



Schola Europaea / Office of the Secretary-General

Pedagogical Development

Ref.: 2019-09-D-24-en-5 <sup>1</sup>

Orig.: EN

---

## Common framework for Whole School Inspections in nursery/primary and secondary cycles

---

Approved by the Joint Teaching Committee – Meeting on 8 and 9 October  
2020

Document 2019-09-D-24-en-4 will repeal and replace document 2019-09-D-24-en-2 at  
the end of the second round of Whole School Inspections

---

<sup>1</sup> Update of Annex 2 in October 2021: Provisional Calendar - Overview planning whole school inspections. Please note that the latest version of the calendar can be found in the annual 'Pedagogical Development and Quality Assurance of the European Schools' document.

## **Content**

### **1. Introduction**

### **2. Whole School Inspection in Nursery/Primary and Secondary**

#### **2.1. General principles for the whole School Inspection and Follow-up**

#### **2.2. Organisation of the Whole School Inspection**

#### **2.3. Pre-inspection activities**

#### **2.4. In-school inspection**

#### **2.5. The outcome of the inspection**

#### **2.6. Post-inspection activities**

#### **2.7. Summary of WSI timetable**

### **3. Decision of the Joint Teaching Committee**

#### **Annex 1: Domains, criteria and indicators for Whole School Inspections**

#### **Annex 2: Provisional Calendar - Overview planning whole school inspections**

#### **Annex 3: Example inspection programme**

## 1. Introduction

In accordance with Article 17 of the Convention, which concerns 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 the standards of pupils' attainment', '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'.

In December 2009 the Board of Governors approved the Rules of procedure for the Boards of Inspectors (2009-D-225-en-5). This document mentions in article 1 'that the two Boards of Inspectors shall put in place, at system level, analysis instruments and evaluation criteria enabling the quality of the education provided to be ensured. To that end, they shall be responsible for individual inspection of teachers, inspection of sections and team inspections of the teaching of the different subjects and of thematic topics of whole-school dimensions.' A Common framework for Whole School Inspections in nursery/primary and secondary cycles was drawn up. This involved a whole school inspection in schools every four years and a follow-up inspection two years after the WSI.

In 2015, four years after the start of the first round of the Whole School Inspection process, a formal evaluation of the Common Framework was completed. The steering group took the opportunity to propose a different approach. This new approach further utilised the schools' own self-evaluation and the results of their follow-up. This new approach also included the participation of a director in the inspection team.

In 2019, the WSI steering committee reviewed the findings from the second round of Whole School Inspections 2016-2019. The steering committee noted that the main recommendations for improvement are in the area of teaching and learning. Therefore the steering committee proposes that, for the third round of whole school inspections the focus should be on teaching and learning - the core business of the school. The WSI steering committee has made a selection of criteria to provide this stronger focus on teaching and learning for the third round of whole school inspections.

## 2. Whole School Inspection in Nursery/Primary and Secondary

Whole school inspections in the European Schools provide an external evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and the overall effectiveness of a school in order to improve the quality of education. This external evaluation incorporates the schools' self-evaluation. WSIs should provide constructive feedback, possibilities for reflection, analysis and comparison and provide the schools and the system with recommendations for future developments.

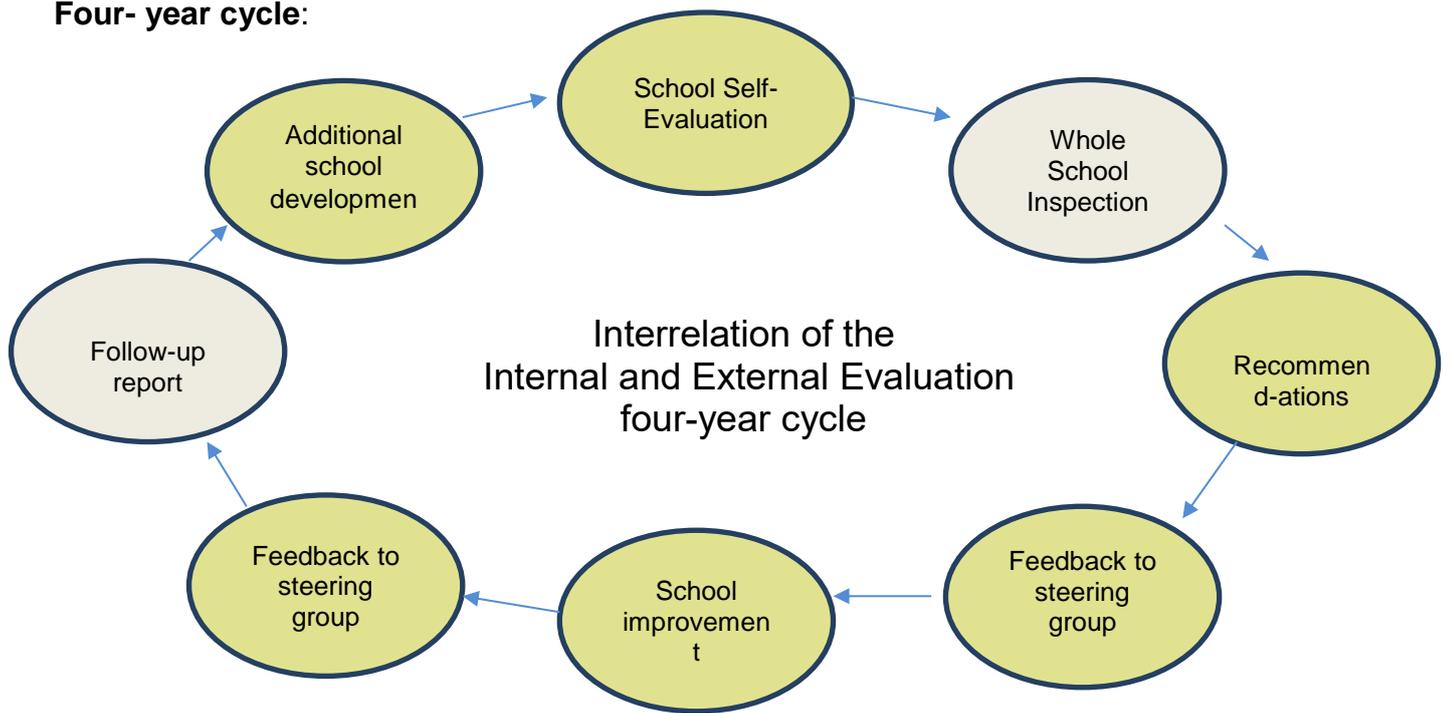
This inspection framework provides a transparent and continuous structure for Whole School Inspection process. This framework includes a catalogue of criteria and general indicators, based on the document "Quality Assurance and Development in the European schools" (Ref: 2000-D-264). The WSI steering committee has made a selection of criteria to provide a stronger focus on teaching and learning during the third round of whole school inspections. It is envisaged that a similar selection process could be undertaken to determine the focus for whole school inspections in the fourth and subsequent rounds of inspections.

Quality assurance and quality development is the responsibility of each school. Essential to quality development is for each school to establish self-renewal ability. This ability consists of mastering (1) a sufficiently precise *system of methods* to accurately spot areas for further development; (2) *planning procedures* in setting up and implementing different development projects.

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 core 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 optimising teaching and learning. Such monitoring and evaluation should contribute, directly or indirectly, to periodic updating of the Multi Annual Pedagogical School Plan (MAPSP), the Annual Pedagogical School Plan (APSP) and the Action Plans (AP), including the continuous professional development plans, which map out priorities for action.

The diagram below illustrates the interrelation of both internal and external evaluation, the succession of measures being clearly visible at the same time in a spiral and developmental process. The cyclical and developmental process can start at different stages.

**Four- year cycle:**



## **2.1. Content of Whole School Inspection**

In line with stronger focus on teaching and learning for the 2021-2025 WSI cycle, a selection of criteria has been made from the catalogue of criteria and general indicators, based on the document "Quality Assurance and Development in the European schools" (Ref: 2000-D-264). It is envisaged that for each WSI cycle, the catalogue of criteria and general indicators is re-visited in order to determine the focus for that cycle.

For the 2021-2025 cycle, 12 criteria have been selected, they are:

### *II school ethos and climate*

II.1. A European Context is established in order to foster mutual understanding and respect for diversity in a multicultural setting

### *III Curriculum and Planning*

III.3. The planning within and across the sections is harmonised

III.4. Individual needs of pupils are respected in planning

### *V. Teaching and learning*

V.1. Lessons have an effective structure

V.2. Lessons fit within a context

V.3. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed appropriately by teachers

V.4. Pupils are active learners

V.5. Teachers respect pupils' individual needs in their teaching

V.6. Teachers show effective classroom management

### *VI. Assessment and achievement*

VI.1. The school implements the European Schools policy on assessment

VI.3. Pupils develop the ability to assess their own work

### *VII. Educational support*

VII.1. The policy on the provision on educational support is implemented

Each of the above criteria is elaborated further in a number of indicators. Annex 1 situates these 12 criteria within the general framework of criteria and indicators for Whole School Inspection.

## **2.2. Organisation of the Whole School Inspection**

A steering group - comprising four inspectors, representing primary and secondary, and a directors' representative - approved by the Joint Board of Inspectors, has the general responsibility for the organisation of the Whole School Inspection. One of the inspectors of this steering group will coordinate the inspection team for each WSI, which in principle will exist of four to six inspectors, depending on the size of the school. The team should also include one director as a fully participant member. The team may be extended to cover expertise in a specific area of inspection. The composition of the team has to account for a common language in order to communicate easily with all engaged in the process. Different team combinations should visit all of the European Schools to enhance harmonisation, credibility and comparison of the findings.

### **2.3. Pre-inspection activities**

The schedule for Whole School Inspection visits will be made available in line with the long term plan and the schools will be informed well in advance. The coordinating inspector will be the liaison person between the inspection team and the school throughout the entire process.

The Central Office (Pedagogical Unit) will initiate and follow up on all procedures.

The coordinating inspector will:

- communicate with the Central Office (Pedagogical Unit) and liaise with the inspection team,
- agree on the dates and the organisation of the inspection and request relevant documents,
- make decisions with other members of the inspection team and in cooperation with the school management with regard to the areas which the inspection will focus on.

The management of the school will:

- present all relevant documents including results of self-evaluation/follow-up, the Multi Annual Pedagogical School Plan, the Annual Pedagogical School Plan, the related action plans and any other documentation relating to teaching and learning which the school management would like to bring to the attention of the inspection team. All other relevant documents should be available to the inspection team during the Inspection,
- inform teachers, pupils and parents about the purpose and the requirements of the inspection,
- draw up a proposed schedule for the in-school inspection visit four weeks prior to the inspection the school, in cooperation with the coordinating inspector.

### **2.4. In-School inspection**

Inspection teams will gather first-hand evidence during the visit, including:

- The follow-up to the previous WSI as documented in the APSP's
- A presentation by the school's Management of all the strong points and achievements with regard to teaching and learning while also indicating the areas where there is room for improvement; this will be followed by discussion with the inspection team in order to provide the inspection team with any further clarification which it requires.
- Class visits: a representative sample of lessons will be observed, distributed over all sections, cycles and subjects; lesson visits can vary in length from part of a lessons to an entire lesson.
- Planning documents (MAPSP, APSP, AP, et cetera) as well as teachers' planning documents
- Assessment procedures and evaluation documents
- Meetings with School management, pupils (including the pupils representatives), teachers (including the teachers' representatives), parents representatives, support team (including the support coordinator), other relevant participants; these meetings will focus on teaching and learning. Because the focus of the WSI is on teaching and learning the third round will include collective meetings with teachers where the

discussion will centre on teaching and learning generally rather than coordination duties. A separate meeting will be held with teachers representatives.

## **2.5. The outcome of the inspection**

At the conclusion of each inspection visit, oral feedback is given to the directorate by the inspection team.

A draft report will consider the results of the schools' self-evaluation and the inspectors' final evaluation expressed in categories – NA=not yet achieved; PA= partially achieved; SA=satisfactorily achieved; FA=fully achieved - together with the general conclusions and recommendations. This draft report will be sent to the schools' director at this stage for verification only.

The final report will be sent to the school management 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, et cetera.

A summary of the final report will be presented to the joint board of inspectors and to the joint teaching committee.

## **2.6. Post-inspection activities**

The report aims to stimulate the school internal process in which the school will focus on the recommendations given. The school management will analyse the final report and forward the proposed activities intended to make progress in the areas of recommendations, within 6 working weeks to the Pedagogical Unit and to the steering group. These proposals will focus on the action to be taken in the short and long term, the roles and responsibilities of school staff and the methods of self-evaluation to be employed to monitor the development process. These planned activities should be incorporated into the school's planning documentation (Aps, APSP and MAPSP).

After 6 working weeks, when the school has sent their reaction on the recommendations (template for the follow-up of the Whole School Inspection), this reaction will be analysed and **IF NECESSARY** commented on.

Two years after the Whole School Inspection the steering group will carry out a follow-up inspection. This will usually consist only of a desk research based on the two APSPs following the WSI in which possible areas of risk can be indicated. A Follow-up visit may be required. A follow-up report will be presented to the joint board of inspectors.

At the end of the four year cycle a general report will be presented to the Board of Governors based on these individual schools reports and will outline general conclusions and recommendations to enhance future developments at system level.

This document and the Whole School Inspection process will be regularly reviewed with a formal review taking place every four years.

## 2.7. Summary of WSI timetable

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>
Start	Whole school inspection
Within 2 working weeks of WSI	Draft report sent to the school
Within 3 working weeks after receiving the draft report	Factual verification of the report by the school
Within 2 working weeks of receiving the factual verification	Final report sent to the school
Next board meeting (JBI & JTC)	Presentation of summary of final report
Within 6 working weeks of receiving the final report	School states the activities planned to make progress in the areas of recommendations
Yearly	School documents progress on recommendations in APSP
Two years after WSI	Follow up report sent to the school
Next board meeting (JBI & JTC)	Presentation of summary of follow-up report
Four years after the WSI	Next WSI

## 3. Decision

The JTC approved adaptation of the assessment criteria, which will focus on assessment of teaching and learning for future Whole School Inspections. As regards the planning of Whole School Inspections, at the Directors' request, the calendar will be revised so as to postpone the inspections until the 2021-2022 school year. This postponement will be analysed and discussed with the Presidency and, if this proves necessary, a written procedure will be initiated for approval of the new calendar.



## Annex 1: General criteria and indicators for Whole School 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 structured continuous professional development and dissemination of information.
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 levels, sections, schools, etc.
The school has guidelines 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 (middle managers, cycle/level/subject coordinators) have an organisational and pedagogical role	There are job descriptions for the role of coordinator. 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. Measures are taken to make best use of teaching time, including replacements. There are guidelines on homework.



## II. School Ethos and Climate

Criteria	Indicators	
A European Context is established in order to foster mutual understanding and respect for diversity in a multicultural setting	<b>SCHOOL</b> The totality of the European dimension is integrated and implemented across the school and in teachers 'planning. Teachers plan and work together across language sections.	<b>CLASS</b> The European dimension can be observed in lessons. Pupils work together across language sections when appropriate.
Pupils' cultural identity is confirmed	There is evidence of celebration of national festivals and reference to national current affairs.	
The social climate reflects the aims of the school, to encourage successful learning and to foster tolerance and mutual respect	There is evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mutually respectful relations between members of the school community.</li> <li>- Knowledge of and respect for the school rules.</li> <li>- Consistent and rapid response to conflicts, particularly to bullying and to discrimination of any kind, by pupils or teachers.</li> <li>- Communal events which bring together pupils, teachers and parents from different language sections.</li> </ul> Pupils have access to, and use, facilities for personal support and, when necessary, complaints.	
Education for sustainable development is fostered in the school	Projects / activities are carried out focusing on sustainable development. Students are involved in planning, accomplishment and evaluation of projects/ activities.	

### III. Curriculum and Planning

Criteria	Indicators
The teachers forward planning is up-to-date	Long term and short term planning, based on the curriculum, is available.
There is continuity and progression from year to year	There is evidence of transfer of planning (meetings, documents, . . .).
The planning within and across the sections is harmonised	The school planning guidelines and templates are used.
Individual needs of pupils are respected in planning	References are made to differentiated approaches and other teaching strategies in the planning (caring for individual pupils' needs, pair work, small group work, activity based work, used of ICT, etc.). Planning is informed by the learning objectives of the GLPs and ILPs.

### IV. Resources

Criteria	Indicators
Human resources are efficiently managed	Teachers are appropriately qualified. Assignments of tasks are related to experience and expertise of teachers.
The school physical environment is appropriate for teaching and learning	There are an adequate number of appropriate sized rooms. Classrooms and public areas are clean, safe, tidy and are in good repair. There are displays of work and other materials in corridors and classrooms related to the European dimension.
A range of adequate equipment is available	Sufficient resources are available to enable pupils to learn effectively in all areas of the curriculum. Resources are used effectively to implement the syllabi. There is an adequate supply of subject-related equipment. There is an adequate supply of ICT equipment in the class rooms. A library/multi-media centre is in place with an adequate range of relevant books and ICT materials.

## V. Teaching and Learning

Criteria	Indicators
Lessons have an effective structure	Lessons are planned, well-structured and relate to the syllabus. Teachers communicate the aims, objectives and competences to be accomplished by their students
Lessons fit within a context	Teachers show knowledge of the subject and the European School syllabus. Culture, history and geography of different countries are integrated in the teaching and learning process. Cross curricular links are emphasised and a broader environment and context are utilised.
A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed appropriately by teachers	Teachers create an environment in which pupils can learn independently and collaboratively and support each other's learning. Teachers involve all pupils actively. Teachers integrate ICT into their lessons.
Pupils are active learners	Pupils show an active learning attitude and involvement during their lessons Pupils get feedback in order to improve their learning Pupils are responsible for aspects of their own learning. Pupils use ICT in learning.
Teachers respect pupils' individual needs in their teaching	Differentiation is taken into account in lessons (e.g. different content/ process/product/learning environment) when appropriate in relation to pupils' different learning strategies. Teaching and learning reflects the learning objectives of the GLPs and ILPs.
Teachers show effective classroom management	Teachers create a stimulating learning environment, including displays of work or other materials. Teachers use resources effectively. Teachers use teaching time effectively. Teachers encourage good behaviour and respond consistently to inappropriate behaviour.

## VI. Assessment and Achievements

Criteria	Indicators
The school implements the European Schools policy on assessment	Teachers apply the policy on assessment and the new marking system. Teachers continually assess pupils' progress (formatively and summatively). A range of different assessment methods is used to provide a good picture of pupils' competences, including knowledge, skills and attitudes. The A mark is a reflection of all the observations and of the pupil's overall performance, both written and oral.
Analysis and communication of assessment and achievement	Records of pupils' progress are maintained. Pupils' results are analysed at individual, class and whole school level. Pupils' attainments are communicated to their parents.
Pupils develop the ability to assess their own work	Pupils' self-assessment skills are developed by using a range of different strategies (portfolios, individual folders, questionnaires, copy-books ...).

## VII. Educational Support (General, Moderate and Intensive Support)

Criteria	Indicators
The Policy on the provision on Educational Support is implemented	The school has guidelines in accordance with the educational support policy. There are harmonised procedures in place to identify pupils with different learning needs. Individual Educational Plans are compiled, reviewed and updated. Support is monitored and its effectiveness (including how the support is provided) is evaluated.
Human and Material resources for support are in place	The coordinator's tasks and responsibilities are clear. Educational Advisers and Consultation and Support Personnel effectively monitor behaviour and attendance and liaise regularly with classroom teachers on both pastoral and academic matters. Confidential documents are properly maintained and stored. Support materials are available (ICT, national materials) and easy to access. Time allocation of support is transparent and flexible.



### VIII. Quality Assurance and Development

Criteria	Indicators
A structure for quality assurance and development is implemented	A systematic procedure for school's self-evaluation is in place in which representatives of all stakeholders are involved at regular intervals.
The school's vision, aims and objectives are outlined in the Multi Annual School Plan (MAPSP) and in the related Annual School Plan (APSP).	The school has clearly stated its aims and objectives. The MAPSP and APSP are compiled in consultation with the different stakeholders of the school to accomplish improvements.
Action Plans are key parts of school development in order to facilitate implementation of MASP and ASP.	Concrete Action Plans are drawn up in relevant areas for school improvement. Every Action Plan has a coordinator with responsibilities for evaluation at regular intervals.

## Annex 2: Provisional Calendar<sup>2</sup> - Overview planning whole school inspections

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Alicante			NOVEMBER		NOVEMBER		
Bergen			MARCH		MARCH		
Brussels I + Berkendael				MARCH		MARCH	
Brussels II + Evere		MARCH 7-11		MARCH			
Brussels III				MAY		MAY	
Brussels IV	MARCH			NOVEMBER		NOVEMBER	
Frankfurt	OCTOBER 25-29		OCTOBER				
Karlsruhe	NOVEMBER 15-19		NOVEMBER				
Luxemburg I			MAY		MAY		
Luxemburg II		MARCH			MAY		MAY
Mol		MAY 16-20		MAY			
Munich		NOVEMBER		NOVEMBER			
Varese	MAY				MARCH		MARCH

	Follow-up inspection
	Whole school inspection

<sup>2</sup> Update of Annex 2 in October 2021: Provisional Calendar - Overview planning whole school inspections; Please note that the latest version of the calendar can be found in the annual “Pedagogical Development and Quality Assurance of the European Schools” document.

### Annex 3: Concept Inspection Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Morning</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parallel meetings with deputy heads</li> <li>• Additional meetings and/or class visits if necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Afternoon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the self-evaluation by the school management</li> <li>• Internal meeting inspection team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings*</li> <li>• Document analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings*</li> <li>• Document analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing of report by inspection team</li> </ul>	

\*Below a suggested meeting schedule for Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

- Pupils, in groups of 6-8 with as wide a variation (year, language section etc.) as possible
- Teachers in groups of 6-8 with as wide a variation (subject, language section etc.) as possible
- Meetings can be hold in parallel two or three at the same time
- Please adapt the schedule to the schools timetable and include other relevant stakeholders if required

<b>Tuesday</b>			
13:30-15:00	Support nursery/primary	Support secondary	Parents representatives*
15:00-16:00	Coordinators of relevant projects nursery	Coordinators of relevant projects primary	Coordinators of relevant projects secondary*
16:00-17:00	meeting inspection team		
<b>Wednesday</b>			
13:00-14:00	Teachers' representatives nursery	Teachers' representatives primary	Teachers' representatives secondary*
14:00-15:00	Pupils P3-5	Pupils S1-5	Pupils S6-7*
15:00-16:00	Teachers nursery	Teachers primary	Teachers secondary*
16:00-17:00	meeting inspection team		

\*Three parallel meetings is only possible at the larger schools where there are six inspectors. At the smaller schools nursery and primary can be combined.