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## **COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR INSPECTIONS in nursery, primary and secondary cycles**

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## 1. Introduction

A wide range of approaches is evident in the assessment and evaluation of the education provided in schools across the member states. The spectrum of approaches can range from a situation where external evaluation is effectively unknown, to a very formal system of centralised inspection. In some member states, external evaluation is largely an administrative process whereas in others the system of external evaluation combines both school self-evaluation and external evaluation by the inspectorate in an integrated school evaluation process.

Having taken into consideration the wide variety of approaches in the different member states this document demonstrates the philosophy of internal and external evaluation as a process and outlines a general inspection framework for implementation in the *nursery*, *primary* and *secondary cycles* of the European School system.

## 2. Inspection in the European Schools

The European School system recognises the importance of evaluation.

Following article 17 of the Convention about the Inspectors of the European Schools, the functions of the Board of Inspectors are 'to assure quality by setting up team and group inspections to supplement the work of individual inspectors, and by using the evaluation produced to improve the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' attainments', 'to ensure effective coordination and supervision of studies in all areas of the curriculum by providing appropriate specialist advice' and 'to use the inspectors' knowledge of the schools gained through inspection to spread good practice and promote harmonisation between sections'.

Article 18 of the Convention also mentions 'joint visits, team or group visits to inspect the teaching of a given subject or aspects of the work of the school' and indicates that 'inspection also serves the purpose of promoting the self evaluation of teachers and schools'.

External and internal evaluation can be regarded as two interrelated areas of one strategy for school development. One type of the external evaluation is inspection.

The main types of inspection in the European Schools are:

- inspections of individual teachers by the national inspector and
- team inspections.

Presently there are two types of team inspections:

- Subject inspections or inspections of a specific characteristic of the school system, e.g. transition nursery-primary-secondary
- Management inspections

In the supervision of European Schools all national inspectors are responsible for the quality of education of the seconded teachers of their own nationality.

Team inspections in the European Schools provide an independent, external evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and the overall effectiveness of a school in order to

improve the quality of provision for education, personal development and well-being of its learners and to provide the system with recommendations for future developments. The general inspection framework aims to provide a structure for team inspections. This framework includes a set of criteria, based on the document “Quality Assurance and Development in the European schools” (Ref: 2000-D-264), to be used as the basic tool for team inspections in subject areas (see annex).

In the European Schools, the team approach to assessing the quality of teaching and learning in a specific area has many strengths. They include the cross-section approach which encourages collaboration among teachers, the initiation of self-evaluation and quality improvement which enhances the harmonisation among schools. Team inspections need to be transparent, showing continuity and comparison. They also need reflection and provide constructive feedback, which will be incorporated into the recommendations for further development.

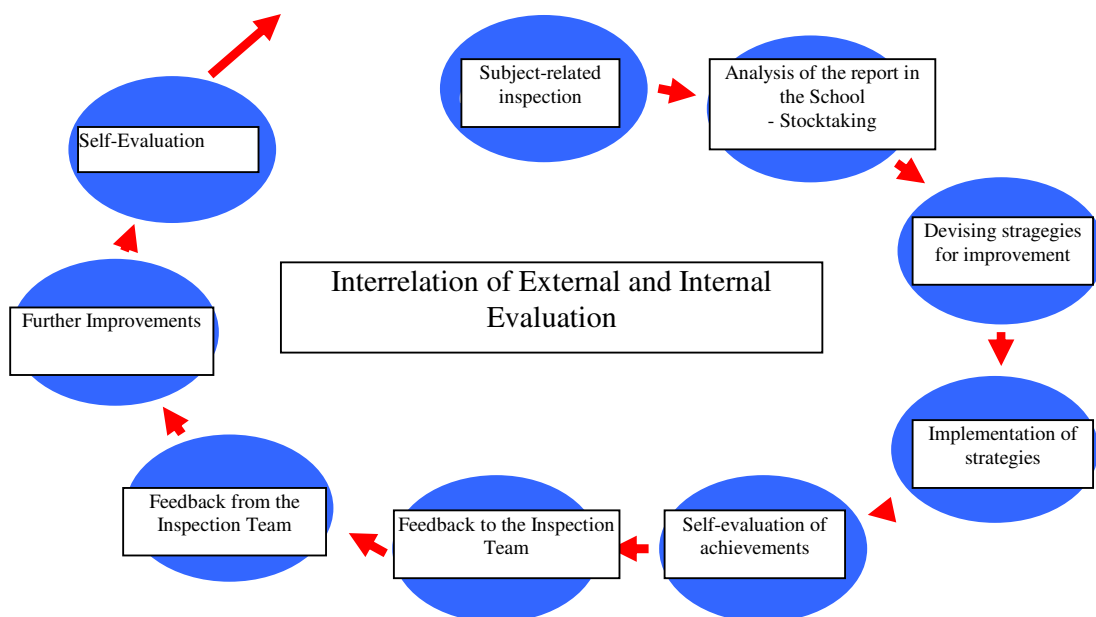
### 3. Rationale for team inspections

Team inspections are a tool for the appraisal of the quality of teaching and learning. They represent a form of external evaluation which is becoming increasingly important in the EU Member States and is based on scientifically substantiated findings.

Forms of external evaluation need to be linked with forms of internal evaluation in the actual school, both based on the document “Quality Assurance and Development in the European schools” (Ref: 2000-D-264) and current educational research.

Schools should become increasingly competent at identifying possibilities and development needs and implementing school improvement measures.

The diagram below illustrates the possible interrelation of both forms, the succession of measures being clearly visible at the same time in a spiral and development process. The cyclic and developmental process can start at any stage.



- The aims of evaluation are:
  - To identify, acknowledge and affirm good practice in schools
  - To promote continuing improvement in the quality of education offered by schools
  - To promote self-evaluation and continuous development by school and staff
  - To provide an assurance of quality in the educational system as a whole, based on the collection of objective, reliable and valid data.
  - To ensure that pupils make good progress
  
- Evaluation comprises **three stages**:
  - Collection and analysis of information and evidence
  - Evaluation of information and evidence
  - Working out the steps to be taken and the implementation of improvement strategies

## **4. Team inspections**

### **4.1 General principles for team inspections**

A structured evaluation system, guided by the need for comparability, transparency, sustainability and consistency both in the manner in which the inspection is carried out and in the style of reporting which it generates, is essential to the realisation of the aims of evaluation in European Schools. Therefore, it is necessary that each team inspection follows the same general principles as set out below:

- Use a set of general criteria and subject specific criteria
- Be conducted by small teams
- Be carried out at regular intervals and
- Take cognisance of the school's internal evaluation process.

### **4.2 Content of team inspections**

A set of general criteria (see annex) is developed which will cover the following areas:

- I. Management and organisation
- II. Curriculum and planning
- III. Resources
- IV. Teaching and Learning
- V. Assessment and achievements
- VI. Support (LS, SWALS, SEN)
- VII. Quality assurance and development

Examples of general indicators where appropriate are included in the annex. Specific indicators related to the criteria will be defined by the subject inspection team.

### **4.3 Composition of the Team**

A steering group of about 6 inspectors appointed by the Board of Inspectors has the general responsibility for the team inspections. The steering group will form the core of the inspection team. This team may be extended to cover expertise in the specific area of inspection and the language needs to facilitate communication with all engaged in the

process. Different combinations of the team will visit all European Schools to enhance harmonisation, credibility of the findings and to allow the teams to compare findings. A coordinating inspector will be appointed for each school.

#### **4.4 Pre-inspection activities**

A schedule for team inspection visits will be made available as far as possible at the beginning of the school year, to allow time for preparation. The school will be informed of the name of the coordinating inspector for the school. This will be the liaison person between the inspection team and the school throughout the entire process.

The coordinating inspector:

- will contact the school informing about the intended inspection and the proposed time schedule and asking for relevant documents
- will send a set of criteria and indicators to the school as background information, which may be used in preparation for the self-evaluation.
- will finalise the organisation of the inspection after receiving the documents from the school
- will liaise with the inspection team in agreed time

The management of the school:

- send all relevant documents including results of a self-evaluation.
- inform teachers, pupils and parents about the purpose and the requirements of the inspection
- four weeks prior to the inspection the school will send a proposed time table for the in-school inspection visit. This may be carried out in cooperation with the coordinating inspector.

#### **4.5 In-School inspection**

Inspection teams will gather first-hand evidence during the visit, which will focus on:

- a representative sample of not less than 10 % of lessons will be observed
- Class visits: lessons will be observed in all sections and in as many levels as possible. 50 % of the lessons to be seen jointly (by 2 inspectors together), in these class visits a variety of teachers should be covered (specialist teachers in that subject, normal class teacher, etc)
- Transition process nursery-primary and primary-secondary
- Aspects of resources, facilities, financing, staffing
- Planning documents, school development plan as well as planning documents of teachers
- Assessment procedures and evaluation documents
- Meetings with the directorate, coordinators, teachers, parents, pupils, relevant other participants.

During the visit relevant documents (e.g. school development plan, subject projects, etc) must be available to the team.

#### **4.6 The outcome of the inspection**

At the conclusion of each inspection visit, an oral feedback is given by the inspectors to the directorate and coordinators.

A draft report, which will cover the criteria of the subject and will reach an overall judgement on the quality of education in that specific subject together with recommendations concerning specific areas where there is scope for further development, will be sent to the individual schools for factual verification. The factual errors or omissions will be changed by the coordinating inspector after consultation of the team and then the report will be issued to the school. This will then become the final report and it will be presented to the school management preferably within 6 weeks of the conclusion of the school inspection visit. The school management should decide how to communicate the outcomes of the inspection to staff, parents, etc.

On the basis of these individual school reports a general report for the Board of Governors may be produced and will outline the overall conclusions and recommendations for future developments on a systems level.

#### **4.7 Post-inspection activities**

The report will initiate a school internal process in which the school will focus on the recommendations given. Preferably within 6 weeks of the report being issued the school will send feedback to the coordinator inspector. The feedback will focus on the action to be taken in the short or long term, the roles and responsibilities of school staff and the methods of self-evaluation to be employed to monitor the development process. The actions planned will be incorporated into the school development plan. Specific attention in the school development plan will be given to the continual professional development of staff, an area which is inextricably connected to quality improvement.

The coordinating inspector will engage in ongoing communication with the school in order to follow up the development process in the specific subject area. This will be an interlinked monitoring process based on self-evaluation and the school development processes.

### **5. Quality assurance and development**

Quality assurance and quality development is the responsibility of each school. School self-evaluation is a tool towards school development. The importance of self-evaluation as a continuous process that is interrelated with the external inspections must be at the heart of the school development process. Self-evaluation makes an important contribution to inspections. It provides the school and the inspectors with a means to ensure that external evaluation covers matters of potential significance to the school. Schools have a range of possible internal processes for monitoring their own performance and evaluating the effectiveness of their work in raising achievement. Such monitoring and evaluation should contribute, directly or indirectly, to periodic updating of the school development plan, which maps out priorities for action. The school sets out the planning for implementation of these priorities, including in-service training and development.

A summary of the findings of self-evaluation on the specific subject undertaken by the school will be used by the team inspection to focus inspection effort where it matters most. The school's summary is used as basis for discussion between the team of inspectors and relevant parties, e.g. directorate, coordinators, teachers, pupils and parents.

## **6. Prospect**

This document must be seen as a starting point of an ongoing process. The document can be regularly reviewed with a formal evaluation taking place after 4 years. The learning gateway will be used as a tool to further support this process.

## Catalogue of examples of general criteria and indicators for team inspections

### I. Management and organisation

| Criteria  | Indicators  |
|---|---|
| The school management ensures teachers are up-to date with current pedagogical developments both in terms of subject content and methodology. | There is evidence of :<br>planning and follow up of in-service training,<br>implementation of the outcomes of in-service training,<br>personal development plans,<br>portfolios, etc. |
| The school management enables and encourages cooperation and coordination within and between sections, subjects and cycles.                   | There is evidence of teachers exchanging professional experiences and expertise between cycles and levels, between sections and between schools, etc.                                 |
| The school has clear policy for transition from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary.   | There is evidence of procedures for transition of information from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary (meetings, visits, projects, etc).                                |
| Coordinators have an organisational and pedagogical role.   | There are job descriptions for the role of coordinator.<br>There is evidence of meetings, projects, etc.  |
| The school management ensures an effective use of teaching time.  | Timetabling ensures an equitable distribution of subject time through the week/half term.<br>There is a homework policy.  |

### II. Curriculum and planning

| Criteria   | Indicators   |
|--|--|
| The school management ensures that the planning of the curriculum is regularly reviewed and revised. | There are long term and short term planning, based on the curriculum                                     |
| There is continuity and progression from year to year.   | There is evidence of transfer of planning and other valuable information (individual attainment /needs). |
| The planning within and across the sections is harmonised.   | The school planning guidelines and templates are used.   |
| Individual needs of pupils are respected.  | Differentiation is taken into account in planning.   |

### III. Resources

| Criteria   | Indicators   |
|--|--|
| Human resources are efficiently managed.         | Teachers are appropriately qualified.<br>Assignments of tasks are related to experience and expertise of teachers.   |
| Financial resources are efficiently managed.     | The budget assigned for the subject is spent effectively.<br>Resources are available to enable pupils to learn effectively in all areas of the curriculum.<br>Resources are used effectively to implement the syllabi. |
| A range of adequate equipment is available.      | There is an adequate supply of subject-related equipment<br>There is an adequate supply of ICT equipment.  |
| Appropriate facilities are available.            |  |
| A range of European dimension resources is used. | There is a range of appropriate resources available and easily accessible.<br>European, multicultural and national resources are used appropriately and integrated into the teaching.                                  |
| Time resource is managed effectively.            | Measures are taken to make best use of teaching time.  |

### IV. Teaching and Learning

| Criteria   | Indicators  |
|--|---|
| Teachers realise the programme/planning.   | Lessons are planned, well structured and relate to the syllabus.<br>Teachers show knowledge of the subject and the European School syllabus.<br>European dimension is integrated in the teaching and learning process.<br>Cross curricular links are emphasized.  |
| Teachers employ a variety of teaching and learning methods appropriately used to the content to be taught. | Teachers communicate the aims, objectives and competences to be accomplished.<br>The teaching where possible encourages awareness of broadened context outside the classroom or the particular lesson.<br>Teachers enable pupils to cooperate with one another<br>Teachers involve all pupils actively.<br>Teachers integrate ICT during lessons. |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Teachers motivate pupils to be active learners. | <p>Pupils have a positive attitude to learning.</p> <p>Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how to improve their own learning.</p> <p>Pupils are increasingly responsible for aspects of their own learning.</p> <p>Teachers create an environment in which pupils can learn independently and collaboratively and support each others' learning.</p> <p>Pupils use ICT.</p> |
| Teachers show effective classroom management.   | <p>Teachers create a stimulating learning environment.</p> <p>Teachers use resources effectively.</p> <p>Teachers use teaching time effectively.</p>  |

#### **V. Assessment and achievements**

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Indicators</b>  |
|---|--|
| Teachers follow the school policy on evaluation and assessment.   | <p>Teachers continually evaluate pupil progress (formatively and summatively)</p> <p>A range of different assessment strategies is used to provide a broad picture of pupils' capabilities, included skills, values and attitudes.</p> |
| Assessment methods are transparent.                               | <p>Records of pupils progress are maintained.</p> <p>Pupils' results are analysed.</p> <p>Pupils' attainments are communicated to their parents.</p>   |
| Pupils increasingly develop the ability to assess their own work. | <p>Pupils' self-assessment skills are developed by using a range of different strategies.</p>  |

#### **VI. Support (LS, SWALS, SEN, Rattrapage)**

| <b>Criteria</b>                                  | <b>Indicators</b>   |
|--|---|
| The formal regulations on support are respected. | <p>There are harmonised procedures in place to identify pupils with different learning needs.</p> <p>Support and guidance is in place to address the different learning needs of pupils.</p> <p>IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) are compiled reviewed and updated.</p> <p>Given support is monitored.</p> |

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
|                                     | The coordinators' tasks and responsibilities are clear,  |
| Resources for support are in place. | Support materials are available (ICT, national materials) and easy to access.<br>Time allocation of support is transparent and flexible. |

### **VII. Quality assurance and development**

| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Indicators</b>  |
|--|--|
| There is a structure for quality assurance and development.  | There is cyclic procedure for self-evaluation.<br>There is a policy on evaluation and assessment of pupil progress.  |
| In the school development plan the school has described its vision and its areas of improvement.   | The school has clearly stated its' aims and objectives.<br>The school has short and long term planning to realise its improvements.<br>The school development plan is compiled in consultation with the different stakeholders of the school.<br>The school has a policy on ICT.<br>The in-service training plan is part of the school development plan. |
| The financial policy and priorities are related to the overall aims and objectives and to the areas of improvement in the school development plan. |  |