



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Guidance handbook for the inspection of all-age schools

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Introduction

Purpose of the guidance handbook

This guidance sets out the way the inspectorate will conduct inspections of all-age schools from September 2017. It sets out the inspection arrangements for all-age schools and offers guidance to inspectors on making inspection judgements.

Where the inspection identifies important concerns in relation to standards, quality of education and training or leadership and management, the inspectorate will arrange to conduct follow-up activity in the school to support improvement. Guidance on the different types of follow-up activity is available on Estyn's website.

All-age schools can use this guidance to see how inspections work and to help them in strengthening their own self-evaluation and improvement processes.

There is further information about inspections on the inspectorate's website www.estyn.gov.wales

Legal basis for the inspection of all-age schools

School inspections are governed by the Education Act 2005 and related regulations. Inspections must be conducted by teams of inspectors, led by a HMI, additional inspector or Registered Inspector, and must result in a published report. Section 28 of the Education Act 2005 says that inspectors must report on:

- the educational standards achieved
- the quality of education provided
- how far education meets the needs of the range of pupils
- the quality of leadership and management, including whether the financial resources are managed efficiently
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- the contribution of the school to the wellbeing of pupils

Some schools have a religious character and teach denominational religious education. In these schools, religious education and the content of collective worship are inspected separately under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005 and are not included in Section 28 inspections.

Policy background

While not governed directly by the following policies and conventions, the guidance handbook takes account of the following:

- the review of the curriculum in schools as set out in 'Successful Futures' (Welsh Government, February 2015) <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-en.pdf>
- the review of teacher training in Wales as set out in 'Training tomorrow's teachers' (Welsh Government, March 2015)

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150309-teaching-tomorrows-teachers-final.pdf>

- the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>
- the Welsh Government's mission for education in Wales from 2017 to 2021
<https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170926-education-in-wales-en.pdf>
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Welsh Government in 2004 as the basis for policy-making for children and young people
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

Part 1: Inspection arrangements

Introduction

This section is set out in a way that reflects the sequence of work before, during and after a core inspection.

The reporting inspector (RI) is responsible for the conduct and management of the inspection and for the inspection report. While this guidance focuses mainly on the role of the reporting inspector, all team members must comply with the same inspection requirements.

Principles of inspection

Inspectors will:

- ensure that inspection is of high quality and responsive to the needs of all learners
- ensure that judgements are secure, reliable, valid and based on first-hand evidence
- involve the school fully in the inspection process, including the opportunity for the school to select a nominee
- use the school's improvement priorities as the starting point for the inspection and to identify key areas for investigation in order to make judgements on the validity of its findings
- include peer inspectors in the inspection process
- keep to a minimum any requirements for documentation and preparation by the school
- gain the perspective of learners and other stakeholders
- apply the principle of equality for Welsh and English to all our inspection work, providing bilingual services whenever they are appropriate
- be constructive in identifying and supporting schools with important aspects or weaknesses that require improvement

Code of conduct for inspectors

Inspectors should uphold the highest possible standards in their work. All inspectors have to meet the standards of Estyn's code of conduct. When conducting the inspection, inspectors will:

- carry out their work with integrity, courtesy and due sensitivity
- evaluate the work of the provider objectively
- report honestly, fairly and impartially
- communicate clearly and openly
- act in the best interests of learners
- respect the confidentiality of all information received during the course of their work

It is important that inspectors judge the effectiveness of provision and leadership on their contribution to outcomes and not on the basis of any preferences for particular methods. The key to the judgement is whether the methods and organisation are fit for the purpose in supporting all pupils to achieve high standards and strong levels of wellbeing.

Inspectors should inform Estyn of any perceived or actual conflicts of interest as soon as they receive notification that they are on the inspection of the school.

Expectations of providers

In order that inspection and regulation are constructive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on mutual courtesy, respect and professional behaviour. We expect inspectors to uphold Estyn's Code of Conduct, but we also expect providers to:

- be courteous and professional
- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
- enable inspectors to conduct their inspection in an open and honest way
- enable inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the Common Inspection Framework
- use Estyn's electronic systems for managing inspections, as required
- provide evidence that will enable inspectors to report honestly, fairly and reliably about the school
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the reporting inspector and other inspectors
- recognise that inspectors need to observe practice and to talk to staff, learners and other stakeholders without the presence of a manager or senior leader
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors in a timely and suitable manner through the nominee or senior leader
- work with inspectors to minimise disruption and stress throughout the inspection
- ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on the school premises
- maintain the confidentiality of meetings and inspection findings until the final publication of the report

At the point of the inspection notification, schools should review the composition of the inspection team. It is the responsibility of schools to highlight any perceived or actual conflicts of interest prior to the start of their inspection.

Health, safety and wellbeing issues

Inspectors will carry out inspections in accordance with the inspectorate's guidance on inspecting safeguarding. If they observe anything that they think constitutes, in their opinion, a real danger to the safety of staff, visitors or pupils, inspectors should alert managers at the school. In all cases, inspectors should make a separate electronic note of the threat and that they informed managers of it. Inspectors should report on obvious risks relating to health, safety and wellbeing under inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance). Where these risks are a serious concern, inspectors should include a short comment in the report's text and a recommendation in the report. Estyn will send a wellbeing letter to the school asking them to outline how they will address the shortcoming.

Responding to a safeguarding allegation

If an inspector becomes aware of a safeguarding allegation/suspicion in respect of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they should follow the procedures set out in the current version of 'Estyn's policy and procedures for safeguarding', which is available on Estyn's website.

Approach to inspection

The starting point for inspection is the school's evaluation of its own performance, supported by relevant evidence. Inspectors will not inspect all aspects of work in depth during a core inspection. They will sample evidence to test the school's own evaluation of its work.

The progress pupils make from their starting-points and the standards they achieve are key measures of the quality of the education they have received and of the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school. Inspection will focus on the needs of pupils, their attitudes to learning and the impact that the provision in the school makes on supporting their progress and the standards they achieve.

The inspection period and number of inspectors may vary according to the size of the school.

Each inspection report will cover all inspection areas and reporting requirements covered by the common inspection framework.

We will carry out inspections in line with our Welsh Language Policy, available from the inspectorate's website and supported by supplementary guidance on inspecting the development of pupils' Welsh language skills.

The Virtual Inspection Room

The inspectorate will use an electronic system, called the 'Virtual Inspection Room' (VIR), for managing many aspects of the inspection. It is a web-based system that allows schools to upload information before the inspection and to download guidance from the inspectorate about the inspection process. The VIR is also the place where headteachers and nominees can access the emerging questions from the reporting inspector at the start of the inspection and the post-inspection questionnaires.

The inspection team

Inspection teams will be led by a reporting inspector (HMI, additional inspector or Registered Inspector), with other team members drawn from among HMI or additional inspectors. Additional inspectors may be on secondment or contract to the inspectorate. Each team will also have a peer inspector (staff from another school) and a lay inspector.

The reporting inspector manages the inspection team and is the first point of reference for everyone involved in the inspection.

We will invite schools to select a senior member of staff, called the nominee, to work with the inspection team. In practice, most schools accept the invitation, but it is not a requirement. The nominee should have sufficient seniority to act as a link between the school and the inspection team, will normally not be the leader of the school.

Contacting the school and the local authority before the inspection

The school will receive 15 working days' notice of the inspection. We will send a letter to notify the local authority at the same time.

Following this, the inspectorate will contact the school by telephone to set up the arrangements for the inspection. Inspection co-ordinators in Estyn undertake the initial contact with schools. During this discussion, the Inspection Co-ordinator will:

- explain the purpose of the inspection and discuss an outline programme for the inspection
- discuss the specific information required before the inspection, including the completion by the school of a self-evaluation form on its provision for safeguarding, and make the arrangements for receiving it in electronic form through the Virtual Inspection Room
- ask if there are any issues or risks the team should be aware of and ask for a general health and safety briefing for the team at the start of the inspection
- establish whether the school wishes to have a nominee and, if it does, agree the role of the nominee and explain the process for completing the nominee guidance
- arrange a meeting at the start of the inspection with the nominee to provide a health and safety briefing for the team
- arrange a meeting at the start of the inspection for the headteacher to set out the school's priorities for improvement and its current stage of development
- provide links and guidance for the completion of online pre-inspection questionnaires for learners, parents, staff and governors
- agree arrangements for setting up a meeting with parents/carers
- arrange the availability of supporting evidence, including samples of pupils' work
- ensure that there are agreed procedures for addressing any concerns or complaints that might arise during the course of the inspection
- arrange for a member of the governing body to meet inspectors during the inspection period
- organise any domestic arrangements, such as a base for the inspectors, parking and internet access

- set up the arrangements for feeding back the inspection findings
- agree the arrangements for completing the post-inspection questionnaire
- inform the school through the initial contact form of the key inspection arrangements

The Inspection Co-ordinator will request the following information from the school through the Virtual Inspection Room as soon as possible after the formal notification of the inspection:

- key background information on the school
- a copy of the school's most recent school development or improvement plan
- details of the school's timetables for the period of the inspection

If the inspection is to take place early in the school year, the inspectorate may ask the school to make samples of pupils' work from the previous year available during the inspection visit, where possible.

When we notify schools of the inspection, they will receive information on how to conduct a confidential online pre-inspection questionnaire of pupils and all parents/carers. Estyn will also provide a pre-inspection online questionnaire for governors and all teaching and support staff directly employed by the school. The outcomes of the pre-inspection questionnaires will form part of the pre-inspection evidence and help inspectors to form emerging questions to investigate further.

During the inspection, inspectors may interview a sample of pupils with leadership or representative roles, other specific groups of pupils and a sample of teaching and/or support staff as part of their gathering of evidence.

We notify the local authority of the inspection when we notify the school. When we contact the local authority, we request a briefing on the school. This should provide brief details on the quality of the school's performance, provision and leadership. This may be in the form of the latest categorisation report, where appropriate.

Planning the inspection and preparing the team

Taking into account the school's identified improvement priorities and any information already held by the inspectorate, the reporting inspector will plan the inspection and allocate responsibilities to members of the inspection team.

Inspections involve observation of teaching, including learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. We require schools to place a full plan of all the intended activities during the inspection week in the VIR. On the basis of the information received, the reporting inspector will plan the observations of teaching and learning, learning walks and the scrutiny of pupils' work. The sample will reflect the range of the school's work and support the investigation of emerging questions and areas of interest suggested by inspectors' initial and ongoing inspection work.

During the inspection

Initial team meeting

In the initial meeting of the inspection team, there should be a health and safety briefing from the school. The headteacher should provide a brief position statement on the school's strategic priorities and its current stage of development. After that, the team should discuss with senior leaders the improvement priorities identified by the school and the progress that it is making in its improvement work. The RI will confirm these arrangements with the headteacher during the pre-inspection phone call.

Inspectors will sample, test and validate the school's own priorities and its evaluations of its strengths and areas for development. The discussions will also consider the evidence that inspectors need to review. This will include observations, including learning walks, sampling pupils' work and interviews with pupils, staff, governors and other stakeholders.

Gathering and reviewing inspection evidence

The team will plan the inspection so that they can cover the reporting requirements within the five inspection areas. The team will ensure that they have enough time to review the key evidence they need to make their judgements. The main forms of evidence are:

- samples of pupils' work
- discussions with pupils, staff, leaders, managers, governors, parents and others
- observation of teaching and other activities, including evidence gathered through learning walks
- pre-inspection questionnaire responses from pupils, parents/carers, governors, teaching and support staff
- documentary evidence, including information on pupils' performance and progress
- information from the local authority/regional consortium

The team will use direct observation of pupils' work wherever possible to gather evidence to support their judgements. Inspectors may select an additional sample of pupils' work, if required, to further their investigation in a specific aspect.

Inspectors will undertake a range of activities to gather evidence for their evaluation of pupils' progress and the quality of the school's provision. This may include learning walks, where inspectors move relatively quickly through a number of classes looking at a specific aspect of the school's provision, conversations with selected pupils about their work, and discussions with individual teachers about pupils' learning in their classes and how they plan work to meet their needs. They may also undertake longer classroom observations.

The voice of learners is a key source of evidence for inspectors. Discussions with pupils will provide an opportunity to explore pupils' knowledge and understanding of their work. It will also help inspectors to gauge how well the school supports pupils and contributes to their progress and wellbeing.

Schools should make information available to the inspection team about the standards achieved by pupils, particularly the results of any initial screening tests and other assessments. This will help inspectors to judge pupils' progress, to come to a view about the standards pupils achieve compared to their starting-points and the way teachers use the information from assessment to influence their planning and their lessons.

The team will need to consider stakeholders' views on the school and test out the validity of those views during the inspection.

Where the nominee is not the headteacher, it is important that the reporting inspector holds a brief daily meeting with the headteacher to clarify inspection issues and the broad, emerging findings of the inspection team.

Recording inspection evidence

Inspectors will use various forms to note and to collate their findings and judgements.

Wherever possible, inspectors will complete their forms electronically as part of Estyn's electronic system for collecting, collating and recording inspection findings.

Team meetings

The main purpose of team meetings is to arrive at an accurate, reliable, valid and corporate view of standards and the quality of provision and leadership. Meetings will provide opportunities for inspectors to:

- test the judgements in the school's self-evaluation
- discuss emerging issues
- resolve pre-inspection questions and issues
- identify any gaps in the evidence base
- consider main inspection findings and any recommendations

Professional dialogue

At the end of a longer classroom observation, inspectors should have a brief professional dialogue with the member of staff on the work seen. It may be necessary, in some cases, to conduct this discussion later during the inspection.

The main focus of the discussion should be on the pupils, the progress they make during the lesson and the standards they achieve. The inspector should stress that these are emerging, interim findings on one aspect of the evidence base and that these may be amended, on reflection, after scrutiny of pupils' work or talking to pupils or as the result of moderation within the team. Inspectors should try to focus on any strengths or areas for development in relation to the specific work seen.

Due to the sharply focused nature of learning walks, and the spread of the activity across a number of lessons/classes within a relatively short period of time, inspectors will not be in a position to offer professional dialogue to individual teachers after learning walk activity.

Formal feedback

At the end of the on-site part of the inspection, the team will provide oral feedback to leaders and managers. The school should invite representatives from the governing body and local authority or regional consortium to attend the meeting. In faith schools, the school may invite a representative from the local diocesan authority. The feedback should focus on the main judgements for each of the five inspection areas and the reasons for awarding them.

The feedback meeting provides the opportunity for leaders and managers to hear and to reflect on the judgements. The feedback should focus on the strengths and areas for improvement and the factors that contribute to them. The reporting inspector should explain to the school that issues may be raised and discussed, factual matters may be corrected and judgements may be clarified, but the judgements themselves are not negotiable.

During all core inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the school needs any follow-up activity. The reporting inspector should inform the school if any follow-up activity is required.

During the inspection, the team will also consider if there is any effective practice in the school that is worthy of consideration and emulation by other schools. Where this is the case, the reporting inspector will ask the school to prepare a case study (or studies) for dissemination on Estyn's website.

All the judgements reported during an inspection are provisional and subject to moderation and validation by HMCI. They are confidential to the school staff and governors. They should not be communicated beyond this group, including via social media, until Estyn publishes the report on its website.

Complaints about the conduct of the inspection

If there are any issues about the conduct of the inspection overall or the conduct of individual inspectors, then the school, through the nominee, should raise these directly, and as soon as possible, with the reporting inspector. The school should not wait until after the inspection, but should raise any issues during the on-site inspection. Issues often arise due to misunderstandings and these can usually be resolved quickly and satisfactorily in school close to the time when they occurred.

There is guidance for schools on Estyn's complaints handling procedures on Estyn's website.

After the inspection

The inspection report

The reporting inspector is responsible for producing a final inspection report that is clear to a lay audience and helpful to the school.

When writing reports, inspectors should take account of Estyn's writing guidance, which is available on its website www.estyn.gov.wales.

We will publish reports bilingually, where schools have made this request, in line with Estyn's Welsh Language Policy.

We base the structure of the inspection report on a common inspection framework and the report will take the following form:

<p>About the school</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>What happens next</p> <p>Main findings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Standards2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning3 Teaching and learning experiences4 Care, support and guidance5 Leadership and management <p>The evidence base of the inspection</p>

We will produce the report within statutory or agreed sector timescales.

The factual accuracy check

The inspectorate will give the school a late draft of the report to help check the factual accuracy of the content. The school will normally have five working days in which to consider the draft report and to identify any factual errors.

The focus of the factual accuracy check is on resolving any factual inaccuracies in the inspection report. It does not focus on the findings or the judgements. There is further guidance for schools on the nature and scope of the factual accuracy check on Estyn's website.

The school should raise any complaints about the conduct of the inspection during the on-site inspection. However, if the school continues to have unresolved complaints about the conduct of the inspection after the end of the on-site inspection, then it should refer to Estyn's complaints handling procedures on Estyn's website. The focus of the procedures is on the conduct of the inspection and not the findings or the judgements arrived at by the inspection team.

Assuring the quality of inspections

The inspectorate is committed to:

- effective selection, training, briefing, support and deployment of inspectors, including peer inspectors and lay inspectors
- effective training, briefing and support to allow the nominee to play an active role
- regular dialogue with the headteacher during inspection
- criteria and recording systems that comply with the common inspection framework and guidance

- careful review and analysis of evidence
- unambiguous oral feedback of the team's findings and judgements for each inspection area
- clear, accurate and well-presented reports

As part of its quality assurance procedures, the inspectorate invites schools to complete a post-inspection questionnaire (PIQ). The questionnaire will be available to schools in the VIR. Schools should complete the first part of the PIQ immediately after the on-site inspection and submit it electronically to Estyn through the VIR system. Schools can complete the second part of the PIQ after the publication of the inspection report, again through the VIR system.

Schools should raise any concerns about the conduct of an inspection during the inspection as soon as possible with the reporting inspector.

The reporting inspector will carry out the quality assurance of the inspection in the first instance. The inspectorate will quality assure a sample of inspections on-site and will assure the quality of all inspection reports before their publication on Estyn's website. Estyn's arrangements for assuring the quality of inspections and the arrangements for dealing with complaints are available on the inspectorate's website www.estyn.gov.wales.

Part 2: Inspection areas and reporting requirements

The guidance that follows sets out how inspectors should approach the various sections of the inspection report and what they need to consider when evaluating the five inspection areas of the common inspection framework.

The Common Inspection Framework

The five inspection areas of the common inspection framework are set out below.

Each inspection area contains reporting requirements. These are the aspects that the inspection team must cover when reporting on each school.

The Common Inspection Framework

1 – Standards

- 1.1 Standards and progress overall
- 1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups
- 1.3 Standards and progress in skills

2 – Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

- 2.1 Wellbeing
- 2.2 Attitudes to learning

3 – Teaching and learning experiences

- 3.1 Quality of teaching
- 3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum
- 3.3 Provision for skills

4 – Care, support and guidance

- 4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support
- 4.2 Personal development
- 4.3 Safeguarding

5 – Leadership and management

- 5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers
- 5.2 Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning
- 5.3 Professional learning
- 5.4 Use of resources

Making judgements

The inspection team will award each inspection area a judgement using the four-point scale below.

Excellent – Very strong, sustained performance and practice

Good – Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement

Adequate and needs improvement – Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement

Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement – Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

Inspectors will arrive at their judgements by considering and weighing the importance of the strengths and weaknesses in each inspection area. The report on each inspection area will reflect and support the relevant judgement.

Weaknesses become important where they have a significant impact on standards and/or wellbeing. Strengths are often present where there are important aspects that require improvement. However, where there are important aspects that require improvement then the appropriate judgement will normally be 'Adequate and needs improvement' or 'Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement'.

Where schools receive 'Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement' for one or more inspection areas, the school will normally require a statutory level of follow-up activity (significant improvement or special measures). There is further guidance on the nature of follow-up activity on Estyn's website [Follow-up guidance for schools and inspectors](#).

Inspectors will always include clear evaluations in relation to the reporting requirements in each inspection area. They will also consider all aspects of these reporting requirements as set out in the inspection guidance handbook. However,

what inspectors report on within each reporting requirement may differ depending on the relative significance of what they find in each school.

Inspectors may report 'by exception'. This means that they may report on some aspects only where there are particular strengths or significant weaknesses. For example, inspectors will always consider the evidence relating to the annual reports that schools provide for parents on pupils' progress and attainment. However, inspectors may report on these 'by exception', i.e. where they are particularly strong or significantly weak. Where the annual reports meet requirements and are like the usual annual reports that inspectors often see, then the inspection report may not include an evaluative comment on them as they are not particularly strong or significantly weak.

By providing clear judgements and findings on each inspection area, the reports will support the Chief Inspector in meeting the requirements of the Education Act 2005, particularly in relation to reporting on:

- the quality of the education provided by schools in Wales
- how far that education meets the needs of the range of pupils
- the educational standards achieved
- the quality of the leadership and management of schools, including whether the financial resources made available are managed efficiently,
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- the contribution made by schools to the wellbeing of their pupils

In order to meet other inspection requirements, reports will also include clear evaluations on the school's arrangements for safeguarding and for pupils' healthy eating and drinking.

About the school

This section of the report should be brief and contain factual background information about the school. The section should not contain any evaluation of the school or its provision. The reporting inspector normally agrees the content of this section with the school during the inspection and during the school's factual check of the draft report prior to publication. Where there is disagreement about the content of this section, the reporting inspector will make the final decision about what to include in the report.

This section will contain brief information on:

- the size, nature and location of the school
- the background and circumstances of the pupils, such as the proportion eligible for free school meals
- the linguistic background of the pupils
- any important changes since the last inspection
- any other relevant factors, such as the proportion of pupils with special educational needs or the degree to which pupils leave or join the school during the academic year
- the date of appointment of the headteacher
- the month/year of the school's previous inspection

If a school is currently a quality improvement, innovation or professional learning school, the reporting inspector should include the statement below. This indicates the school's involvement in education reform, but does not constitute a statement on the quality of the school's work:

'The school is currently working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to education reform in Wales.'

If a school was a pioneer school, but is no longer receiving funding linked to this work, the reporting inspector should include the statement below. Again, this indicates the school's involvement in education reform, but does not constitute a statement on the quality of the school's work: 'Until recently, the school was working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to education reform in Wales.'

When the school has a religious character, the reporting inspector should also include the following statement: 'Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.'

The context section will also include a link to www.mylocalschool.wales.org.uk, a website with information on schools for parents/carers and others with an interest in their local school.

Summary

This section of the report will contain a short summary statement (usually 100-200 words) on the inspection findings.

The summary should report on the key strengths and any important aspects or weaknesses that require improvement. It should be consistent with the findings in the body of the report. It should not contain one overarching judgement on the school as a whole.

Recommendations

The recommendations should give the school a clear and specific indication of the areas for improvement that it will need to address. Inspectors should write the recommendations in order of priority. The recommendations should arise from the main judgements in the inspection areas and should provide a clear and practicable basis on which the school can move forward.

What happens next?

This section of the report will set out what the school needs to do following the inspection. In all cases, the school will need to respond to the recommendations by putting in place the actions required to make the improvements identified by the inspection team. The report will also indicate whether Estyn has asked the school to provide a case study in relation to any aspect(s) of its work. The report will state whether the school requires any level of follow-up activity by Estyn.

Inspection areas

For each inspection area, there is guidance on what it covers and the considerations that inspectors need to keep in mind when evaluating it.

Within each inspection area, the reporting inspector may report on the aspects in the order they appear in the handbook or they may choose to sequence the aspects differently in order to reflect their findings. For example, in Inspection Area 1 - Standards, they may begin with standards and progress in skills, then specific groups and standards, and progress overall at the end. In Inspection Area 3 - Teaching and learning experiences, they may begin with the curriculum and then teaching if this makes the findings of the team clearer.

The report on each inspection area should normally be around 250-700 words.

There is supplementary guidance on the inspection of various aspects of the work of schools on Estyn's website: www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/supplementary-guidance.

1 Standards

1.1 Standards and progress overall

Inspectors should evaluate the standards reached by pupils overall and judge whether these are appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities. Inspectors should consider pupils' progress, especially their progress since starting school, from one phase to another, and during the school year.

Inspectors should base their evaluations of pupils' achievement and progress on the outcomes of lesson observations, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Inspectors should evaluate how well pupils recall previous learning, develop thinking skills, acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills, and apply these to new situations.

Inspectors should consider all relevant performance information. They should consider how well the school is doing overall and the general trend in its performance, especially in relation to the standards achieved, and progress made, by individual and groups of pupils, and modelled outcomes where appropriate. Inspectors should look at the school's analysis of performance data covering a period of time, normally over at least the last three years, to identify trends in performance. Inspectors should consider the performance data in the light of their own evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of written and practical work.

While inspectors should consider a wide range of information on pupils' standards and progress, they should normally only report on performance data where the outcomes are both collected nationally and externally verified.

1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups

Inspectors should evaluate the progress of particular groups of pupils, for example pupils eligible for free school meals, boys and girls, pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), pupils with reduced timetables or regularly receiving education off-site and those from minority ethnic groups.

For pupils with special educational needs (SEN), judgements about achievement should take account of information about their individual needs and abilities. Inspectors should consider the rate of progress these pupils make in relation to their individual targets and starting points. Inspectors should also look at the progress of pupils with relatively weak skills who do not receive support for special educational needs.

Inspectors should consider whether specific groups of pupils are making as much progress as they could in relation to their starting-points and their age and ability. For example, inspectors should consider how well pupils with more developed skills achieve and the extent to which the work they undertake stretches them fully to achieve as well as they could.

1.3 Standards and progress in skills

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent pupils develop the skills required to access the whole curriculum and to learn effectively.

Inspectors should report clearly on pupils' standards in each of the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing (in Welsh/English), numeracy and ICT in the foundation phase and key stage 2. Inspectors should consider pupils' progress in relation to the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy. Inspectors should also consider the outcomes in GCSE performance in English and/or Welsh and mathematics. When inspecting skills, the focus should be on whether pupils have the required skills in literacy (Welsh/English), numeracy and ICT and on how well they use these skills appropriately in their work across the curriculum.

Inspectors should judge standards in skills based on first-hand evidence, for example from observations of pupils in lessons, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Careful observation of pupils in lessons and talking to pupils will provide evidence of their speaking and listening skills, their numeracy skills and their ability to think. Scrutiny of work will provide evidence on how well pupils can write clearly and read for understanding, how well they can use their numeracy skills at appropriate levels in a range of subjects and whether they are acquiring a useful range of skills and knowledge in ICT.

Inspectors should consider the extent to which the level of pupils' communication and higher-order thinking skills support or hinder their progress in classroom interaction with teachers and with other pupils. They should consider how well pupils develop their creativity and their physical skills, for example through play and active learning in the classroom and outdoors, and how enterprising they are.

Inspectors should consider pupils' standards in Welsh when compared with schools in similar contexts and pupils' previous attainment. Inspectors should consider

pupils' progression from the foundation phase through key stage 2 to key stage 3. They should consider pupils' attainment in Welsh, Welsh Literature or Welsh second language when compared with their previous progress and with attainment in similar schools.

Inspectors should consider the progress pupils make in developing their Welsh language skills across the curriculum and around the school. They should consider how well pupils know about the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming bilingual.

In key stage 4, where applicable, inspectors should consider the proportion of pupils who gain a recognised key stage 4 qualification in Welsh second language. In Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, they should consider the proportion of pupils who complete their coursework and final assessment in Welsh in key stage 4 and in the sixth form in the whole range of courses they follow across the curriculum.

2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

2.1 Wellbeing

Inspectors should consider the extent to which pupils feel safe and secure, and free from physical and verbal abuse. They should consider how well they are becoming healthy, confident individuals and understand, for example, how to make healthy choices relating to diet, physical activity and emotional wellbeing, including how to keep themselves safe online. They should consider how well pupils use this understanding in their own lives in school and respond positively to opportunities to undertake physical activity, for example during lessons, at break and lunchtime and through after-school clubs and activities.

Inspectors should consider the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires from learners, parents, staff and governors carefully in relation to pupils' behaviour and develop appropriate emerging questions, where appropriate. Inspectors should consider evidence from observations of pupils interacting in classes, at break and lunchtime and around the school, as well as evidence from discussions with individuals and groups.

Inspectors should consider the extent to which pupils, including those with special educational needs, are ready to take on leadership roles and responsibilities and to play a full part in the life and work of the school, for example as members of the school council, playground buddies, peer mentors and digital leaders. They should consider how well all pupils show confidence and resilience in their lives, for example in the way they interact with new people and with adults.

Inspectors should consider how well pupils are developing as ethical, informed citizens, for example through their awareness of fairness, equality, tolerance, sustainability and children's rights.

2.2 Attitudes to learning

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent pupils are developing the key attitudes and behaviours that will help them to learn throughout their lives.

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which pupils are ambitious, confident, capable and independent learners. They should look at how well pupils engage with new, unfamiliar experiences and ideas. They should judge pupils' interest in their work, their ability to sustain concentration and to avoid distractions. They should consider how readily pupils engage in tasks and bring them to completion. They should evaluate how well pupils persevere and remain purposeful when they face difficulties or seek other solutions when their first approach to a problem is unsuccessful. Inspectors should consider to what extent secondary age pupils are developing their employability skills as they move through the school.

Inspectors should consider to what extent pupils are ready to learn at the start of lessons and whether they move easily between different lessons and activities. They should look at how well pupils are able to work in a range of ways, for example independently, in small groups and in whole-class settings. Inspectors should consider how well pupils demonstrate respect for the contributions of others, for example by allowing others to speak or by remaining calm when others disagree with them.

Inspectors should consider the extent to which pupils demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school. They should look at how well pupils move between activities and classes and how well they behave during activities such as whole-school assemblies. They should observe whether pupils are considerate and relate well to each other and adults. Inspectors should consider how well pupils behave at lunchtime and playtimes.

When evaluating participation and enjoyment in learning, inspectors should consider the evidence from classes, scrutiny of pupils' work, interviews with pupils, observation of their engagement in lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities and the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school.

When evaluating attendance as evidence of pupils' participation and engagement in learning, inspectors should report by exception, i.e. where there is a clear trend of weak or very strong attendance or where it has significantly improved. Inspectors should consider the trends in the overall school attendance rate and the most up-to-date information available, including any notable variations between particular groups of pupils and others, for example those eligible for free school meals. They should focus particularly on the rate of persistent absence and consider how many pupils have absence rates well above others in the school. They should compare attendance rates with national figures and those of similar schools, particularly any comparative, benchmarked data and modelled outcomes. However, inspectors should also consider significant mitigating factors, for example in relation to the proportion of pupils who join and leave the school, where there is robust evidence to support them.

3 Teaching and learning experiences

3.1 Quality of teaching

The evaluation of teaching does not necessarily have to be the first section of the inspection area as inspectors may begin with the quality of learning experiences or the provision for skills if this makes their findings clearer.

When evaluating teaching, inspectors should note that there is no fixed template that teachers should follow, and teachers may use a range of different approaches over time. The key consideration is whether the teaching is successful in engaging pupils' interest and how well it develops their skills, knowledge and understanding to an appropriately high level as they move through the school.

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They should consider the quality of teachers' planning and how well their planning benefits from purposeful schemes of work. They should consider the extent to which teachers have clear objectives for pupils' learning and use a range of approaches and resources to engage their interest and to challenge all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve as well as they can. They should consider the extent to which they make their classes stimulating and engaging places in which all groups of pupils, including the most and least able, can learn productively.

Inspectors should judge how well teachers use various questioning techniques to draw out and further develop pupils' responses and to gauge their understanding. They should consider the clarity of teachers' instructions and explanations and how well the pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding as a result. They should evaluate how well the teachers manage pupils' behaviour and whether they treat all pupils equally and with appropriate respect. Inspectors should judge how successfully teachers use other staff to support pupils' learning.

The focus on assessment in this inspection area is predominantly on classroom practice.

Inspectors should evaluate how well the oral and written feedback from teachers helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They should consider how well teachers use the outcomes of national personalised assessments to help pupils to understand their own strengths and areas for improvement. They should consider how well teachers gauge pupils' understanding through skilful questioning and monitoring of pupils' learning. They should consider how well teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own performance and that of other pupils, where appropriate. Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which teachers analyse the outcomes of their assessment of pupils, and those stemming from personalised assessments, to inform their future planning of lessons and the next steps in pupils' learning. They should consider how well teachers ensure that their assessments are valid, accurate and reliable.

In coming to evaluations on teaching, inspectors should use the full range of evidence available to them. This is likely to include evidence from pupils' work, schemes of work, assessment records, information on pupils' progress, discussions with pupils and staff as well as lesson observations and learning walks undertaken by members of the inspection team. Inspectors should not allocate a judgement to an individual lesson or teacher, but should report on the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching across the school.

3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which learning experiences across the school stimulate and challenge the full range of pupils so that they engage fully in their learning and make the best possible progress.

Inspectors should consider whether the curriculum gives pupils individual learning pathways with a broad and balanced range of experiences. They should consider how well the curriculum combines formal, non-formal and informal elements, including work-focused experience and community participation. Inspectors should consider how well the school gives pupils the opportunity to obtain appropriate qualifications and equal access to options that meet pupils' interests and abilities.

Inspectors should consider the school's strategic approach to planning the curriculum and the extent to which it helps pupils to become ambitious, confident, aspirational and well-informed individuals.

Inspectors should approach innovation and flexibility of approach in a positive way when schools have tried to be creative and imaginative in taking forward well-considered curricular initiatives for the benefit of pupils. In the light of current education reform, inspectors may see flexible approaches developing in schools. They may find that schools are developing their approach to the curriculum, for example through collaboration with other schools, or through regional consortia groups.

Inspectors should evaluate how well the curriculum builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school and on transfer from partner primary schools. They should consider to what extent the school provides pupils with a suitably wide range of experiences to develop their interest and skills across a range of subjects and areas of learning.

Inspectors should consider teachers' planning, schemes of work, pupils' work and observation of work in classes in coming to a view on the quality of the learning experiences provided. They should consider how well the learning experiences meet the needs of all pupils no matter what specific models of delivery they choose to organise and deliver the curriculum.

Inspectors should evaluate how well the school's curriculum provides for specific groups of pupils, especially those with advanced skills and understanding, those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. In Welsh-medium or bilingual schools, this might include provision for pupils with little prior knowledge of the Welsh language. In schools with pupils receiving part of their education off-site or on-site in nurture groups or inclusion provision, inspectors should evaluate how well this curriculum is meeting their needs.

Inspectors should consider the extent to which teachers and learning support staff take full account of individual pupils' learning needs in the planning of the curriculum and in the delivery of individual lessons and sequences of lessons. Inspectors should identify where pupils have learning targets and consider how well teachers and other staff take note of these and provide a suitable programme of work to help pupils to meet them. Inspectors should consider the effectiveness of any support provided for pupils within the classroom or in withdrawal groups to develop their skills.

Inspectors should examine arrangements for grouping pupils through setting or mixed-ability grouping and consider whether the arrangements have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and experiences.

Inspectors should consider the ways in which the school develops a curriculum that fully reflects the nature of the school's context, including designing learning activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of Wales and the school's local area.

In schools with pupils up to and including Year 2, inspectors should consider how well the school takes account of the principles of the foundation phase, and how well staff plan for pupils to use the outdoors in the development of their learning and skills.

Inspectors should consider the nature and extent of learning outside the classroom that links directly to the planned curriculum, for example to support the development of pupils' understanding of a specific topic, subject or learning area. (Pupils' involvement in clubs and after-school activities is a focus within Inspection Area 4).

3.3 Provision for skills

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which the curriculum arrangements ensure that pupils acquire the necessary skills in literacy (Welsh/English), numeracy and ICT to support their work across the curriculum. Inspectors should consider how well the school has taken account of the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy in the planning of pupils' learning experiences. The breadth of pupils' experiences across the curriculum should also provide purposeful, progressive opportunities for pupils to practise and to develop their skills in literacy (Welsh/English), numeracy and ICT. They should look at the evidence in pupils' books, online folders and in classes to consider the extent to which the planning is helping to deliver purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum.

Inspectors should evaluate the extent and quality of the school's provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills in formal teaching activities and in informal situations. They should consider how well the school teaches pupils about the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming bilingual. It is a statutory requirement that all pupils learn Welsh up to the age of 16.

4 Care, support and guidance

4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support

Inspectors should consider how well the school tracks and monitors pupils' progress and wellbeing, including attendance and behaviour, as they move through the school. Inspectors should consider how well the school uses this information to consider the progress and development of specific groups, for example those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement or those who are more able. They will need to consider how well the school identifies relevant issues and responds appropriately to the outcomes of tracking, monitoring and national personalised assessments, for example through the provision of appropriate support

and challenge, the use of intervention strategies and the mentoring or coaching of individuals or groups. Inspectors should consider how well the school includes any pupils educated off-site or on-site in nurture groups or inclusion centres, in these arrangements. Inspectors should consider how well the school tracks the progress of pupils with special educational needs in relation to the targets in their individual plans, and their progress from their individual starting points. Inspectors should also consider how well the school uses partnerships with others, for example other schools or agencies, to provide effective support for learners.

Inspectors should consider how well the school supports pupils with emotional, health and social needs so that they can engage positively with the school and benefit from the opportunities that it offers.

Inspectors should consider how well the school establishes productive relationships with parents and has effective lines of communication with them so that parents can support their children well and raise any issues that may affect their child's learning and wellbeing. Inspectors should consider the extent to which the school is actively helping to develop parents' capacity to support their own children. For example, the school may provide information on the curriculum, guidance on the benefits of regular pupil attendance, workshops for parents on how to help their child to develop their reading skills and support for families of pupils with special educational needs.

Inspectors should consider a sample of reports to parents or carers to check that they give parents appropriate information on their child's progress and how their child can make further progress in the future.

4.2 Personal development (including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)

Inspectors should evaluate how well the school's provision helps pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding to make healthy lifestyle choices, for example in relation to healthy eating and drinking, substance misuse, sex and relationships, online safety and so on. Inspectors should consider how successfully the school's provision helps pupils to understand the impact of lifestyle choices and behaviours on their present and future mental and physical health and wellbeing. Inspectors should report on whether the school has the appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which the school's provision helps pupils, including those from different groups such as those eligible for free school meals, to take on responsibilities and to play a full part in the school and wider community.

Inspectors should consider how well the school's provision prepares pupils, including those with special educational needs, to become active citizens, for example by making decisions about the life and work of the school. They should consider how well the school's arrangements help pupils to participate in decision-making at a school level, including the opportunities they have to influence what and how they learn, and the effectiveness of the school council and other pupil groups, for example the eco committee. Inspectors should evaluate how well the school's provision helps pupils to develop an understanding of their culture, the local community and the wider world.

Inspectors should evaluate how well the school's personal and social education programme supports the development of the social and emotional skills of all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Inspectors should consider how well the school helps to prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, including education about careers and the world of work and the importance of regular attendance.

Inspectors should consider the effectiveness of impartial guidance and advice provided to learners, for example relating to future career choices. They should consider the overall coherence and effectiveness of the provision for personal and specialist support, including the availability of services from specialist agencies, especially for learners who face considerable barriers to learning.

Inspectors should look at how well the school helps pupils to understand issues relating to equality and diversity, and develops the values of tolerance and respect. They should consider how well the school's arrangements foster a positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour and an anti-bullying culture. They should consider how well the school develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of harassment, discrimination, identity-based bullying and extremism. They should also consider how well the school responds to and manages any incidents relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination. They should consider the extent to which the school's provision challenges stereotypes in pupils' attitudes, choices and expectations, and how well it promotes human rights.

Inspectors should consider the extent to which the school provides effective opportunities for pupils to develop secure values and to establish their spiritual and ethical beliefs. They should consider how well the school promotes principles that help pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. They should consider how well the school develops pupils' ability to reflect on religious and non-religious responses to fundamental questions and to reflect on their own beliefs or values. They should consider how far the school fosters shared values, such as honesty, fairness, justice and sustainability, and helps pupils to understand the needs and rights of others both locally and as members of a diverse global world.

Inspectors should consider how well the school encourages pupils to use their imagination and to engage with the creative arts through their studies, extra-curricular activities and educational visits. They should consider the extent to which schools give pupils' the opportunity to participate in performance, as individuals and in groups, to foster their self-confidence and expressive capacities, their ability to contribute creative ideas and their ability to work in a team.

Inspectors should consider how well the school provides lunchtime and after-school opportunities or puts on assemblies, performances or eisteddfodau to encourage pupils to participate in the arts and in sport and recreation.

Acts of worship and assemblies can play an important part in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors should consider acts of collective worship in all schools that do not provide denominational education. They should consider the quality of acts of collective worship in their own right and how well the school plans them over time. Inspectors should report on daily acts of collective worship where they are particularly good or where they are weak or do not meet statutory requirements.

4.3 Safeguarding

Inspectors will report on whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Where arrangements are a serious cause for concern, inspectors should include a recommendation in the report and Estyn will send a wellbeing letter to the school asking them to outline how they will address the shortcoming(s).

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent the school's safeguarding arrangements ensure that all children are protected. Arrangements should include the identification of children in need or at risk of significant harm, safe recruitment practices and having appropriate arrangements for child protection referrals. Inspectors should also consider how well the school promotes safe practices and a culture of safety. The Welsh Government has issued specific statutory requirements and guidance about these safeguarding matters and providers should have in place policies and procedures that comply with them.

Inspectors should consider the school's provision for child protection. They will look at how effective its arrangements are for preventing and addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination. Inspectors should consider how the school keeps pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation.

Inspectors should consider whether the school has robust procedures for checking the suitability of staff and others who are in contact with children, and that the school maintains a record of these checks. Inspectors should check that all staff know what to do to respond to child protection issues and that the designated lead officer and lead governor, and other staff where appropriate, have received relevant safeguarding training. Inspectors should check whether the school has appropriate policies, procedures and reporting arrangements in relation to physical interventions and withdrawal. Inspectors will examine any areas used for withdrawal. Inspectors should check whether a school has robust procedures in place to safeguard pupils who receive their education off-site.

In considering safeguarding matters, inspectors should take into account the security of the school buildings and site.

5 Leadership and management

5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers have established and communicated a clear vision and appropriate aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that focus on meeting all pupils' needs.

Inspectors should reflect on how well leaders and managers at all levels set high expectations for staff, pupils and themselves. They should consider how well they develop an effective, engaged team of teachers and support staff. They should consider to what extent leaders and managers model and promote professional values and behaviours that contribute positively to school improvement and effective collaboration between staff and with other providers. They should consider how well staff at all levels understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities and how well they collaborate in driving forward strategic priorities and school improvement.

Inspectors should consider a wide range of evidence when evaluating the quality of leadership and management, for example minutes from a range of recent meetings, interviews with staff, improvement action plans and reports on their implementation, recent self-evaluation from leaders and managers and the analysis of information on pupil performance.

Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers act in accordance with the principle of sustainable development and how well they make decisions and set priorities for improvement that balance immediate, short-term needs with the long-term needs of pupils, the local community and Wales.

Inspectors should look at the extent to which leaders and managers sustain high quality or improve weak aspects of provision. They should consider how well leaders and managers prevent problems from occurring in the first place and how quickly they bring about any remedial actions.

Inspectors should consider how well leaders have established a clear, strategic rationale for the curriculum in terms of its benefits for pupils in preparing them to learn throughout their lives and to play a full part in society. They should evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers are purposeful and successful in meeting national and local priorities, such as reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment, preparing for the implementation of the DCF, and improving the development of pupils' skills in Welsh/English, numeracy and ICT. Inspectors should evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers plan strategically to provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in formal and informal situations.

Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers share positive features of provision with staff in the school and collaborate with other schools within the sector to achieve improvements in the education system locally, regionally and nationally, for example in relation to education reform. Inspectors should focus on how well the school uses strategic partnerships and collaboration with other agencies to help to build its capacity for continuous improvement, for example in reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

Inspectors should evaluate how well governors understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities. They should consider how well governors know the school's strengths and areas for development and the degree to which they have participated in setting the school's strategic priorities. They should consider whether there is an appropriate balance between support and challenge in the way the governing body discharges its role in holding the senior leadership to account on behalf of the local community, i.e. its role as a 'critical friend'.

Inspectors should judge how well the governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and takes full account of relevant legislation and guidance, including in relation to how it manages complaints and appeals from parents.

5.2 Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning

Inspectors should evaluate how accurately leaders and managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They should consider how well leaders and managers gather and analyse first-hand evidence of standards, information on pupil

performance and provision, including teaching. They should consider how well the school involves a wide range of partners, including pupils and parents, in identifying its strengths and weaknesses.

Inspectors should consider the impact of improvement planning processes and how well identified priorities for improvement link to the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation procedures. Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers support priorities through the appropriate allocation of resources. They should evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers define relevant and measurable actions for improvement. They should consider how well leaders plan specific, realistic timescales and allocate appropriate responsibility for securing improvement to members of staff.

Inspectors should investigate the school's track-record in making improvements and the extent to which they have led to a positive impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing, for example through improvements to the quality of teaching. Where appropriate, inspectors should consider how well the school has responded to recommendations from previous Estyn inspections or from strategic partners and whether the school's actions have led to improvements.

5.3 Professional learning

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent leaders have created the culture and ethos to support the professional learning of all staff, including the arrangements to support the active engagement of all staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills. They should consider the extent to which staff participate effectively in professional learning experiences, appraisal and performance management. Inspectors should evaluate the impact of leaders in the way they manage the performance of staff in order to help staff to improve their practice. They should also judge whether leaders and managers address issues of underperformance robustly and directly, where necessary.

They should consider professional learning undertaken by staff and its impact on pupils' learning and their own practice. They should explore the extent to which staff have shared professional learning outcomes with other staff. They should look at how well leaders have identified good practice within the school and ensured that other staff may benefit from it. They should also consider how well staff work with other schools, teacher training institutions and providers of professional learning to share and to develop their professional practice. Where the school is a lead school for initial teacher education, inspectors will consider the impact of this work on the school's approaches to professional learning.

5.4 Use of resources

Inspectors should consider how well the school uses its resources efficiently and proportionately. They should consider the extent to which the school's spending decisions and broad financial planning link appropriately to its strategic priorities and its improvement planning. In relation to spending decisions, inspectors should consider how well the school balances its short-term needs alongside the long-term needs of pupils, the local community and Wales.

Inspectors should consider the extent to which leaders and managers know the costs of existing programmes and activities, keep them under review and question whether they are cost-effective. Inspectors should consider the size of any surplus or deficit relative to the school's total delegated budget and reserves. They should consider whether there is a consistent trend of spending that is significantly above or below the annual delegated budget and explore the reasons for this, where it occurs.

Inspectors should consider whether there is an appropriate level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned curriculum effectively.

Inspectors should consider whether the school uses its indoor and outdoor environment effectively and efficiently. They should consider how well the learning environment supports or detracts from teaching and learning of high quality and how well it maximises the physical and mental wellbeing of pupils.

Inspectors should report on the extent to which the school makes effective use of specific funding and grants, for example the pupil development grant, especially where the amount of the grant is relatively high, and any funds to support education reform.

The evidence base of the inspection

The report will contain a brief overview of the evidence base of the inspection. In this section, reporting inspectors will summarise the activities undertaken by members of the inspection team and the sources of evidence that they considered before, during and after the inspection to ensure that the findings of the inspection are valid, accurate and reliable.

Thematic focus

Estyn may choose a small number of additional themes to focus on each year. The themes chosen will help Estyn to gather information on specific aspects of education and training in Wales. Estyn will use the information to complement its remit work and to inform the findings of the Chief Inspector's Annual Report.

Where there is an additional theme, the inspection team will focus on only one additional theme on each inspection. There will be no separate section of the report or a separate judgement on the additional theme in the published report.

The inspection team may approach the gathering of evidence for the additional theme in a variety of ways, depending on the theme chosen. It may involve a questionnaire or an interview with a specific member of staff or scrutiny of documentation or pupils' work, or a combination of approaches. The aim is to make the gathering of evidence as proportionate and as manageable as possible for the school and the inspection team.