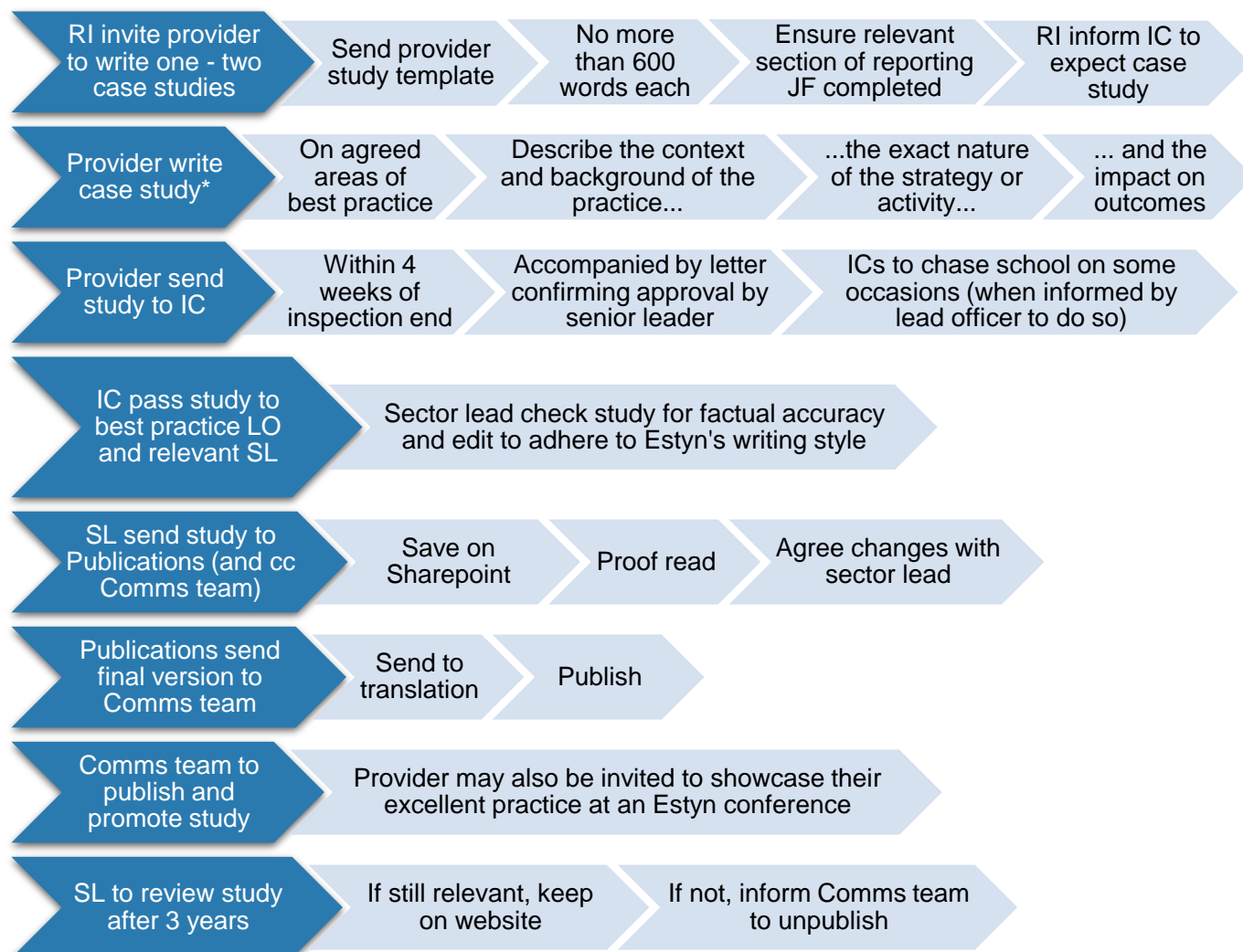
The points below provide guidance for the inspection team when considering case studies of effective practice.

- 1 There is an expectation for schools/providers to highlight to inspectors any effective practice that they have identified in their most recent self-evaluation report. This should be the starting point for inspectors' consideration of examples of effective practice.
- 2 If a school/provider gains an excellent judgement for any Inspection Area, the inspection team will have identified one, or possibly more, examples of effective practice at the school/provider that are worthy of emulation and warrant wider dissemination. These case studies will continue link to excellent judgements and exemplify highly effective practice. After September 2017, the RI should continue to ask the school/provider for a case study where there is an excellent judgement. See: [Guidance on the evaluation of very strong, sustained performance and practice.](#)
- 3 In the new inspection arrangements, the inspection team may identify examples of interesting or innovative effective practice that are worthy of sharing with others, even if the Inspection Area overall has not received a judgement of excellent. In such cases, the RI will invite the school/provider to prepare one or two optional written case studies on the agreed areas of effective practice.
- 4 However, inspectors should not request case studies for interesting or innovative practice when the inspection places a school/provider in follow-up or where the leadership and management is judged lower than 'Good'. As a general rule, the case study should also not relate directly to an Inspection Area that receives lower than 'Good' overall.
- 5 Innovative practice may be cutting edge work that pushes at the boundaries, but it does not have to be unique. If the work stems from collaboration with or learning from others, then it is unlikely to be unique.
- 6 Interesting practice need not always be innovative. Its merit may lie more in its sustained impact over time, the high level of its effectiveness or the particular drive and imagination associated with it that may distinguish it from work that may appear similar in other providers. Such examples may be closer to what we have previously understood as 'best practice', even though the inspection area where this practice occurs may not have received an overall judgement of 'Excellent'.

- 7 The team should be confident that the practice described is work that other schools/providers could take forward in different settings. If the reasons for its interest lie in the fact that it cannot be easily replicated, it is unlikely that it will be of much value to other providers.
- 8 Schools/providers may have established innovative practice relatively recently. In such cases, the work may not have demonstrated sustained impact on outcomes for pupils/learners. This makes it difficult to judge the overall effectiveness of the practice or whether the school/provider can sustain the improvement and or its impact on learners over time. However, the practice may still have interest to other schools/providers and be worthy of further consideration.
- 9 Where the Estyn website already contains case studies of very similar practice, further case studies are unlikely to generate much value, but the practice may still be excellent or highly effective in itself.
- 10 What constitutes interesting and innovative practice may change as the inspection cycle moves on and schools/providers develop and improve their practice further.

What happens after the inspection team identifies effective practice?

RI – Reporting Inspector **IC** – Inspection Co-ordinator Officer **SL** – Sector Lead **LO** – Lead Officer



* The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit the content and presentational style of the case studies written by the school/provider. The final decision on whether to publish a case study rests with the Inspectorate.