

PRIMARY

Inspection Guidance

September 2017

GENERAL INFORMATION: Sustaining Improvement Inspection

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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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 improvement¹, 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 improvement² 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 be conducted by the District Inspector (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 lines of inquiry linked to the priorities identified in the SDP³ and will evaluate how the quality of safeguarding has been sustained or improved.

The line(s) of inquiry must be substantive and, in the case of a school evaluated previously as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement⁴, may include confirming that an area(s) for improvement identified, at the time of the last inspection, has been addressed.

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

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

3 *The Education (School Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland (2010) Schedule for Regulations.*

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

During the SII, there will be a scrutiny and discussion of a specific sample of school self-evaluation documents as part of the SDP process and of first-hand data analysis related directly to the line(s) of inquiry. This will include the school's evaluation of: the outcomes for learners; the quality of learning and teaching; 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 the school's evaluation of safeguarding.

What is the focus of the sustaining improvement inspection?

While the ETI will focus on priority area(s) 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 line(s) of inquiry 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 on 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 by the IST⁵.
- Further guidance on the inspection process will be provided by 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 chair or a representative to be at the report back at the end of day two, at approximately 3:30 pm.
- If available, a base room should be provided for the RI.

⁵ There may be occasions, for example, school/public holidays where the notification period will be more than two working days from the Inspection Services Team (IST).

- The Complaints Procedure is available on the ETI website.

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 (a) line(s) of inquiry linked to the priorities identified in the SDP⁶. Normally, evaluation of the line(s) of inquiry will lead to an analysis of: learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; and, outcomes for learners.
- At the meeting, the RI and principal will discuss:
 - the outcomes for learners, 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 ongoing 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 to effect improvement in the children's learning and attainment; and
 - the safeguarding proforma.
- The agreed line(s) 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, a copy of the SDP, teachers' planning, available data and learners' work.
- In addition, the school should provide a copy of the completed safeguarding proforma⁷ signed by the chair of the board of governors and the principal; any issues identified will be followed up by the RI.

6 *The Education (School Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland (2010) Schedule for Regulations.*

7 *Safeguarding proforma.*

- 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 documentation, including the school's internal and external performance data and the quality of the learners' work.
- The RI will arrange meetings with key staff, including the principal, members of the senior leadership team, as necessary.
- The RI will present an oral report to the principal and chair of the board of governors⁸, if available, at the conclusion of the inspection.

The quality of arrangements for safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding will be included in the inspection and reported on during a SII. The ETI review and report on the school's evidence of assurance that safeguarding reflects and reflects broadly the DE's guidance.

The ETI also determine whether the school is monitoring and reviewing, at least annually, safeguarding and the children's welfare. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI's safeguarding proforma to underpin this process.

- 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 learners.
- The completed proforma will indicate to the RI the extent to which the school reflects or reflects broadly (based on its own self-assessment) the guidance issued by the DE 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 a 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 line(s) of inquiry may change to that of safeguarding. If a school does not provide sufficient assurance that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or

⁸ Or another representative of the governors if the chair is unavailable.

reflect broadly the DE's guidance, the ETI will return within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

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;
- performance data (qualitative or quantitative data) which forms part of the development plan evaluation and review indicating that the actions taken are leading to improvement for the learners including interventions for individuals or small groups of learners;
- individual education plans or personal learning plans;
- timetables for each class/session and any intervention groups; and
- samples of work which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes for learners. The ETI team may also look at classwork, work in books or portfolios or work on display.

The SII will last for two days. The following is an illustration of the activities; on all inspections the RI will agree the timetable with the principal.

Day 1

- Arrive at the school and introductions as required.
- Initial meeting with the principal.
- Review SDP for line(s) of inquiry.
- Completed safeguarding proforma provided to the RI.
- Queries clarified.
- Timetables obtained to select observations.
- Lesson observations/scrutiny of relevant documentation.
- Meetings with teachers as required, e.g. designated teacher/literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator⁹.
- Brief update meeting with the principal.

Day 2

- Brief meeting with the principal to confirm arrangements for the day and to address any issues or concerns arising from the previous day.
- Lesson observations as required.
- Scrutiny of documentation/class visits as required.
- Report writing.
- 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 back¹⁰ with the principal as the inspection progresses. The short report will reference the outcome of the original inspection, the line(s) of inquiry, key findings, the evaluation of safeguarding at the time of the SII and a conclusion as detailed overleaf.

⁹ Throughout the guidance, co-ordinator should be taken to mean co-ordinator or head of department/year/key stage, etc.

¹⁰ The Inspection performance 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 learners, the ETI will report accordingly. If during the SII, the ETI identify 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 a school does not demonstrate sufficiently to the ETI that it has sustained its 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 the 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 disclosure¹¹ is made to a member of the ETI team by a member of staff or a child or there are obvious breaches of online safety. This may trigger a six week follow-up visit.

Conclusion

Either

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 capacity¹² for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

Or

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

¹¹ If a disclosure is made, the RI will follow the procedures outlined in 'Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults: A Code of Good Practice for Members of Inspection Teams'.

¹² From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as outstanding/very good/good are 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:

Either

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. 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 learners; this will be reflected in the future inspection arrangements for the school.

If arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory¹³, reference will be made to a six week followup visit.

The outcome should remain confidential to the staff and board of governors until the report is published on the ETI website. The outcome is provisional, subject to moderation as part of ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published; the RI will mediate any change of outcome, as a result of moderation, to the principal. The key findings and any areas for improvement outlined orally, and the exact wording thereof, may be subject to change under ETI's quality assurance and editing processes.

¹³ *Or the school does not provide evidence of assurance that the arrangements reflect or reflect broadly the DE's guidance.*

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