

Final report

Professional Communication

- *How can feedback sessions contribute to the willingness of schools and school boards to improve the quality of education? -*



SICI collaborative project of:

*The Ministry of Education and Research, Estonia
The National Agency for School Evaluation, Lithuania
Inspectorate of Education, The Netherlands
Education Scotland, Scotland*

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Introduction

In 2018 – 2019 the four inspectorates of education¹ of Estonia, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Scotland participated in the SICI (Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) research project 'Professional Communication'. The project was launched as a result of SICI's request to answer the following question: 'What elements of professional communication in feedback sessions have a positive impact on the willingness of schools to improve their quality of education?'

The aim of the project was to identify and describe structures, elements and competences of communication during inspection meetings in which results are reported to the school. Besides writing a report about the findings, there is also the intention to provide a product that supports inspectors to put the findings into practice.

The findings and conclusions of the project are discussed in this final report.



¹ Technically, Estonia and Lithuania do not have an inspectorate. In Estonia all inspections are carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research. In Lithuania the National Agency for School Evaluation is responsible for school inspections.

1. Professional Communication Research Project

Cause and purpose

Most Inspectorates of Education are concerned with the question of the impact of their work on the improvement of the quality of education. One of the areas in inspection where we can have a positive impact on the improvement of the quality of education is the feedback session. How can we motivate schools or governing bodies in feedback sessions to work on improving their quality or working on compliance? What are characteristic elements of feedback sessions at different inspectorates? What are the positive and negative influences with regard to the willingness of schools and governing bodies to improve their quality? What is written about this in the literature and what shows from the experiences of governing bodies, schools, inspectors etcetera? We try to identify elements of feedback sessions that have a positive influence as well as elements that have a negative influence on the willingness of schools or governing bodies to improve their quality. Based on these elements, inspectorates can evaluate and improve their own feedback sessions so that the impact of their work on the improvement of the quality of education increases.

Participating countries

The four inspectorates participating in this project are: Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Scotland. The inspectorates of these four countries all use their own working methods, appropriate to the form of supervision that is customary for the particular situation in their countries.

In order to get a global picture of the existing working methods of these four countries, we start with an outline of the different forms of supervision.



Estonia

In Estonia, the ministry of Education and Research exercises supervision over the lawfulness of the activities of both schools and their owners with the aim of ensuring the availability of basic and general secondary education and accessibility thereto on equal grounds, the organization of teaching and education, and the quality and effectiveness thereof. There is no separate inspectorate, the external evaluation department of the Ministry of Education and Research exercises supervision over state, private and municipal educational institutions. Inspectors study documents and check whether the documents comply with the requirements set out in the legislation. After reviewing the documents, the inspector carries out on-site interviews with the school owner, the headmaster, representatives of the teachers, support specialists, parents' representatives and students to establish how all the rules and systems stated in the documents are actually implemented. The results of the supervision are set out in a statement that is published on the website of the Ministry.



Lithuania

The National Agency for School Evaluation has two main goals. One is to perform quality evaluation of the school performance in primary and secondary education. The second goal is to provide schools with methodological assistance and recommendations to improve the quality of school performances. It is their belief that with their help, schools will successfully develop a better self-evaluation culture in the future so that the main focus switches from external evaluation to school self-evaluation. Observing lessons is an essential part of inspection visits. During the feedback session the conclusions, according to a fixed pattern of mentioning ten strengths and five areas for improvement, are presented to the school community.



the Netherlands

The aim of the Dutch inspectorate is to contribute to better education in the Netherlands. The inspectorate has three functions: controlling compliance with legislation and regulations, promoting and stimulating the quality of education and giving public accountability for the quality of education.

They focus on the governing body *and* the schools ruled by that governing body. The governing body is responsible for the quality of the education and must account for the results. Every four years the governing body is inspected, after which the Dutch inspectorate of education makes statements about the quality assurance system and the financial management of the governing body and of the educational quality of a sample of the schools ruled by the governing body. The full process of a governing body inspection usually takes about six weeks.



Scotland

Education Scotland, which includes Her Majesty's inspectors of Education, is the Scottish Government Agency charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education and thereby securing the delivery of improvements in learning experiences and outcomes for Scottish learners of all ages. Their status as an executive agency implies they are independent and impartial, though they remain directly accountable to Scottish Government ministers.

Scottish inspectors provide feedback at all stages of the inspection ensuring there are no surprise messages for school senior leaders at the final inspection 'sharing of findings'. They work according to the PRAISE framework which describes the entire inspection process and provides many instructions for the communication of inspectors.

The areas they evaluate, are: leadership of change, learning, teaching and assessment, improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion and raising attainment and achievement. Self-evaluation is a very important part in the Scottish inspection model.

All schools inspected in Scotland are provided with a formal report and a letter for parents on the inspection findings and the schools strengths and areas for development of the school.



2. Literature

We conducted a literature study prior to our research project. We read about the impact and importance of communication in a professional setting. The questionnaires we used for inspectors and school leaders are based on what we found in literature.

The importance of professional communication

Communication has always been an essential part of inspection. The messages inspectors convey must lead to the establishment of structural changes in educational practice. It is therefore important that the inspector has a motivating approach. We have studied to determine what the most important characteristics of communication are in the context of carrying out inspections. Van Steenkiste (University of Ghent, 2004) says a motivating approach consists of two aspects. First of all, inspectors need to be *clear* regarding the type of recommended change. They should provide convincing arguments and should be able to explain and defend their judgements. Secondly, inspectors need to adopt an *encouraging disposition* to bring about change.

It is known that when people are intrinsically motivated to bring about a change, that change is more likely to succeed than when people feel that the change is being imposed on them and made mandatory. The chance of success is considerably lower then. People who are obliged to implement changes are more likely to 'cheat' or try to withhold information. Whereas people who fully support the change, perform better and are more likely to achieve lasting changes.

Therefore we can say that *fostering autonomous motivation* is much more efficient than merely bring about behavioral change. Studies show that when people feel free and confident to handle the situation in their own way they are more likely to endorse or own the changes and advice provided by an inspector. A good relationship with the person giving advice also has a positive effect on the willingness to implement changes.

Given what is mentioned above, inspectors need to be skilled in adopting an *autonomy supportive approach*. This increases the feeling of satisfaction with the conversation and the openness for feedback. However, it does not imply that inspectors need to become permissive, if they see a need for change. Yet, their way of doing so is different from prescriptive and controlling. Autonomy-supportive inspectors work from the school leaders' or governors' perspective, they are flexible and try to stimulate initiatives of school leaders and school teams to promote a sense of positivity and willingness to make a change. Thus, if school leaders or governors believe that the purpose of inspection is to inform, give feedback and to provide support, it will most likely feel like a challenge which might lead to growth, commitment, trust and openness. This also applies to an inspection context that is primarily focused on control and compliance; certain forms of communication are more motivating than others.

Authority versus power

We have also viewed communication from the theory of Jansen and Van den Brink (professors of social administration, 2014).

The duties of an inspector consist, roughly summarized, of informing, judging and enforcing. From these tasks, our inspection is always linked to authority and power.

Inspectorates strive for equal relationships with the institutions that they supervise. They also strive to ensure their conclusions and judgements are recognized by school leaders and governors. An equal relationship between the inspector and the school leader or governor, increases the chance that they take the findings seriously and actually start implementing the recommendations that are being given by the inspector.

An equal relationship arises only if an inspector acts on the basis of authority, not if it is done through power.

According to Jansen and Van den Brink the exercise of authority consists of three dimensions:

1. A *positional* dimension: the inspector evaluates educational institutions on behalf of the government.
2. An *institutional* dimension: the inspector uses a framework for supervision.

3. A *personal* dimension: the way in which interactions take place, the individual qualities that a professional has, the life experience or character that gives an inspector a unique way of acting.

A combination of these three dimensions ensures effective exercise of authority.

Empirical research has shown that the legitimacy of an authority is largely dependent on the way in which it communicates with the people over whom power is exercised. It is about good and respectful manners; about a reserved and moral way of exercising power.

We increasingly see the following characteristics of modern authorities:

- Exercise of power with *explanation*
- Authority with *involvement*
- A *polite verbal approach* as a form of authority
- First, *cooperation is requested*, only in the last instance, it is enforced
- The most important 'weapon' is *the mouth*
- A synthesis of the outreaching hand and the raising hand
-

The essence of proper government action can be summarized in four core values:

1. Open and clear
2. Respectful
3. Involved and solution oriented
4. Honest and trustworthy

Competences related to communication skills, in the context of inspectorates are expression skills, sensitivity and manners, judging fairly and persuasiveness.

The personality of the inspector and his or her performance greatly influence the image that exists of the inspectorate in society. This influence is greater than we often think and it also has a bigger effect than one can achieve systematically through procedures and sophisticated methods. Therefore, the inspector is an important ambassador when it comes to the image and impact of the inspection. Van Twist et al. (Self as tool, 2017) describe how people in public administration, such as inspectors, use themselves as an instrument in their work.



"Self as tool is about individuality, but also about ability, accumulated experience, and conscious commitment. Professionalization of craftsmanship therefore implies a conscious use of self. With insight into your own prejudices, your own style and your own body. Having knowledge and insight about yourself is necessary to effectively use yourself as an instrument. This concerns relevant components for the use of self: knowing what your presence means, how you influence, how you get into contact with people and how you come across to others." – Van Twist (author of the book 'Self as tool')

3. Research approach

Research approach

For this SICI project inspectorates of four different countries applied to participate: Estonia, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Scotland. All participants began the task by completing a literature review on the characteristic elements of communication that influence the willingness of school leaders or governors² to improve their quality of education. Based on the input derived from literature, we designed a questionnaire for inspectors and another one, slightly different, for schools and school leaders (appendix 5 and 6).

Both questionnaires commence with four segments consisting of statements about different topics. For each topic respondents must indicate to what extent they consider it important and subsequently to what extent they think the inspector actually pays attention to this during the feedback session. The first segment contains statements about the inspector **being clear** during the feedback session, followed by a segment about **professional dialogue**. The third segment focuses on the **stimulating nature of the feedback session** whereas the fourth segment zooms in on the **organizational aspects**. The questionnaire ends with four open questions to give respondents the opportunity to share their views on what they think are determining factors for a successful feedback session. In addition, they are also asked which factors in communication are counterproductive. The questionnaire was completed with an invitation to write down suggestions for improvement.

After the initial design of the questionnaires in English, all participants were asked to translate the questionnaire into their own language. When translating, in some cases it was necessary to adjust the text somewhat due to the differences in use of specific words. We agreed that some inspectorates would adjust or omit a question in case it was not appropriate or relevant to the working method of the inspectorate in their country. It is important to emphasize that the changes made have been kept to the very minimum.

The aim was for every inspectorate to submit the questionnaire to as many inspectors as possible and the largest possible group of school leaders or governors. The number of inspectors participating varies considerably per country. This has various reasons. On the one hand, one country employs many more inspectors than the other. In addition, some inspectors had already taken part in many other surveys and questionnaires, which would make the workload too high to ask them to participate in this one as well.

In the Netherlands, the inspectorate changed its supervision recently. Nowadays, inspection investigation focuses on the school board, instead of schools. According to Dutch law, the governors are held accountable for the quality of education, not the school leaders. Therefore, the Dutch did not submit a questionnaire to school leaders. Instead, they organized a round table meeting with a selection of governors. The governors were selected based on their answers to questions about the sharing of findings session that were part of a customer satisfaction survey. In this way they could form a mixed group of people who were positive about the way the inspectorate conducted the sharing of findings session and people who were critical of it.

In Scotland the questionnaire could not be submitted to school leaders because of other workload pressures in the Scottish system at that time. They have, however, been able to abstract some information from previously collected feedback about the inspection process. Several questions in the feedback survey provided useful insight into some of the areas that were also included in the questionnaire designed for Professional Communication.

Lithuania and Estonia could present the questionnaire to both inspectors and school leaders.

It was possible to have the questionnaires completed either on paper or digitally. All countries opted for a digital version of the questionnaires.

The results of the questionnaires and the conclusions drawn from the round table discussions are gathered together in this report. First, a summary of the most important common outcomes is described and then the complete report of each country is added.

² In the Netherlands, inspectors focus primarily on school boards instead of schools.

4. Overall findings

Most important elements for a good feedback session according to inspectors

Taking all the answers from the Estonian, Lithuanian, Dutch and Scottish inspectors together, we see that they believe all elements of the questionnaire were (very) important. As we expected based on our literature research, none of the elements we included were seen as unimportant by the inspectors. In their opinion and from their experience, the most important elements for a successful feedback session are **providing clear evidence and exemplars** to support and explain their judgements. Also, at the end of the feedback session, it should be very clear to the school (board) what their **strengths and areas for development** are. Another important aspect is **retaining (an equal, friendly, supportive) relationship** with school leaders or governors. The relationship the inspector has with a school leader or governor has a major influence on the chance that the judgement will be accepted by them. Last but not least inspectors believe that they need to consider the **context of a school (board)** in order to give a fair judgement. This means that inspectors must also take the context of a school (board) into account when forming judgements.



Fig. 1: Most important elements for a good feedback session according to inspectors.

Most important elements for a good feedback session according to school leaders and governors

"Recognizability of the inspectors judgement is necessary to create support for the implementation of improvements in practice. Therefore it is necessary that an inspector matches the ideas, ambitions and the language of the school board." – Dutch governor

During the feedback session school leaders and governors are very keen on **sharing their own vision** on the judgement of the inspector. They want to feel heard and seen and also want to receive **recognition and appreciation** for their achievements so far. A necessary condition for this is that they are given the opportunity to **enter into dialogue** in which **their input is valued** and taken seriously. School leaders and governors underscore that it is important for the inspector to **listen carefully** and take note of what they, as the ones responsible for the quality of education in their school(s), have to say about the state of affairs. This should lead to inspectors **taking the context of the school into account** in their final assessment. Apart from sharing their own side of the story, school leaders and governors expect inspectors to thoroughly substantiate their opinions with **solid evidence and clear and concrete exemplars** that endorse and illustrate their findings. In the meantime, inspectors are expected to **retain a good relationship**.



Fig. 2: Most important elements for a good feedback session according to school leaders and governors

What is crucial in feedback sessions in case of inadequate quality according to inspectors?

" It is important to communicate the findings of the inspection in such a way that the school fundamentally understands what, why and how they need to change."
– Estonian inspector

In these cases inspectors consider it extra important that the findings are reported during the inspection process as opposed to doing so only in the final feedback session. This is to prevent the judgement coming as a surprise during the feedback session. Therefore inspectors always try to **'work towards conclusions from the very start.'** They act in this way to ensure that the message during the feedback session does not come as a surprise but is really something that is being recognized by the school leader or governor. Also, it is considered important to provide sufficient **exemplars and evidence** to show what their judgement is based on and why exactly it is of insufficient quality. Furthermore, one should not forget to pay attention to **maintaining a positive relationship**. Inspectors always try to adopt a motivating and supportive attitude towards the school leaders or governors. In the event of inadequate quality, **solid evidence and clear exemplars** are indispensable.

What is crucial in feedback sessions in case of inadequate quality according to school leaders and governors?

School leaders and governors indicated that in this case, apart from the inadequate judgement, they would also like to hear **which things do go well** at their school. They emphasise it to be important for the inspector to take into account the **developmental stage** a school is in at that particular moment. Lithuanian school leaders explicitly mention the need for **sensitive** inspectors in case of weak quality feedback sessions. In the Netherlands governors expressed the wish to organize not just one, but **two feedback sessions**. The first session could then be used to give and explain the judgement. Because the judgement is sometimes quite difficult to process, it would be good to allow some time to let the message sink in. The extra session could be used to talk about how to improve the quality of education and what changes should be made.

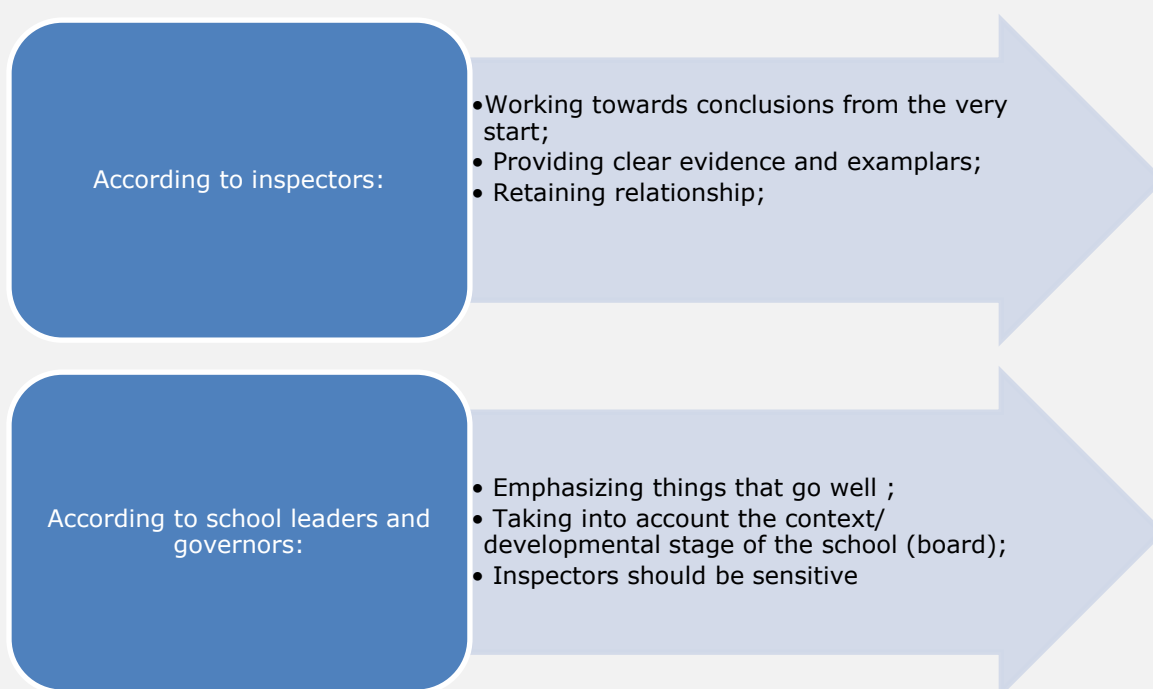


Fig.

3: Crucial elements for feedback sessions in case of inadequate quality.

What is crucial in feedback sessions in case of sufficient or good quality according to inspectors?

Inspectors indicate that in general, it does not differ too much whether the feedback session is held in a situation where the quality of education is good or insufficient. Broadly speaking, the same skills are expected of them. Nevertheless, from the answers to the questionnaires we can notice small differences. The challenge in this situation is to encourage school leaders and governors to **keep improving**. It can be tempting to just be satisfied with the good result and proceed to lean back. During the feedback session it is the inspector's task to **motivate them to bring about further improvements** in their schools. The Lithuanian and Estonian research results show very strongly that inspectors consider it important to **express appreciation** for the hard work and the good results.

What is crucial in feedback sessions in case of sufficient or good quality according to school leaders and governors?

" The whole team of external evaluators should be well prepared for school external evaluation and work collectively and responsibly until the very end of the evaluation process. Good professional preparation and thoughtful presentation are very important. Besides, it is necessary to create a good atmosphere and remove tensions." – Lithuanian inspector

There are hardly any differences between what inspectors and school leaders or governors think about the content of a feedback session in case of good quality. However, they all mention they would want to get **recognition for the hard work** they have done to achieve this level. Also, they would like to **enter into dialogue** about the opportunities for further development for their school. Judging from the results of the questionnaire, the concerns of inspectors that school leaders and governors who are assessed as good would therefore be unmotivated to seek even higher standards of education, might in fact not be justified.



Fig. 4: Crucial elements for feedback sessions in case of sufficient or good quality.

What are the absolute don'ts in feedback sessions?

Both inspectors and school leaders agree on the various obstructing factors that reduce the effectiveness of feedback sessions. First and foremost: if the **message or the judgement of the inspector comes as a surprise** during the feedback session, the willingness of school leaders and governors to implement improvements will definitely decrease. Furthermore, **conducting a monologue** instead of entering a dialogue, is another element that negatively influences the effectiveness of a feedback session. The feedback session must not be characterized by one-way communication in which the inspector speaks and the school leaders and governors just have to listen and quietly accept what is being told.

Another element that evokes resistance is the inspector **adopting a 'know-it-all' attitude**. If inspectors feels superior to the members of the school (board), they raise a lot of resistance and ultimately have a counterproductive effect on the feedback session.

Also, inspectors **being in a hurry** to quickly complete the feedback session, do not contribute to an effective feedback session. Conducting a feedback session in haste may very well cause school leaders and governors to feel disrespected and besides they are often left with unanswered questions. Last but not least, it is very unfavorable if the **message of an inspector is unclear**. Conveying an unclear message could be caused by providing too little explanation, evidence and exemplars that clarify the judgement.



5. Conclusions

We started our research project with the following question:

'What elements of professional communication in feedback sessions have a positive impact on the willingness of schools to improve their quality?'

Despite differences in culture and supervision system, the results of the research in the four participating countries do not differ very much. For example, almost all inspectors consider all elements from the questionnaire to be (very) important. Overall, we do see a difference between the extent to which inspectors attach importance to a certain element and the extent to which they actually put it into practice during a feedback session.

A good feedback session seems to be characterized by conducting a dialogue, guarding equality, retaining the relationship and providing sufficient and valid evidence for the given judgement. The perspectives of inspectors and school leaders and governors hardly differ. However, we do see that the latter place more emphasis on sharing their views and giving input than inspectors do. School leaders and governors also tend to attach more importance to the fact that the specific context or situation the school (board) is in, should be taken into account in the final judgement of the inspector. Although inspectors certainly feel the need to thoroughly inform themselves about the context, it is not clear whether, according to them, this information should influence the final judgement or not.

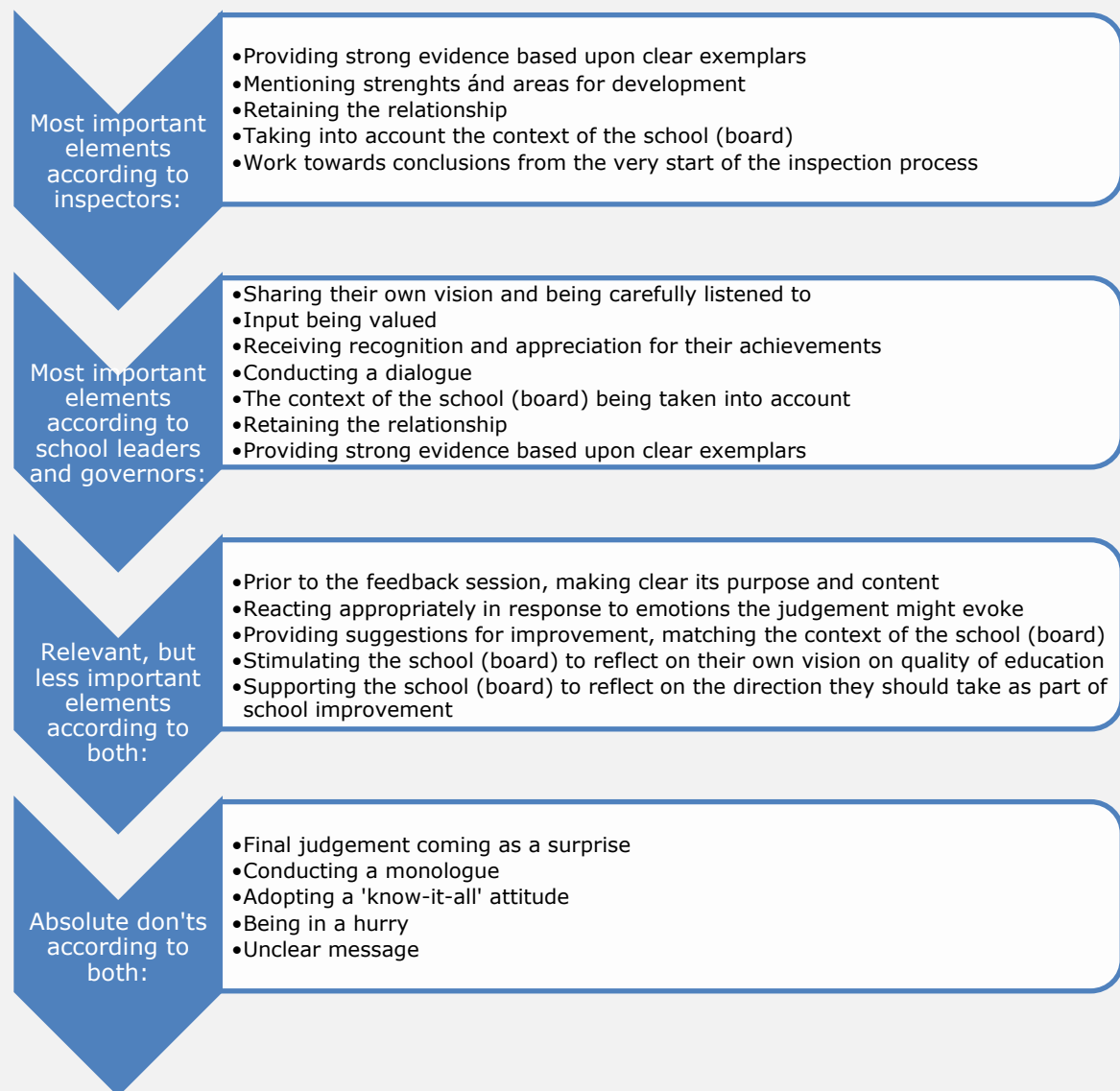


Fig. 5: General conclusions regarding the feedback session.

6. Final remarks

In this study we found out which characteristics of the communication during a feedback session have a positive influence on the willingness of school leaders and governors to change and improve their educational institutions. We see opportunities for further research centered around the question how inspectorates investigate, which parts of the entire supervision process have a great impact on the development of a school and which aspects in particular have influence regarding the improvement of the quality of education. Such research could focus primarily on communication within the entire inspection process. We also see opportunities for further research into the use of supplementary, contemporary (digital) means of communication to strengthen the effect of feedback to schools and governors.

We can conclude that people are well aware of the communicative aspects that are important for establishing an effective feedback session, but it still is difficult to always put it in practice. In general, inspectors do not think they perform badly at all, but they feel there is some room for improvement. Asking for feedback amongst inspectors or asking feedback from school leaders and governors could help to identify the weak spots. The first step is to become more aware of one's own blind spots. Training to improve the skills and regular feedback from colleagues to stay alert, could help inspectors to perform even better in the future. This in turn ensures that feedback sessions motivate school leaders and governors to make the necessary changes that lead to a higher quality of education.



7. Project group

Below is a list of names and professional positions of the participants in the project group 'Professional Communication':

Name	Professional position	country
Elen Ruus	Chief expert of the external evaluation department	Estonia
Pärje Ülavere	Expert of external evaluation department	Estonia
Kęstutis Kurtinys	Head of division for training and accreditation of evaluators	Lithuania
Ramunė Korenkienė	Methodist	Lithuania
Herman Franssen	Inspector primary education	The Netherlands
Els Schram	Inspector special education	The Netherlands
Judith Schmidt	Policy advisor international affairs	The Netherlands
Aileen Monaghan	Inspector Education Scotland	Scotland
Celia McArthur	Inspector Education Scotland	Scotland



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Inspectie van het Onderwijs
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap



Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba

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Van Twist, M., De Jong, I., Van der Steen, M. & Schulz, M. (2017) *Self as Tool*

Jansen, G., van den Brink, J & Kneyber, R. (2014) *Gezagsdragers*

Appendix 1: Country Report Estonia

1. Description of the context

In Estonia, the Ministry of Education and Research exercises supervision over the lawfulness of the activities of both, schools and their owners.³ There is no separate inspectorate, the external evaluation department of the Ministry of Education and Research exercises supervision over state, private and municipal educational institutions.

In addition to schools, the Ministry of Education and Research exercises supervision also over preschool institutions, vocational educational institutions, institutions of professional higher education, hobby schools, continuing education institutions etc. Of course, the legal requirements for those institutions are different, but the general rules for conducting a supervision are the same, regardless of the type of an educational institution. The general organization of supervision is similar in all educational institutions.

Supervision over private schools and their owners is conducted the same way as supervision over municipal educational institutions, there are no significant differences in carrying out inspections depending on the legal form of the school. State supervision over teaching and education provided in a private school is exercised in accordance with the procedure provided by legislation that regulates the activities of corresponding state or municipal educational institutions.⁴ The legal requirements for private, municipal and state schools are similar, all schools providing general education have to support the mental, physical, ethical, social and emotional development of students. Conditions for the balanced development of the abilities and self-realisation of students and for the materialisation of their research-based worldview should be created in those schools.⁵

1.1. School Inspection

The aim of inspection is to ensure the availability of pre-primary, basic and general secondary education and accessibility thereto on equal grounds, the organization of teaching and education, and the quality and effectiveness thereof.

In Estonia, there are no regular school inspections, the system is largely trust-based. This means that some schools can operate decades without being supervised by the state. However, the fact that the Ministry of Education and Research has not supervised a school, does not mean that the owner of the school could not decide to do that. School owners have always the right to carry out supervision over the schools belonging to them.

In addition to external evaluation, internal evaluation is carried out in all schools. Internal evaluation is an ongoing process aimed at ensuring the conditions supporting the development of students and the consistent development of a school. To that end the strengths and weaknesses of a school are identified and the development plan of the school is drawn up on the basis thereof. Following the goal, teaching and education and management is analyzed and their effectiveness is evaluated in the course of internal evaluation.⁶ Schools do not present the results of internal evaluation to the Ministry of Education and Research, but during inspections they are usually asked to present it.

As all schools are expected to carry out internal evaluation and school owners have a right to inspect their own schools, there is no need for a regular inspection by the state. There are only 7 inspectors altogether in Estonia and Estonia is divided into 6 regions between them. In addition to

³ Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act § 84 (1)

⁴ Private Schools Act § 23 (1)

⁵ Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act § 3 (1)

⁶ Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act § 78 (1)

supervision of schools and primary schools, the inspectors also solve problems and disputes in their regions, advise and give information to schools and school owners etc.

The Ministry of Education and Research carries out three types of supervision. Supervision is carried out in all new schools, regardless of whether they are municipal or private. In the event of the first application for an education licence it is issued for a term of up to five academic years. During the period of validity of an education licence issued for a specific term, supervision over the teaching and education carried out by the school is exercised. It should be noted that this applies only to new schools. There are also thematic and problem-based inspections that can take place in all schools. Riskbased inspections are being piloted from autumn 2019. The Minister of Education and Research decides in which schools those supervisions will be carried out.

In the framework of the supervision carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research, inspectors first request the educational institution electronically the documents that form the basis for the activities of the educational institution or its owner. For example, the statutes, the conditions and procedure for admission, the curriculum, the rules of procedure of the educational institution, the development plan, the action plan for the year of study, the internal evaluation procedure, the internal evaluation report, etc. Inspector shall examine the documents of the educational institution and analyze whether the documents comply with the requirements set out in the legislation. The curriculum is analyzed by experts from the Foundation Innove, who identify the positive aspects of the curriculum and areas of improvement. The Innove Foundation also assesses whether the educational institution's curriculum is in line with the national curriculum.

After reviewing the documents, inspector carries out on-site interviews in the educational institution with the school owner, the headmaster, representatives of the teachers, support specialists, parents' representatives and students. It is mainly examined, how the activities regulated in the educational institution's documents work out in the daily life (for example, inspectors find out how the internal evaluation is taking place, who participates in the internal evaluation, what methods are used and how the results are analyzed).

No classroom observations used to be carried out during supervisions but this method will be piloted in autumn 2019. In conversations, inspectors ask the owner and the head of school about how they evaluate teachers' work and how they carry out classroom observations. Inspectors also gather information on how the head of school gives feedback to teachers and supports them. Estonian schools and childcare institutions have a very high degree of autonomy in conducting teaching and learning activities, selecting methods and tools and analyzing as well as evaluating learning activities.

The assessment of the quality and performance of teaching and learning activities shall be carried out in particular within the internal evaluation process of the educational institution. Educational institutions are able to obtain data from different electronic databases (EHIS, Haridussilm) that characterize the results of learning activities (e.g. results of state examinations) as well as various operational indicators (such as teachers' qualifications). Different data can be analyzed by the educational institutions in the internal evaluation and further activities can be planned according to the results. The external evaluation experts analyze and assess in particular how the institution itself assesses its performance and quality.

The results of supervision are set out in a statement⁷, that is also made public. The statement must contain the time and place of drawing up the statement, brief details on the education institution, the supervisory body exercising supervision, the time of exercising supervision, the names of the officials and experts who carried out supervision, the results of supervision, the time and description of offences, the precepts and proposals made, and the term of notification of complying with the precepts.⁸ The statement enters into force after being signed by the Minister of Education and Research or the Secretary General and sent to the educational institution. The statement is an administrative act.

⁷ Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act § 87 (1)

⁸ Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act § 87 (2)

In case, during the inspection, any nonconformances are found, precepts and proposals are made to a school or a school owner and a deadline is given for making the improvements. Of course, a thorough written explanation is given to school in the final statement about all nonconformances and why the school should make improvements. After the deadline, the inspector assesses, whether improvements have been made or not.

1.2. The Position of the Feedback Session within the Inspection

There are two types of feedback sessions with different purposes in Estonian supervision system. Smaller feedback sessions take place constantly during the supervision and there is a feedback session that takes place after the supervision that sums up the whole process.

The first type of feedback sessions are the ones that take place throughout the supervision. In all supervisions, taking place in Estonia, an administrative authority shall, before issue of an administrative act, grant a participant in proceedings a possibility to provide his or her opinion and objections in a written, oral or any other suitable form.⁹ This also applies in the field of education.

Hearing of opinions and objections of participants in proceedings is something that is done throughout the supervision whenever a nonconformity is detected. In practice, this means, that the inspector gives the head and the owner of the school information about all possible nonconformities found and the school head and the owner have an opportunity to give additional information to refute the nonconformity, or to comment on the situation and discuss it with the inspector. Such information provided by the school is also used in the statement.

The aim of those feedback sessions is to give the head and the owner of the school a possibility to provide their opinion and objections and also to make sure that the inspector has understood everything correctly. These proceedings always take place before the final statement is signed and entered into force.

The second type of feedback session is the one taking place after the statement has been signed and entered into force. The main aim of that feedback session is to introduce the statement and the results of the supervision to all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, school owner, etc. This feedback session gives the inspector and the head of school an opportunity to communicate the results of the supervision to the stakeholders and give any additional information that would help them to understand the results better. It is up to the school head and the owner to decide, whom they wish to invite to the feedback session. They are also allowed to invite the media, but it is not common to do that.

The survey of the Professional Communication project was carried out based on the feedback session taking place after the statement has been signed and entered into force. The reason for such a decision is that this process is called a "feedback session" in the Estonian system. The feedback sessions taking place throughout the supervision are called "Hearing of opinions and objections of participants in proceedings" and those sessions are not as well-structured and defined as the other process. In this process, the inspector just introduces the findings and gives everyone concerned an opportunity to state their opinions and present more evidence. It can happen during a conversation, there is no special proceedings for that.

1.3. Policy Regarding to the Feedback Session & Experiences with the Current Way of Conducting the Feedback Session

Conducting the feedback sessions taking place throughout the supervision has been traditionally a part of the Estonian inspection system for a long time, but having feedback sessions that take place after the statement has been signed and entered into force is quite a recent practice. Such feedback sessions have been taking place for over a year.

⁹ Administrative Procedure Act § 40 (1)

The aim of introducing such feedback sessions was to engage the community and different stakeholders more to the process and raise their awareness about the school and its activities. Not all information found in the inspection is stated in the final act. The feedback session also gives the inspector an opportunity to elaborate more on what was found during the supervision and discuss the things that were not in the final statement.

The feedback sessions are carried out by the inspector leading the inspection. The inspectors have not had special training for carrying out feedback sessions, but there have been peer learning sessions and also some job shadowing opportunities. There are no official guidelines and there is no central framework for carrying out feedback sessions. The main reason for this is that every feedback session is different and therefore requires a different approach. Therefore, the inspectors need to be flexible and able to adapt to every situation.

In some feedback sessions, only the school head and the owner have been present, but in some cases, the whole community has been involved together with the media. In such different situations, the inspector needs to adapt quickly and be able to answer their questions. The experiences with the current way of conducting the feedback sessions show that such practice should be continued. It gives the community an opportunity to get more engaged in the school life.

2. Research Approach

The questionnaire of the Professional Communication project was used at full scale. It was translated into Estonian, because Estonian is the only official language in Estonia and also the language of public administration in state agencies and local government authorities. Only minor changes were made in the process of translating and the sole aim for making the adjustments was to make all questions clear and understandable for the potential respondents.

An online questionnaire was carried out from the end of 2018 to the beginning of 2019. It was sent to all inspectors and to all schools that had so far been inspected in the 2018/2019 academic year. All inspectors (7) and 8 school leaders filled in the questionnaire. It was not compulsory for school leaders to fill it in. The questionnaire was not completely anonymous, all respondents had to provide their e-mail addresses, but not their names. All respondents chose to use their official e-mail addresses.

The results were presented to all inspectors and discussed in the external evaluation department of the Ministry of Education and Research.

3.1 Results - inspectors

Seven statements from the survey were considered very important by all inspectors:

1. The inspector discusses the findings using well considered evaluation statements based upon clear exemplars.
2. After the feedback session, it is clear to the school what their strengths as well as their areas for development are.
3. The inspector shows that she listens carefully.
4. The inspector is open to input from the school and takes this input seriously.
5. The inspector takes care of (retaining) the relationship with the school.
6. During the feedback session, the inspector demonstrates she has thoroughly taken note of the context of the school.
7. The inspector stimulates (supports) the school to reflect on their own vision on quality of education.

All in all, it can be concluded that although some elements were emphasized as very important, all elements were considered important by the inspectors. To the open question "What in particular could the inspectorate improve to achieve a highly effective feedback session?", some of the inspectors answered that they see that the process is already effective and they did not feel that the process needed to be changed. One inspector emphasized the importance of motivating the school to improve. One inspector answered that the role of the audience is also very important in

the process, because they are the ones that ask the questions and actually determine how the process goes.

All inspectors also found that they practice all the elements that were considered important by them.

The reason for such results might be that the elements in the survey had also been considered important and emphasized by the inspectors previously when discussing the topic. This means that the inspectors had already accepted the elements as guidelines for conducting an effective feedback session.

3.2 Results – school leaders

School leaders considered the following statements important:

1. The school will be given the opportunity to share its own vision on the findings and judgements (evaluations) of the inspector. *(100% very important)*
2. The inspector discusses the findings using well considered evaluation statements based upon clear exemplars. *(87,5% very important)*
3. The inspector provides clear evidence to support the judgements. *(87,5% very important)*
4. The inspector is open to input from the school and takes this input seriously. *(86% very important)*
5. The inspector ensures mentioning the strengths as well as the areas of development. *87,5% very important)*
6. During the feedback session, the inspector demonstrates she has thoroughly taken note of the context of the school. *(87,5% very important)*

Most of the school leaders found that the inspectors pay enough attention to those elements.

There were no significant differences in what school leaders considered important and what the inspectors considered important. One of the reasons for this is that all inspectors considered all elements important. The answers of the school leaders varied a little more, but there were no elements that they considered completely unimportant. One slight difference that can be pointed out is, that the elements considered the most important by school leaders are all connected to giving the school an opportunity to share its own vision on the findings, be heard by the inspector and the fact that the findings should be based on clear evidence. It can be concluded that the school leaders consider it important that their voices are heard and their opinion is taken into account and they also appreciate that all judgements are based on clear evidence.

4.1 Less Important Elements According to Inspectors

The results of the survey show that the inspectors considered all statements very important or important. All inspectors also agreed or strongly agreed that the inspectors pay enough attention to all of the elements in the survey.

To the open question “Which factors do not contribute to a successful feedback session?” the inspectors answered that all elements of the feedback session are important.

It can be concluded that the inspectors considered all elements almost equally important for conducting a successful feedback session and therefore, it is not possible to bring out any hierarchy of the elements in the inspectors’ view.

4.2 Less Important Elements According to Schools

1. The inspector reacts appropriately in response to emotions her judgements might evoke. *(37,5% very important)*
2. Prior to the feedback session, the inspector makes clear what the purpose and content will be. *(50% very important)*
3. The inspector takes care of (retaining) the relationship with the school. *(50% very important)*

4. The feedback session takes place at the right moment in time. *(50% very important)*
5. The amount of time set aside for the feedback session is sufficient. *(50% very important)*

According to the survey results, the school leaders think that inspectors pay enough attention to those aspects. This might show that they have not experienced any problems with those elements of the feedback session. This might be one of the reasons why they do not consider those elements so important. It can also be concluded that the school leaders do not hold the elements connected to organizational part of the feedback session important.

5.1 What is Crucial in Feedback Sessions in Cases of Inadequate Quality?

To the question "In your opinion, what is most determinative for establishing a successful feedback session in case of weak/inadequate quality of education?" the inspectors answered that it is important that the school understands, why they need to change something and what further developments are needed. They also found it very important to support the school and motivate them to change. What is more, it was emphasized, that providing clear evidence is essential in such situation by the inspector.

To the same question, the school leaders answered that it is important to emphasize positive findings and to explain all nonconformities thoroughly and give clear evidence and examples. The school leaders also considered it important that all nonconformities should be introduced to them during the inspection, so that they would have an opportunity to discuss them.

It can be concluded that both parties think that supporting the findings with clear evidence is important in situations where the results of the supervision are negative. The school might understand the need for change better and be more motivated if the inspector provides clear evidence to support the judgements. As the aim of the feedback session is to communicate the results of the supervision to the community, it is understandable, that the school leaders wish that also positive findings would be emphasized.

5.2 What is Crucial in Feedback Sessions in Cases of Sufficient or Good Quality?

To the question "In your opinion, what is most determinative for establishing a successful feedback session in case of sufficient/good quality of education?" the inspectors answered that it is important to recognize the good work that the school head and the owner have been doing and to discuss, what further developments could help the school to get even better.

To the same question, the school leaders answered that it is important that the Ministry would recognize their efforts. They also considered important having a dialogue about possible further development opportunities for the school.

As the aim of the feedback session is to communicate the results of the supervision to the community, it is understandable that a school with good results wishes that the inspector would present the findings to the community and wishes to be recognized for the good results.

6. Summary

In conclusion, both, the school leaders and the inspectors considered all elements of the feedback session in the survey either important or very important and both parties also agreed that all elements are practiced by the inspectors.

It appeared that inspectors consider nearly all statements in the questionnaire very important. 7 statements were considered very important by all inspectors and the rest were considered very important by the majority of the inspectors, and important by the rest. One of the reasons for this might be that all of the statements have been emphasized at some point during peer learning sessions, job shadowing etc.

In the context of Estonia, it is very important to give the school an opportunity to share its own vision on the findings and to be heard by the inspector to achieve an effective feedback session. School leaders also considered it important that the findings should be based on clear evidence. As inspectors also consider those aspects important and practice them, no big changes are needed in this field.

7. Improvements and Follow Up

The results of the survey show that all the elements in the survey should be practiced by the inspectors in the future. It is important that inspectors would keep in mind of what the school leaders consider most important and pay extra attention on those elements. The inspectors answered that they practice everything that is held important by the school leaders and inspectors themselves.

One of the follow up activities was introducing the survey results to the inspectors and discussing on how all the elements could be practiced more effectively.

The results of the survey show that 62.5% of the school leaders wish that the feedback session would take place before the final statement has entered into force. Only 14.3% of inspectors thought so. The aim of the final feedback session is to give feedback about the inspection to all stakeholders and to introduce the final results to them. To do that, it is important, that by the time of the feedback session, the final statement would have entered into force. So, it is not possible to change the position of the feedback session and still achieve the same purpose.

However, it is possible to add one more feedback session to the supervision process for making conclusions, where, at the end of the inspection, but before finalizing the statement, the results are introduced to the school head. This has already been practiced in some inspections and will be tested further.

Appendix 2: Country report Lithuania

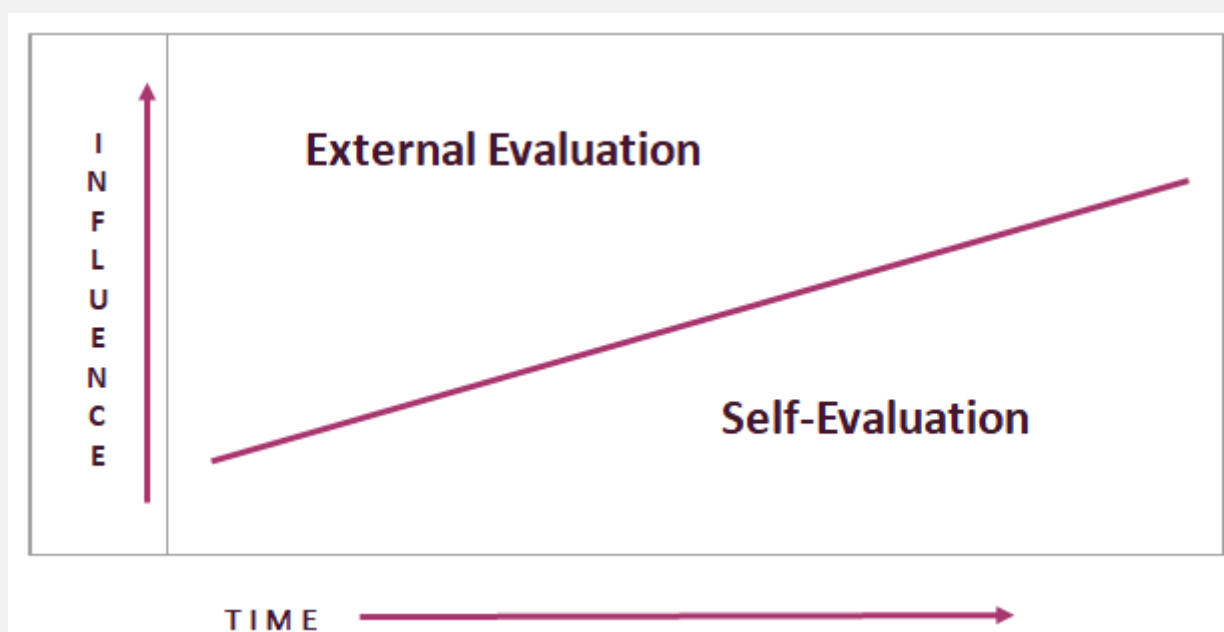
1. Description of Context

The mission of the National Agency for School Evaluation (established in 2005) is to assist the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania to assure the quality of education by developing self-evaluation and external evaluation in educational institutions providing heads of schools and school owners with the possibility to make more qualified decisions based on collected data.

Two main goals are set regarding school external evaluation:

- to perform quality evaluation of the school performance in general education (primary and secondary) schools;
- to provide school and school owners with methodological assistance and recommendations for improving the quality of school performance.

We believe that in the future schools (with our help) will successfully develop better self-evaluation culture and our main focus will switch from external evaluation to school self-evaluation.



Meanwhile, school external evaluation is conducted every 7 years and 75% of time spent by evaluators at school is dedicated to lesson observation. To ensure better transparency, each teacher is observed at least twice by different evaluators. Feedback for teacher is given by an evaluator straight after the lesson. The record of the lesson usually includes three strengths and two areas for improvement.

The Framework of (General) School Evaluation Methodology (2016) consists of 4 areas (Performance, Teaching / Learning and Experiences of Pupils, Teaching / Learning Environments, Management and Leadership) which are subdivided further into 11 themes and 25 indicators. There are 5 evaluation levels (starting from N – not present to 4 – the highest). On the last day of external evaluation (the duration of evaluation depends on school size), during the **feedback session** conclusions – 10 strengths and 5 areas for improvement – are presented by evaluator (team leader) to school community. However, it is up to school and its administration to decide whom they would like to invite to the session. The draft report (school is given time to comment on it) and the final report are presented to school in written at a later time. They contain all 4 areas of external evaluation and conclusions (strengths and areas for improvement). Whereas the

short version of the report is always made public and available online, the school can decide if they want to publish the full report which can sometimes include some sensitive data.

2. Research approach

In order to get as reliable as possible results about the feedback session after external evaluation in Lithuanian schools we constructed anonymous online questionnaires using Google Forms for both evaluators (team leaders) and school principals. We met with evaluators (team leaders) during their training session in January 2019 and presented the SICI project, its aims and the questionnaire. It was quite unexpected but the response rate of school principals was much higher than that of evaluators (team leaders), 69% (n=52 out of 75) and 59,38% (n=19 out of 32) respectively.

We analysed the results of questionnaires in two different ways. While looking at the quantitative data, our main focus was on the most and less important elements for a good feedback session. We also compared which answers provided by evaluators (team leaders) overlap with those of the school principals and what are their differences and their possible reasons. The open questions were more difficult to analyse, so we decided to split them into categories according to certain topics (e. g. team of evaluators, presentation of conclusions, communication with school community during the visit and feedback session, ideas on feedback session improvement etc.).

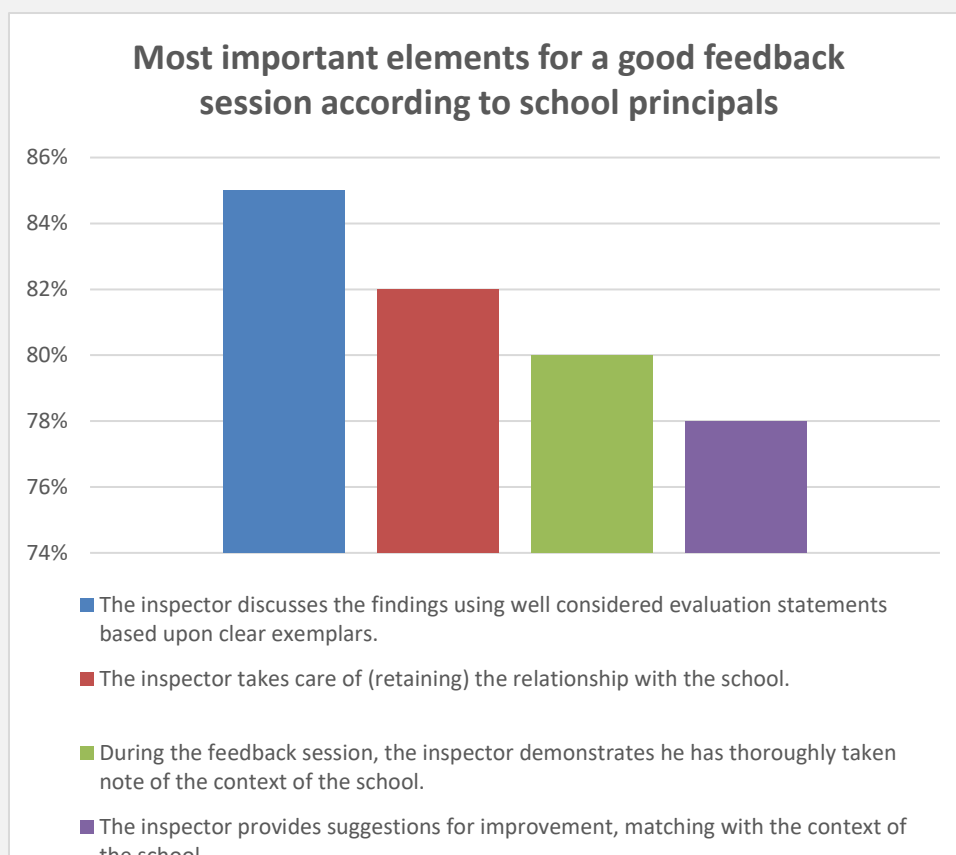
3. Results

Both, the evaluators (team leaders) and school principals, found most of the statements provided in questionnaires, very important or somewhat important; however, some to a greater and some to a lesser extent.

As the most important elements of a good feedback session, the evaluators (team leaders) mentioned such areas as **retaining good relationship with the school** (establishing a nice ambiance during the feedback session, mentioning the common goals, making conversation on a more personal level), mentioning **the purpose and content of the feedback session** prior to it, presentation of evaluation findings **using well considered evaluation statements** based upon clear exemplars and that the evaluator (team leader) should pay very close attention to **the context of the school** while providing suggestions for improvement.

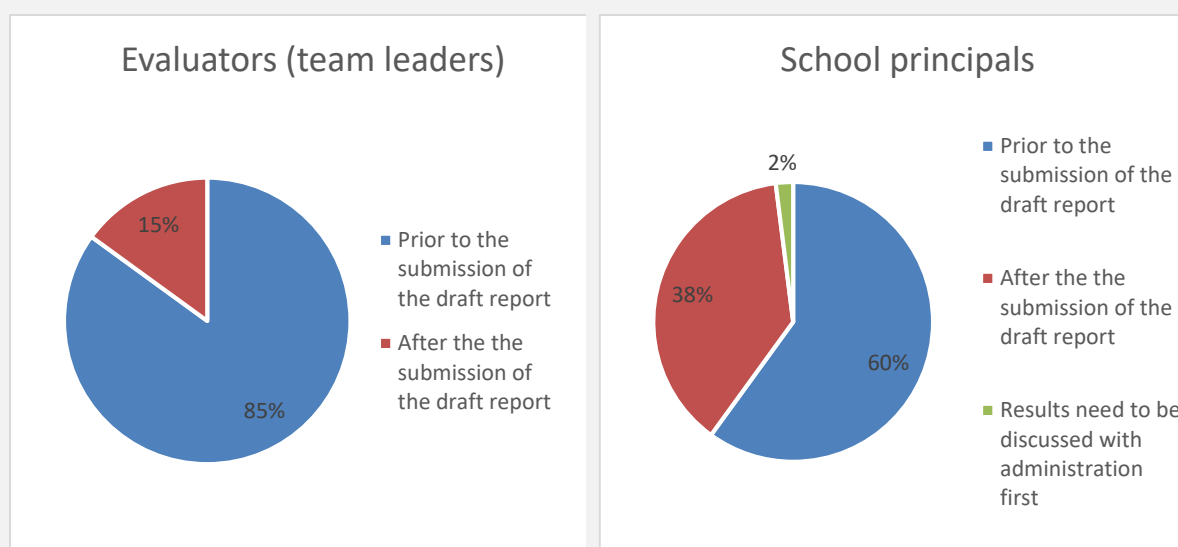
As elements of the feedback session, that require a little bit less attention mentioned by evaluators (team leaders) were considered these: **the opportunity given to school to share its own vision on the findings and judgements** (evaluations) of the inspector and the idea that **inspector should appreciate the efforts of the school** and **stimulate (support) the school to reflect on their own vision on quality of education** or that **sharing of finding session should necessarily stimulate (support) the school to reflect on the direction they should take as part of school improvement**. This could be explained keeping in mind that, during the feedback session, a school consultant is present who is later involved in school improvement process by helping school in setting goals, visions, planning etc. and therefore evaluators (team leaders) usually do not identify themselves with this kind of school supporters in Lithuania.

As the results show, the school principals also share similar opinions like evaluators (team leaders) in some cases. They mentioned in the survey the following elements of the feedback session as the most important: the inspector discusses the findings using **well considered evaluation statements based upon clear exemplars**, takes care of **retaining the relationship with the school** by establishing a nice ambiance during the feedback session, mentioning the goals they both have in common, making conversation on a more personal level, demonstrates he/she has thoroughly taken note of **the context of the school** and provides **suggestions for improvement, matching with the context of the school**.



Elements of the feedback session that are less important according to the school principals include these: the importance of **inspector's appropriate reaction in response to emotions** his/her judgements might evoke, e. g., acknowledging emotions, giving room for emotions etc., **the right timing of the feedback session**, e. g. shortly/long after the inspection visit (because the feedback session always takes place on the last day of the school visit in Lithuania) and **the opportunity given to the school to share its own vision on the findings and judgements (evaluations)** of the inspector (the school usually has this opportunity when they receive the draft version of the report).

When comparing the results of the evaluators (team leaders) and school principals about **the best moment of conducting the feedback session** (prior to or after the submission of the draft report), we found out that the majority of respondents in both groups are satisfied with the current situation (the findings of the school evaluation are presented prior to the submission of the draft report):



4.1 What is crucial in feedback sessions in cases of inadequate quality?

In cases of week/inadequate school performance quality, the evaluators (team leaders) think that for establishing a successful feedback session most determinative factors are: professionalism, impartiality, responsibility, positive attitude towards school improvement, clear agreements among the evaluation team members. Besides, the evaluator (team leader) should be able to present the conclusions using clear language, providing school with enough evidences and examples, his/her observations should be made on data gathered during school evaluation. The presentation should also be short and concise. The school principals share similar opinions adding good evaluator's communication skills and experience, friendly attitude of the evaluation team, understanding of school context, belief in school's ability to improve the education.

4.2 What is crucial in feedback sessions in cases of sufficient or good quality?

Besides the factors already mentioned above, the evaluators (team leaders) believe that in cases of sufficient/good school quality the strengths of schools could be emphasized during the feedback session and used for education improvement later. Friendly, open dialogue and clear, evidence-based conclusions are also very important. The school principals think that, even if the school is doing quite well in certain areas, there is always room for improvement and it is always good to know that your efforts are appreciated, especially by the evaluator (team leader). It empowers to seek even higher standards of education.

5. Which factors do not contribute to a successful feedback session?

According to the evaluators (team leaders), there are a bunch of factors that influence feedback session in a negative way. Quite many of them mentioned lack of time or effective time planning, especially in cases when conclusions need to be presented in a rush during the break between lessons. This sometimes leads to insufficient preparation and presentation without enough examples and evidences, lack of dialogue between the school and team of evaluators and not answered questions left. The school principals also mentioned similar problems regarding time: hurrying, not answered questions, lack of evidences etc. which, on the other hand, reinforce negative attitude towards the process of external evaluation.

6. Improvements

Conclusions about possible improvements can be drawn from the answers provided to statements about the paying sufficient attention to different elements during feedback session. According to the gathered information, these elements are: the opportunity given to school **to share its own vision** on the findings and judgements (evaluations) of the inspector, **stimulating (supporting)**

the school to reflect on their own vision on quality of education, **appropriate inspector's reaction in response to emotions his/her judgements might evoke** (for example: acknowledging emotions, giving room for emotions).

Most of these things can be achieved by appropriate training and promoting professional dialogue between school and the team of evaluators.

7. Follow up

The survey results show that there are certain areas for improvement regarding the feedback sessions of external evaluation in Lithuanian schools.

First of all, we never expected that schools (school principals) would be so keen answering questions regarding this particular area of school external evaluation. Their answers provided us with valuable information about the quality of work of our evaluators (team leaders) and we definitely will implement this practice in future to gather feedback from schools.

We plan to adapt the questionnaire to our needs and use it to get feedback from our evaluators, as well.

Secondly, we noticed that feedback sessions in Lithuanian schools are not paid enough attention to, especially the time issue. We believe we should rethink it in the future and instruct evaluators about different options (possibilities) addressing this issue. That would improve the overall quality of presentations and better meet the needs of school communities.

Finally, during our future events of continuous professional development of evaluators (team leaders) we would also like to address the topic of professional communication, e. g. on how a good feedback session should look like and developing of evaluators' (team leaders') communication skills, emotional intelligence etc.

Appendix 3: Country report the Netherlands

1. Description of the context

Aim and function of the Dutch inspectorate

The Inspectorate wants to contribute to better education in the Netherlands. It wants to achieve this through effective supervision.

In order to achieve its aim the Dutch Inspectorate of Education has three functions:

- controlling compliance with legislation and regulations (What needs to be done better?);
- promoting and stimulating quality of education (What is being done right? What could be done better?);
- public accountability for the quality of education (describing developments that concern the system as a whole and raising the debate about topical issues).

In the Netherlands, all three functions receive approximately equal attention. In schools where the quality is (potentially) very weak or inadequate, the inspectorate wants to ensure that schools at least comply with basic quality. The emphasis is on checking legislation and regulations and intervening when the laws and regulations are not met. The supervision of schools with sufficient quality has, besides the control over legislation and regulations, the character of stimulating further quality development. Public accountability mainly takes shape through an annual report on the State of Education.

The approach of the Dutch inspectorate of Education is a combination of the accountability approach and the improvement approach:

- Accountability approach: control of legislation and regulations.
- Improvement approach: enhancing quality development.

The object of supervision

With our supervision we focus on the governing body *and* the schools ruled by that governing body. "Ownership" of the quality of educational provision rests with schools and their governing bodies, with the latter ultimately responsible for the quality and continuity of the education their pupils receive. For this reason, the inspectorate applies a governance-led approach.

The governing body is responsible for the quality of the education and must account for the results.

All governing bodies are inspected once every four years. In the four-yearly inspection of the governing body the Dutch Inspectorate of Education makes statements about the quality assurance system and the financial management of the governing body and about the educational quality of a sample of the schools ruled by the governing body. During the inspection of the governing body we examine its quality assurance and financial management. The full process of an inspection usually takes about six weeks. We have multiple meetings with the governing body and we perform school visits. First and foremost, we look at whether the governing body has a good overview of the quality of the education it is providing, and whether it is implementing any necessary improvements and has its finances in order.

Besides the inspection of the governing body, also the schools are being inspected in different ways:

- Verification inspections. The inspectorate assesses whether the quality assurance system of the governing body actually works in practice. It also provides the Inspectorate with information about the actual educational quality of the school;
- Quality inspections of risk-affected schools. If the inspectorate suspects that the quality of a school is inadequate it conducts a full inspection. This suspicion can arise as a result of the annual risk analysis of results and signals;

- Voluntary inspections of good schools. At the request of the governing body and when providing a self-evaluation, the inspectorate may also inspect schools that the governing body feels are deserving the overall judgement Good;

The new **inspection framework** consists of five quality areas that fall into different standards. Quality areas:

- Educational process (school level)
- School climate (school level)
- Learning outcomes (school level)
- Quality assurance and ambition (governing body and school level)
- Financial management (governing body)

This classification allows us to answer three fundamental questions about the education pupils are receiving:

- Are they learning enough (learning outcomes)?
- Are they being taught well (educational process)?
- Are they safe (school climate)?

Together, our findings in these three areas reveal the overall standard of education the school is providing in the classroom.

The standards of the framework make a clear distinction between:

- Standards based on national regulations (statutory requirements);
- Self-defined quality factors (by schools and their governing body).

Judgements we use: Good, Adequate, Inadequate, Very weak.

The statutory requirements determine whether a school is judged Adequate, Inadequate or Very weak, whilst fulfilment of its own self-defined quality factors - those displayed or aspired to by the school and their governing body - makes the difference between Adequate and Good.

The feedback session at the end of the four-yearly inspection of the governing body

In this project we have chosen to focus on the feedback session that takes place at the end of a four-yearly inspection of the governing body. We have chosen this type of feedback session because the four-yearly inspection of the governing body is our new inspection approach and we are still building up experience with this new approach.

The purpose of the feedback session

- The general purpose of the feedback session is to explain the findings and judgements of the inspection activity. The Dutch inspectorate wants to organize support for the judgements and discuss starting points for recovery and/or improvement. The emphasis is less on convincing and more on conducting a dialogue. But we are uncertain about whether or not we put this in practice enough.
- An additional purpose of the feedback session is to stimulate quality development on both sides (development of the schools and the governing body and development of inspectors).

The Dutch inspectorate does not want to give a work instruction for inspectors with strict rules for the feedback session. However, it is important that inspectors are always aware of the goals the feedback must have for the school and for the inspection.

An overview of the goals:

- Explaining findings and judgements;
- Making to understand and to recognize judgements and findings;
- Convincing of necessary improvements of the school;
- Obtaining support for improvement actions;
- Stimulating the reflection on the further development of the educational quality of the school;
- Contributing to the dialogue about possible development directions or improvement actions of the school.

The structure of the feedback session

The feedback session has a fairly traditional form. The inspector presents the findings and asks for a response from the governing body. Do the findings of the inspectors correspond with the view of the governing body? Then, if it is correct, a dialogue arises about how the improvement activities can be carried out. The board is also asked to give feedback on the process of the inspection.

Participants:

- Governing body;
- Other participants on request of the schoolboard: e.g. school managers, quality employee, controller, members of the schoolboard);
- Inspectors;
- Financial inspector (this is rare).

Structure of the conversation:

- General agenda: to structure the feedback session inspectors can use a general agenda. Usually this agenda ensures sufficient structure.

Experiences with the current way of conducting the feedback session.

Almost all governing bodies are broadly (very) satisfied with the new supervision (average grade of boards 7.9, schools 7.7)

They appreciate the conduct of the research and the feedback session. They also recognize the judgements and they value the report.

2. Research Approach

The research of the Dutch inspectorate has focused on the successful elements of the feedback session with governing bodies. The research approach consisted of two parts. First we questioned the inspectors by means of a digital questionnaire and a round table session. Secondly, we asked a small group of governors in a round table session.

We invited all inspectors of our own organization to fill out the questionnaire. We approached inspectors from all sectors, except those from the sector 'higher education' because their working methods differ a great deal from the other sectors. For example: they are not familiar with conducting feedback sessions after inspections. Seventy out of two hundred inspectors responded. We also organized a round table meeting for inspectors who were interested in discussing on a deeper level with us about how to make feedback sessions more effective. Six inspectors joined this meeting.

Unfortunately, we could not have the entire group of governors fill out the questionnaire because we asked them to participate in several other questionnaires during the same period of time. To prevent them from experiencing too much workload, we decided not to let them participate in this particular questionnaire. Instead of sending every governing body a digital questionnaire, we decided to invite a small number of governors to come to our office for a round table meeting. We selected them based on the information we derived from the customer satisfaction survey; we aimed to involve a mix of governors who rated the feedback session as positive as well as people who rated the feedback session as negative. We invited about twenty governors out of which eight were present during the round table meeting. During this meeting we presented the results of the questionnaires filled out by the inspectors. Afterwards, we had a discussion with the governors about the structure, content and effectiveness of the feedback sessions they experienced. During the meeting, we also presented them with a shortened version of the questionnaire containing the most important questions. To do this we used a program called 'Sendsteps' through which questions are shown on the screen and all participants should answer the questions via their mobile devices. The moment everyone has given their answer, the results are directly shown on

the screen. This way we could at least collect some data on the feedback sessions from the perspective of the governing bodies.

Apart from the round table meeting with the governors, we also organized a round table meeting for inspectors who were interested in discussing on a deeper level with us about how to make feedback sessions more effective. Six inspectors joined this meeting.

We analyzed the results of the questionnaires filled out by inspectors, by categorizing the answers to the open questions. We started by reading all answers and thereafter we defined the most common response categories. Subsequently we assigned all answers to the most suitable category. To analyze the results on these open questions we simply counted the number of times a certain category was mentioned. Often there were about five categories that were mentioned most frequently by far. For analyzing the closed questions, we performed an unweighted count of the answers.

To analyze the results of the questionnaires filled out by governors, we used the outcomes of the answers generated by Sendsteps. The Sendsteps program automatically calculates the percentage of respondents who have chosen a certain answer category.

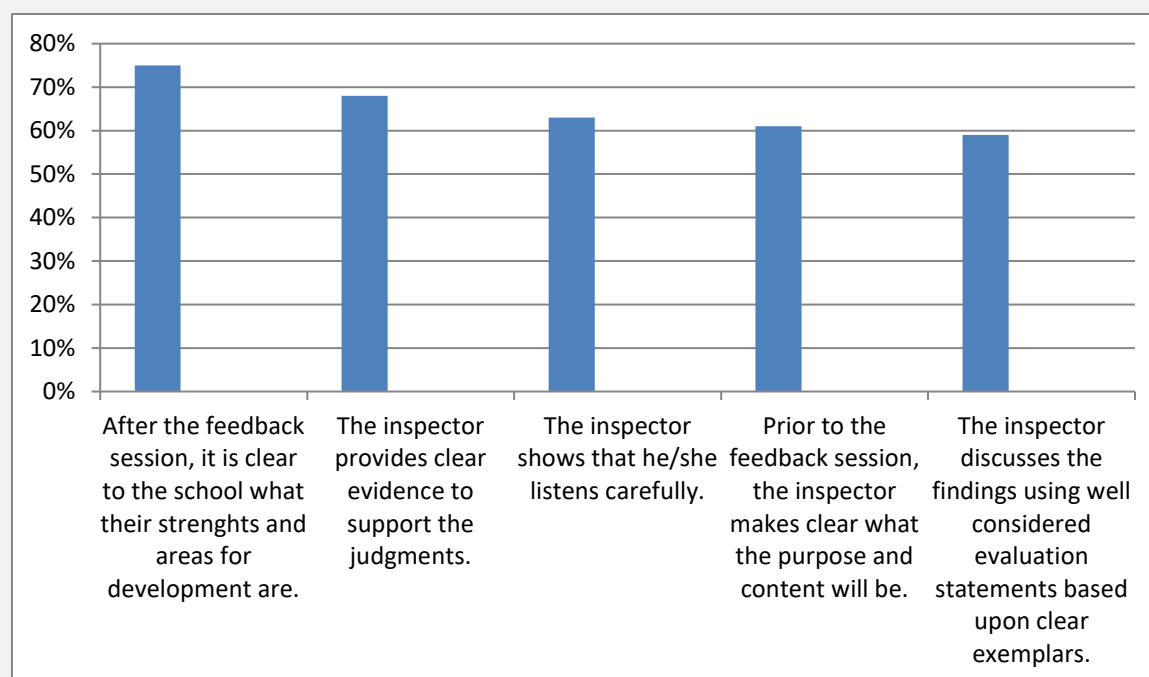
During both round table meetings we asked an employee to take minutes of what was said during the discussion. Although the information we collected during these meetings may not be statistically reliable because it was based on a very low number of respondents, we were nevertheless convinced that meeting face to face with a small group of people would provide valuable information. It gave us the opportunity to have an in-depth conversation about what they thought an effective feedback session should or should not be like. We thought it helpful to use these data to supplement the results of the questionnaires.

3.1 Results - inspectors

One of the main findings is that all inspectors find every element mentioned in the questionnaire important. There are no elements that are considered as being not important, only elements that are considered to be *slightly less* important than others.

Besides, inspectors believe that the feedback session has more impact on the implementation of improvements than the report does. Also, inspectors' opinions about when is the best timing for a feedback session, are strongly divided. Some prefer to send the report prior to conducting the feedback session so that governors know what to expect. Others are convinced that reading the report prior to the feedback session can lead to misunderstandings. In their opinion it is better to explain the judgements first and then send the report so it can be interpreted in the right way. Inspectors think that the feedback session in general has more impact than the report does.

Most important elements for a good feedback session according to inspectors:



Results of the questionnaire filled out by inspectors

Additional information we derived from the round table meeting with inspectors

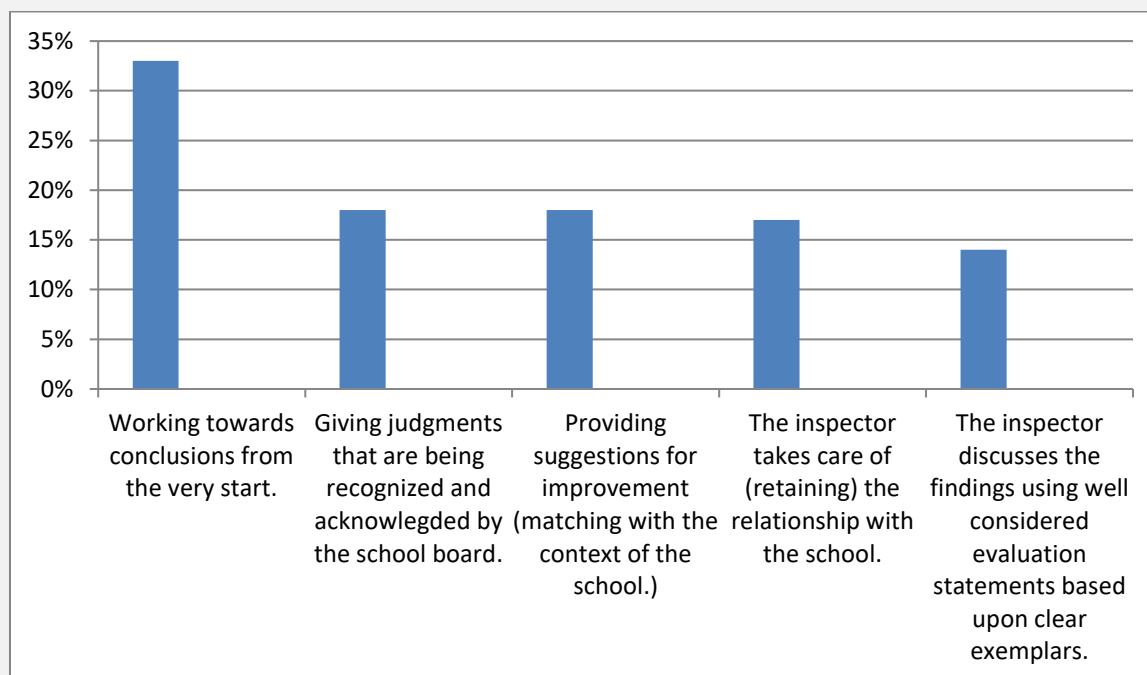
The inspectors made it clear that in their opinion one of the most important factors for a successful/effective feedback session, is **working towards conclusions from the start** of the process. They mentioned that it is a prerequisite for success that inspectors keep updating governing bodies on the (preliminary) results and findings of the inspection from the very start. At the end of the feedback session, it is important for inspectors to **verify whether or not their judgements and evaluation statements are being recognized** by the governors. If this is the case, governors are generally more willing to accept the message and work on improvements.

Another aspect of the feedback session inspectors find essential, is approaching the governing bodies as **equal conversation** partners. They emphasize that it is important for inspectors not to behave superior or determine what governors should do to improve their schools. Instead the feedback session should be an open and respectful dialogue between two equals. An equal conversation increases the chance that a feedback session will have an effect on improvements being made through the school boards.

Inspectors also **emphasize matters that go well under** the responsibility of the governing bodies. They often feel that by acknowledging and reinforcing the vision and the actions of the governors, they encourage them to take an extra step.

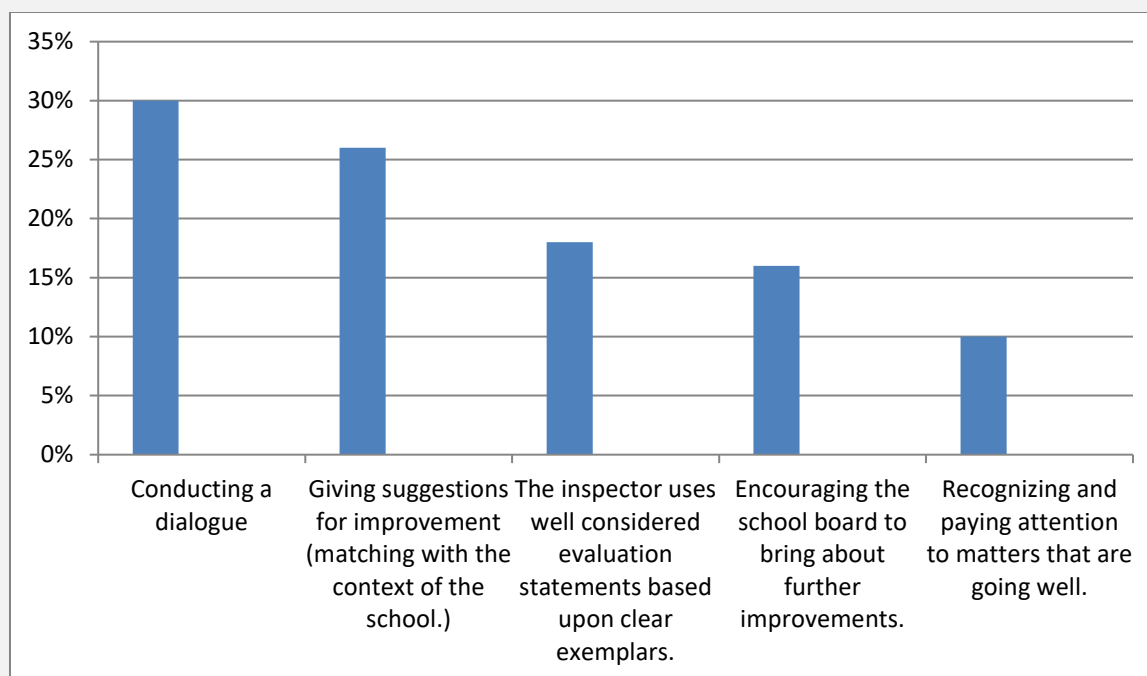
Last but not least it is important to allow enough time for the feedback session. Inspectors share with us that being in a hurry while conducting a feedback session is extremely ineffective. **Taking enough time** for the feedback session ensures that there is room for giving explanations and answering questions if necessary. It contributes to a good conclusion of the entire inspection process.

What is crucial in the case of inadequate quality?



Results of the questionnaire filled out by inspectors

What is crucial in the case of good quality?



Results of the questionnaire filled out by inspectors

Additional information we derived from the round table meeting with inspectors

Inspectors agreed that in both cases - inadequate and good quality - , they basically need to display the same skills. However, there are some minor differences. In the case of inadequate quality inspectors tend to overly use substantive arguments instead of responding to emotions their judgements may evoke among the representatives of the school boards. Allowing and responding to emotions can contribute to a positive relationship.

In the case of good quality on the other hand, it can be a real challenge to encourage the school board to continue working on further improvements. Some school boards seem to take the positive judgement as a reason to take it easy. The inspectors need to find a balance between motivating governors without taking over their duties and responsibilities.

*Which elements do **not** contribute to a successful feedback session according to inspectors?*

Based on the answers to the open questions, we found that inspectors mentioned four things that stand in the way of establishing a successful feedback session.

First and foremost they stress that a feedback session should never be a **monologue**. A dialogue on the other hand ensures that both parties have input and are equally important for the conversation. Secondly, inspectors see **insufficient preparation** as a determining factor for an unsuccessful feedback session. Taking enough time to prepare and take notice of the situation, context and history of the school is necessary.

Another absolute don't is for an inspector to adopt an **arrogant, know-it-all attitude** towards the school board. This only leads to resistance and polarization while it is so important to work together to achieve a common goal: improving the school board to enhance the quality of education.

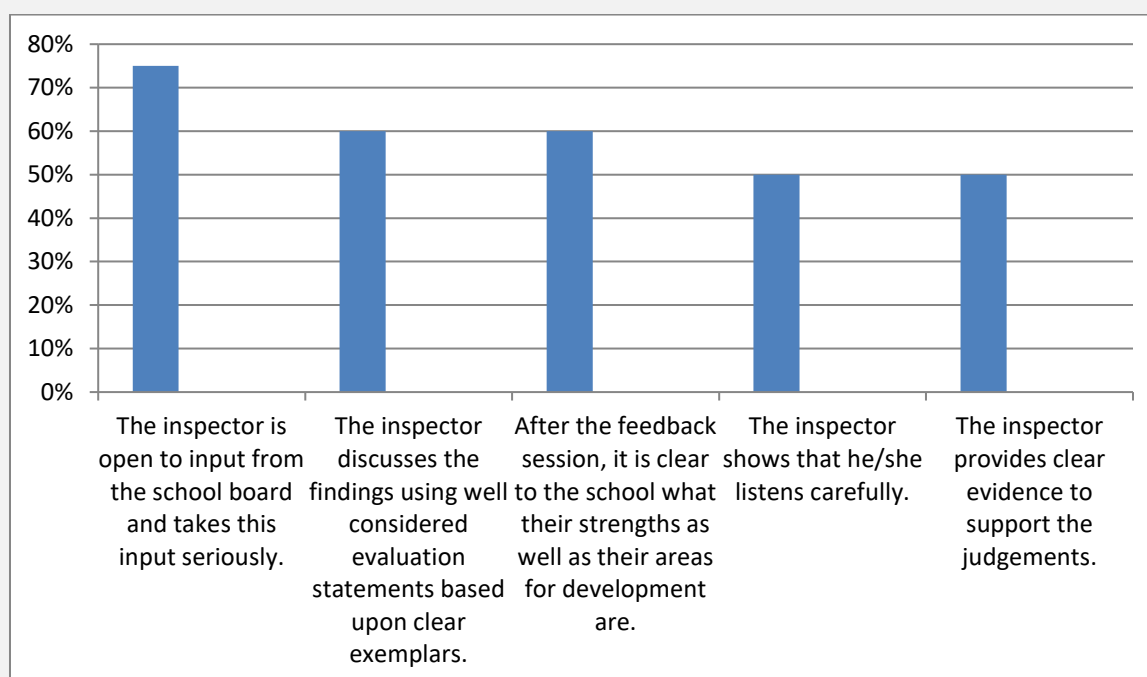
The last element that inspectors identify as an obstacle for a successful feedback session is the **lack of room for emotions**. Inspectors admit that it can sometimes be quite difficult for them to respond to emotions that are triggered by their critical feedback or negative judgements. Inspectors often choose not to respond to these emotions, but instead they proceed to defend or explain their judgement. They do this because they generally find it difficult to deal with emotions of the school board. Inspectors realize all the more that they have to give room for emotions and respond to them to ensure that the other person feels heard and seen.

3.2. Results – governing bodies

Based on the results of the questionnaire, we see that governors underscore the importance of being given the opportunity to actively participate in the conversation. They want their views and input to be taken seriously by the inspector.

Besides, they believe – as opposed to inspectors – that the report has just as much impact on taking actions towards improvement as the feedback session does.

Most important elements for a good feedback session according to school boards



Results of the questionnaire filled out by governors

Additional information we derived from the round table meeting with governors

School boards made it clear that they think it is important to be treated as **a serious, equal conversation partner**. This increases the acceptance of the judgement and the motivation to make efforts to implement improvements. Therefore, governors expect to receive the report before the feedback session is conducted. Only when this is the case, they have the opportunity to prepare themselves properly for a dialogue during the feedback session. If they do not receive the report beforehand, they feel like they are not being taken seriously. Guarding equality does not only apply to the actual feedback session but also to the planning and other practical issues. Both parties should have a say in how and when it is carried out.

They also mention that a successful feedback session must always contain **recognizable judgements**. Unrecognizable judgements cause resistance which hinders the improvement process.

In addition to that governors expressed their wish to take their **own ambition and vision as the starting point** of the conversation. They feel more motivated to initiate changes when the inspector 'speaks in their own language'. Therefore they appreciate inspectors who **align with their own ideas** about improving the schools.

Another factor that ensures a successful feedback session is good and thorough preparation by the inspector. He or she should have extensive knowledge about the context of the governing body and the **development stage** it is in at that particular moment in time. The inspector should also take this into account in his final judgement. The more the inspector shows that he has taken extensive note of the context, the more authority and credibility he gets assigned. In fact, it stimulates

governors to look critically at their own actions and it enables them to except any negative judgements or critical feedback they might receive.

Last but not least it is important to ***schedule enough time*** for conducting the feedback session. Some governors say that they felt that the feedback session they experienced was being conducted in haste. This gave them the feeling that they were not taken seriously. Moreover, it did not motivate them to improve their practices.

What is crucial in the case of inadequate quality?

In case the inspector gives an inadequate judgement after an inspection, governors suggest that it would be helpful to organize multiple meetings instead of just one feedback session. In their opinion, the first meeting should be used to deliver the message, whereas the second should be used for discussing actions for improvement. It is often not feasible or desirable to achieve all of this in just one meeting.

The next thing they think is particularly important under these circumstances, is to align with ideas, ambitions and the 'language' of the governing body.

What is crucial in the case of good quality?

Governors are convinced that in this case inspectors should just as well align with ideas, ambitions and the 'language' of the governing body.

*Which elements do **not** contribute to a successful feedback session according to school boards?*

Governors mentioned three absolute no go's in regard to feedback sessions. They unanimously agreed that conducting the feedback session before the draft report has been sent is a mistake. Governors do not feel taken seriously when they join the feedback session, without having read what the inspector has written about the quality of their schools or school boards.

They also reject a dominant or arrogant attitude of the inspector. If an inspector presents himself as a know-it-all and conducts a monologue instead of a dialogue, this has a negative effect on the governors' willingness to change.

The inspector is also advised against proclaiming his personal opinion instead of factually reflecting what he has observed during the inspection visit(s).

4. Conclusions

Many elements are important to achieve a successful feedback session. It is not merely about the inspector using good communicational skills, like being clear and listening well, but also about knowing and taking into account the context of the school board. Conducting a feedback session appeals to many competencies at the same time. The reason is that the feedback session serves different purposes. We not only want to present our findings and judgements well and clearly, we also want to conduct a dialogue about how the school board can realize further improvements.

What is – according to both inspectors and governing bodies – crucial for a successful feedback session?

Guarding equality

Guarding equality and transparency is seen by both inspectors and governing bodies as indispensable for a successful feedback session. This does not only apply to the actual feedback session but also to the planning and other practical issues involved in the inspection process. Both parties should have a say in how and when it is carried out.

Governors find it very important that inspectors think along with them about which further steps could be taken in order to improve. This is preferably done by communicating according to the 'language' of the governing bodies (i.e. align with their unique situation and the ambitions they have set for themselves.) For this reason governors wish to receive the report before the feedback

session takes place. This way they feel that they are taken seriously and they can prepare themselves for a dialogue about the findings during the feedback session.

Investing in support for the conclusions

It goes without saying that a feedback session can only be successful if it is clear afterwards to the school board what their strengths as well as their areas for development are.

The best way to achieve this for inspectors is to continuously inform the governor about the findings and observations during the process of inspection. They should work towards conclusions from the very start and make sure the final judgement does not come as a surprise. The feedback session should be conducted carefully and properly and this obviously takes time. That is why it is so very important to provide for sufficient time for the feedback session.

Providing evidence and exemplars to support the judgement

To increase the chance that a message will be accepted and the judgement of the inspector will be the starting point for improvement actions, it is essential that valid and convincing arguments are put forward.

Emphasizing good practices

Another essential aspect of an effective feedback session is creating a balance between mentioning what needs to be improved and emphasizing good practices and indicating that the school board is on the right track. This increases the motivation and ownership of the school boards. Especially with governing bodies that are of inadequate quality, it is important to mention what does go well.

Communication skills

Of course it is important that an inspector has excellent communication skills. He or she needs to be able to listen well and adopt an active listening position.

Wat does not work?

Inspectors monologue

Both inspectors and governors emphasize the importance of a dialogue. It ensures that both parties have input and are equally important for the conversation.

An absolute don't is for an inspector to adopt an arrogant, know-it-all attitude towards the governor. This only leads to resistance and polarization while it is so important to work together to achieve a common goal: improving the governing body to enhance the quality of education. Also, governors mentioned that they do not appreciate an inspector proclaiming his or her personal opinion instead of factually reflecting what is observed during the inspection visit(s).

Insufficient preparation

Governors consider insufficient preparation as a determining factor for an unsuccessful feedback session. Taking enough time to prepare and take notice of the situation, context and history of the school is necessary.

Lack of room for emotions

Inspectors sometimes choose not to respond to emotions their judgements might evoke, but instead they proceed to defend or explain their judgements. Inspectors realize all the more that they have to give room for emotions and respond to them to ensure that the other person feels heard and seen.

In what way do inspectors and school boards think differently in regard to the feedback session?

Where some inspectors like to share concrete directions and advices, governors do not wish to receive clear cut advice from inspectors. However, they do want inspectors to think along with them and the plans they made for the future.

Governors find it more important than inspectors that their input is taken seriously. They think it is only fair that the inspector takes the situation and development stage of the school board into

account when it comes to giving a final judgement. This particular aspect was not mentioned by inspectors.

Another difference is the relative importance of the report in relation to the feedback session. Governors are more positive about the impact of the report than inspectors are. Inspectors believe the feedback session has way more impact than the report.

When it comes to the timing of the feedback session, inspectors doubt whether it is better to send the report prior to the feedback session or afterwards. Governors unanimously agree that conducting the feedback session before the draft report has been sent is a mistake. Governors do not feel taken seriously when they join the feedback session, without having read what the inspector has written about them.

5. Do we practice what we preach?

We also asked inspectors what we could possibly improve about the way we conduct feedback sessions and the inspection process in general. They came up with suggestions for improvement.

Timing and importance of the feedback session

Inspectors and governors disagree on the question what is most important: the feedback session or the report. Inspectors believe that the feedback session has more impact on the implementation of improvements than the report, whereas governors think it is both equally important. Inspectors think that more time and attention should be paid to the feedback session instead of the written report. They think that writing the report takes a disproportional amount of time, and even more so because they wonder who actually reads it and what the report is ultimately used for. They have the feeling that the report is not sufficiently useful compared to the amount of time that is invested in it. Moreover, they are convinced that the inspectors judgements and their messages can be better conveyed orally than on paper. Governors however, think the report is of great value. They believe the report is just as important as the feedback session because the school board can use it to share the message of the inspectorate with all of their colleagues who might not be able to be present during the feedback session.

However, inspectors and governors both believe the current format of the report could use an update. Moreover they feel the language that is being used in the report is not suitable for spreading the message in an understandable way amongst colleagues.

Maintaining relationship

Especially in case the inspector judges a governing body is of insufficient quality, maintaining the relationship between inspector and governor is essential. It may then be necessary to take more time for a conversation and to organize extra moments of contact every now and then. This would make it possible to ascertain in what way the feedback session has an effect. Both inspectors and governors mentioned the importance of keeping in touch in between planned, official visits. To improve their relationship, it could be useful to insert short moments of contact in between mandatory standard visits.

Dealing with emotions

Some of the inspectors question whether we are sufficiently capable of responding to emotions adequately during the feedback session. It might be good to receive specific training on this.

Feedback on the feedback session

Inspectors actually know what is important for creating a successful feedback session. However, that does not necessarily mean that inspectors have all these skills and be able to use them optimally. Nor do we know what the exact effect of the feedback session is. Are governors actually encouraged by it to further improvement? We reflect too little on these questions ourselves and we are not absolutely sure about the effect of the feedback session. To find out if the feedback session comes about as we hope it does, we could ask for feedback on our own actions. Feedback can be collected from our own colleagues but we could also ask governors to share their opinions about the performance of the inspectorate as an organization.

6. Follow up

Implications for our own organization

We will publish the results of this research and share the outcomes and information with our colleagues throughout the inspectorate. We will also give advice to the organization; as a project group we will introduce proposals. To start with, we could facilitate and stimulate that inspectors contact governors more often in between official inspection visits in order to strengthen their mutual relationship. The effect of an inspection visit can be increased by, for example, having a conversation with the governor before *and* after sending the report.

Furthermore, we are seriously considering setting up an internal feedback system in which colleagues give each other feedback in a structured way at regular intervals during the year. We are currently exploring the possibilities for this idea. Also, we will create a poster sized factsheet which gives an overview of the do's and don'ts during a feedback session.

Moreover, we will consult our training department about offering a training that specifically focuses on effective communication and dealing with emotions. The goal is to ensure that our inspectors are skilled and comfortable in conducting effective feedback sessions and establish or maintain a good relationship with governors.

Appendix 4: Country report Scotland

1. Introduction and research approach

This SICI project is led by the Dutch Inspectorate in Utrecht and researches the quality, value and power of inspection feedback across four European Countries.

Overview:

The participating Inspectorates are:

- Netherlands: Herman Franssen, Els Schram, Judith Schmidt
- Estonia: Elen Ruus, Pärje Ülavere
- Lithuania: Kęstutis Kurtinys
- Scotland: Janie McManus, Aileen Monaghan, Celia McArthur

Period for the study: January 2018 – November 2019

Many Inspectorates of Education across Europe are concerned with the question of the impact of their work on the improvement of the quality of education. This project will study:

- How can we motivate schools and the use of governing bodies in feedback sessions to work on improving their quality?
- What are characteristic elements of feedback sessions at different Inspectorates?
- What has a positive influence on the willingness of schools / governing bodies to improve their quality and what a negative influence?
- What is written about this in the literature?
- What shows from the experiences of governing bodies, schools, inspectors et cetera?

The teams are identifying elements of feedback sessions that have a positive influence as well as elements that have a negative influence on the willingness of schools / governing bodies to improve their quality. This study can support inspectorates to evaluate and improve their own feedback sessions so that the impact further during inspection visits.

Aim of the project

- “To identify and describe structures and competences on communication within inspection sessions from results that are fed back to the school.”

Central question

- “What elements of professional communication in feedback sessions have a positive impact on the willingness of schools to improve their quality?”

1.1. Intended results:

To find out the quality of feedback across all the participating countries

- Exchanging of research findings
- Deciding on follow-up and final product
- During this meeting all countries shared their questionnaire data to date

1.2. Methodology and Limitations for the Scottish contribution to the study

In Scotland the choice of research approach was to complete a digital written questionnaire and analyse the data from this. The questionnaire is the main source of information. The research methods follow Punch's comments that "we first need to establish what we are trying to find out, and then consider how we are going to do it" (Punch, 2005, p.20). An early consideration is the position taken by the researcher completing the report. Since the background of the researcher, is that of an Inspector of Education, there are aspects of the study, which will inevitably reveal that the writer has her own educational values and is not necessarily sitting in an impartial position. Likewise all participants are inspectors at Education Scotland and likewise their views will be linked to Education Scotland inspectorial values. To ensure the trustworthiness of the questionnaire the researcher worked alongside the lead team from Utrecht and the Head of Scrutiny at Education Scotland constantly reviewing and re-considering the wording of the questions and the final report responses "taking tentative interpretations/findings back to the people from whom they were derived, and asking if they were plausible" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.259). This auditing process is known as member checking. The methodology is limited by the selection of twenty HMI from Education Scotland. The methodology also includes the additional views gained from the analyses of inspection headteacher questionnaire responses provided by 66 headteachers, primarily from ELC and primary school settings, at the end of the Scottish Inspection process in 2017-18. The strongest focus comes from the data results provided by the inspectors questionnaire. The headteachers offer a small amount of extra data to be utilised where the inspection questionnaire they completed end on to the inspection process is relevant to the study. Education Scotland regularly collects data from the head-teachers of schools that have been inspected. As the questions were designed for another purpose, they do not always specifically correspond totally with the questions being asked of inspectors.

2. Results : What is important for an effective Feedback session:

A number of areas were explored in the questionnaire to find out what is important for an effective feedback session.

2.1. Demonstrating Clarity – Importance of Clarity in Inspection Feedback Sessions

The first area explored by the survey was in relation to clarity during the feedback session. Inspectors were asked four questions in relation to clarity in the feedback sessions. This ranged from making clear the purpose and content of session, using clear evidence and ensuring the school is clear on areas of strength and development.

At first inspectors were asked to rate how important they considered these elements to be for the success of the feedback session. Figure 1 shows the results of the question. In each of these questions 100% (n=20) of inspectors in Scotland that responded rated 'very important' to the success of the feedback session.

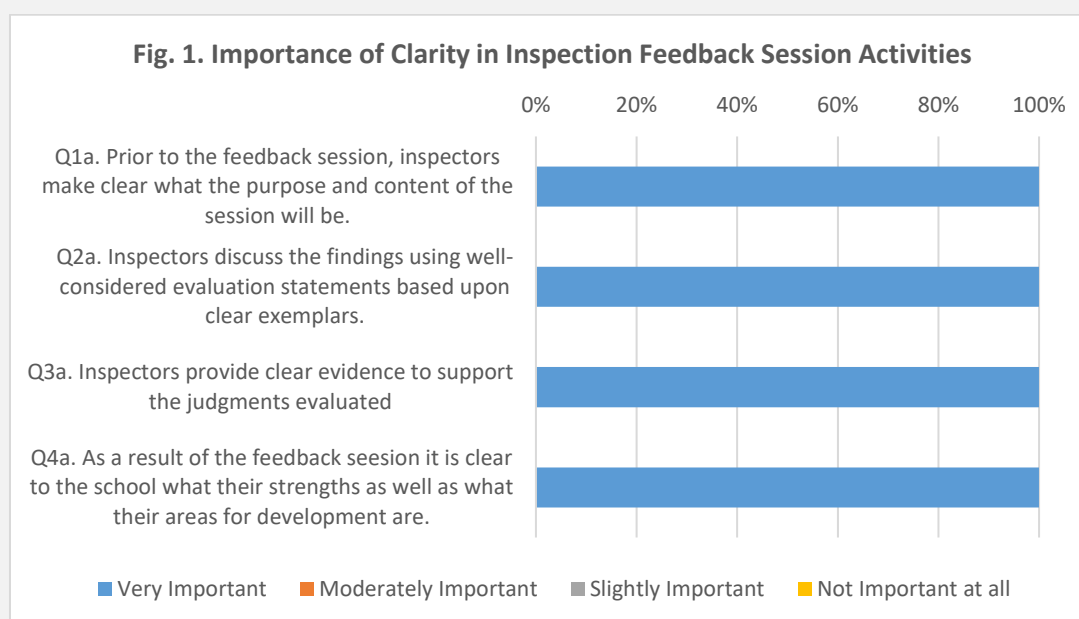


Fig.1. Importance of Clarity in Inspection Feedback Session activities

In Scotland inspectors all believe that the following are important for an effective feedback session :

- making clear the purpose and content of a feedback session
- using well considered evaluation statements based on clear exemplars
- providing clear evidence to support the judgements valued
- clarity for the school in what their strengths and areas for development are

2.2. Do inspectors pay enough attention to ensuring clarity?

Following this inspectors in Scotland were then asked whether they considered that **they paid enough attention to each of these four areas** in their feedback session. For each of the questions most respondents considered that 'often' enough attention was paid to these components. For the first 3 questions, 85% (n=17) respondents considered that inspectors often paid enough attention to this area, with 15% (n=3) stating that 'sometimes' inspectors paid

enough attending to this area. For the fourth question around whether the strengths and areas for development were clear, 95% (n=19) considered this was 'often' the case, with just 5% (n=1) considering this was 'sometimes' the case.

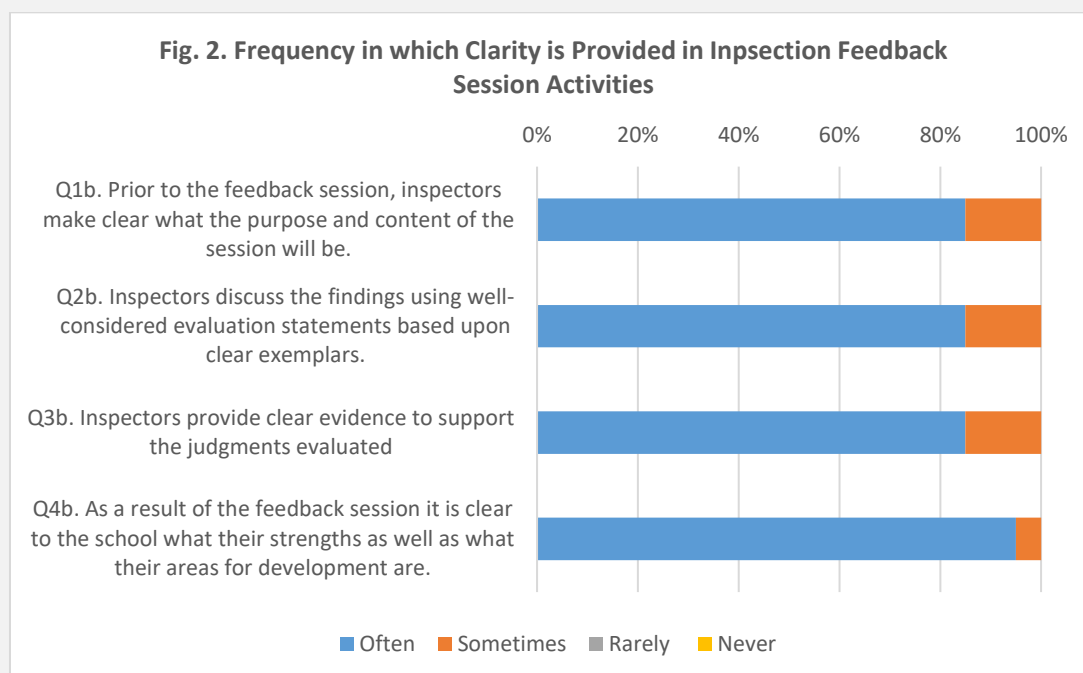


Fig.2. Frequency in which clarity is provided in inspection Feedback Session activities

We can learn from these responses that although inspectors in Scotland all consider these areas to be important, a few inspectors considered there is room to improve to improve the attention that is paid in this area by Scottish inspectors.

2.3 What do our Head-Teachers in Scotland think?

Education Scotland collects feedback on the inspection process from head-teachers. Several questions in this survey provide useful insight into some of the areas that are being explored through this SICI survey. A few of these questions relate to the ones above asked to inspectors around **the clarity of inspection** findings, the results from the headteachers can be seen in figure 3 below.

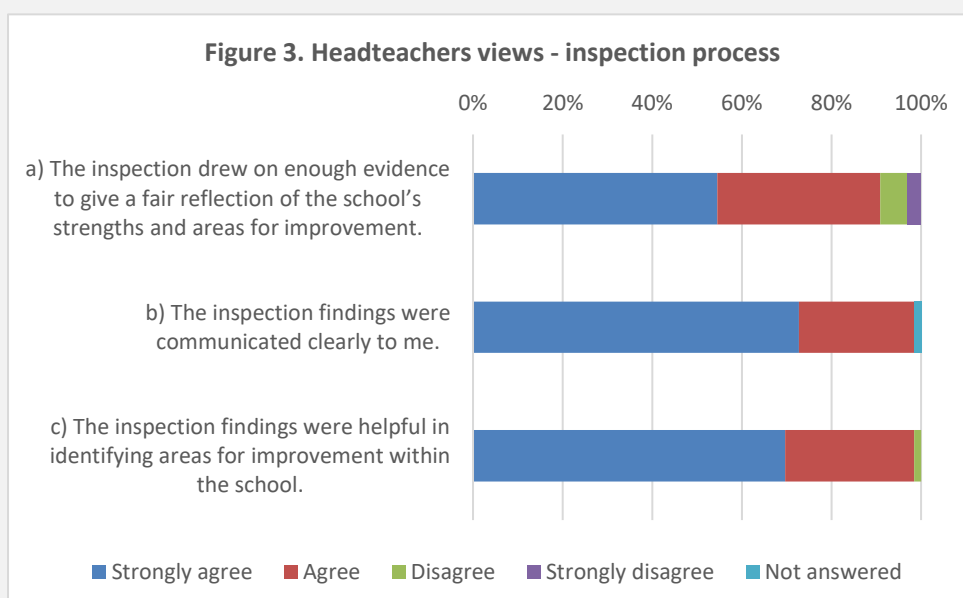


Fig.3. Headteacher's view – inspection process

In the after inspection questionnaire headteachers are asked whether **the inspection drew on enough evidence to give a fair reflection of the school's strengths and areas for improvement**; Only 55% (n=36) of head-teachers strongly agreed that this was the case. A further question revealed **that 73% (n=48) of the respondents 'strongly agreed' that the inspection findings had been clearly communicated with them** and 70% agreed that the inspection findings were helpful in identifying areas for improvement in the schools.

These results suggest that Head teachers differ for the views of 85% inspectors who believe that they provide clear evidence to support the judgements evaluated.

2.4. Professional Dialogue – Providing Room for Professional Dialogue in Inspection Feedback Sessions

Inspectors were surveyed about **professional dialogue in the inspection feedback sessions**. They were first asked to rate how important they felt the particular component of professional dialogue was in relation to the success of the feedback session (Fig 4). After this, they were asked how often they considered that inspectors paid enough attention to these during their feedback sessions (see Fig 5).

In three of the components surveyed; inspectors listening carefully, inspectors being open to input from the school and taking this seriously, and inspectors taking care to retain a relationship with the school, 100% (n=20) of the respondents considered this to be 'very important' to the success of the feedback session. Ninety five percent of respondents (n=19) considered that it was 'very important' that inspectors reach appropriately in response to emotions their judgements might evoke, with 5% (n=1) considering this to be 'moderately important'. Eighty percent of inspectors (n=16) that responded considered it 'very important', with 15% (n=3) considering it 'moderately important' and 5% considering it 'slightly important'.

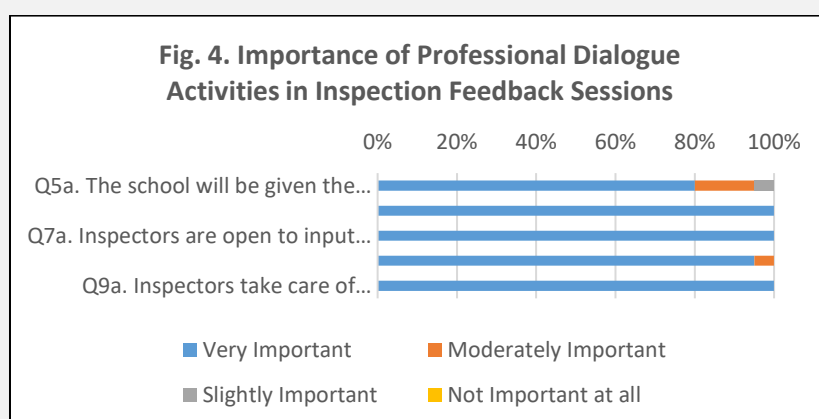


Fig.4. Importance of Professional Dialogue activities in inspection feedback sessions

While the areas in relation **to professional dialogue were generally rated very highly in terms of importance**, there was a mixture in views as to how frequently these were being completed in practice. **Just over half (55%, n=11) of respondents considered that the school was 'often' given the opportunity to share its own vision on the findings (with 80% of inspectors rating this area highly important)**. Seventy five percent (n=15) of respondents reported that inspectors 'often' showed that they listened carefully, and that inspectors react appropriately in response to emotions. Seventy nine percent of respondents (n=15/19) reported that inspectors are 'often' open to input from the school. **The component here which rated the highest is in relation to inspectors taking care to retain a relationship with the school, with 90% of respondents reporting that this was 'often' the case.**

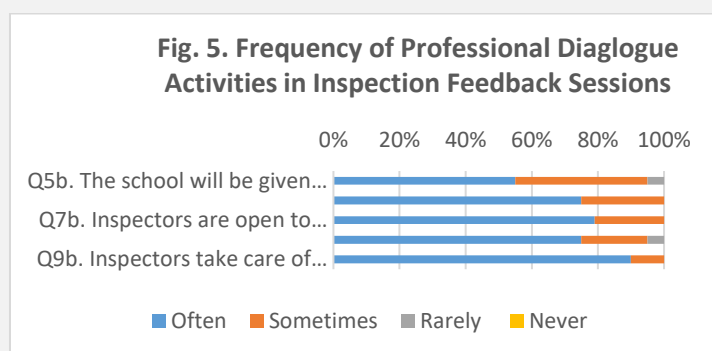


Fig.5. Frequency of professional dialogue activities in inspection feedback sessions

In Scotland inspectors clearly rate professional dialogue as very important but the fact only three quarters of inspectors agreed they show they listen carefully and react appropriately to emotion ,suggests there is more work to be done to enable all Scottish inspectors to answer this very positively.

2.5. Stimulating Nature of Feedback – Content of Inspection Feedback Sessions

The next section of the survey **explored the nature and content of the feedback given during the feedback session**. As with the previous sections, inspectors were **first asked to rate how important they considered the factors to be, and then how often these were occurring in practice**. There were a number of factors in relation to the content and nature of the feedback sessions that inspectors were asked to rate (see Fig 6). There were **six aspects** considered which included:

- sharing strengths and areas for development
- appreciating the efforts of the school
- demonstrating that they have taken account of the context of the school inspectors providing suggestions for improvement matched to the context encouraging schools to reflect on their own vision
- stimulating and supporting the school to reflect on the direction they should take.

In all cases except in relation to the aspect of 'inspectors encouraging the school to reflect on their own vision of the quality of education they provide', **100% of inspectors in Scotland that responded (n=20) considered that the element was 'very important'**. In the case of

encouraging schools to reflect on their own vision, 95% of respondents considered this to be 'very important' (n=19).

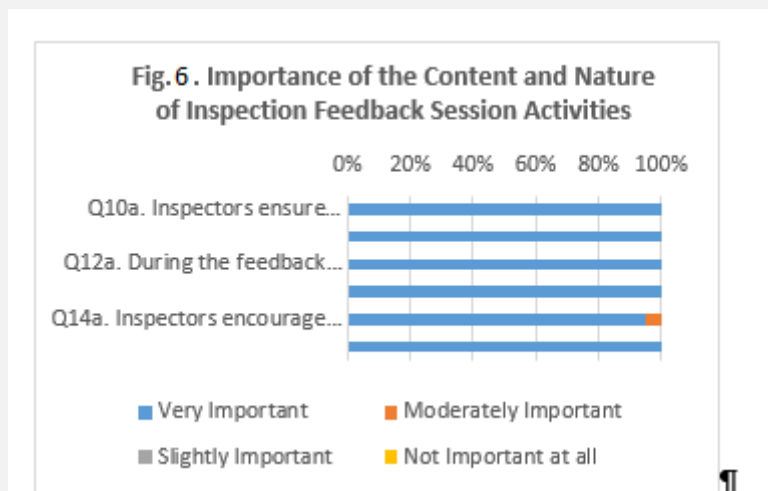


Fig.6. Importance of the content and nature of Inspection feedback sessions

Respondents were then asked to consider whether they thought that these aspects in relation to the content and nature of **feedback were happening in practice**, the results of these are shown in Figure 7 below. **All respondents (100%, n=20) considered that inspectors were 'often' ensuring areas of strength and development were highlighted** through the feedback sessions. **95% (n=19) of respondents considered that inspectors were 'often' ensuring that the sharing of findings session supported the school** to reflect on the direction they should take. **90% (n=18) of respondents considered that inspectors 'often' provided suggestions for improvement matched with the context of the school, and also that they 'often' encouraged the school to reflect on their own vision of the quality of education** they were providing. 85% of respondents (n=17) considered that inspectors 'often' appreciated the efforts of the school and that they have thoroughly taken note of the context of the school.

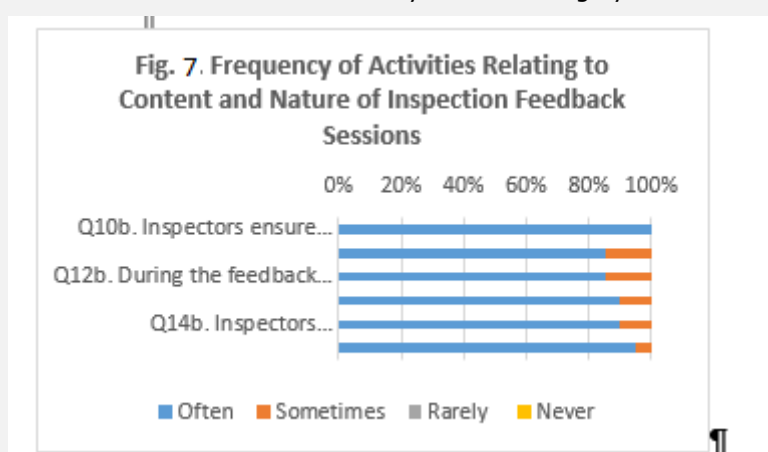


Fig.7. Frequency of activities relating to content and nature of inspection feedback sessions

The results offered here are generally high. This may be as a result of the present Scottish inspection model which demands that all inspectors complete their evaluations with the inclusion of areas that are strengths and areas that need further development.

2.6. What do our Head-Teachers Think?

We ask our head-teachers following inspection, whether they consider that the inspection team took account of the context of the school during the inspection process. In the 17/18 academic year 98% (n=49) of head-teachers 'strongly agreed' or agreed that inspectors had taken account of the context of the school, 2% disagreed. This is a very strong statement of support for how Scottish inspectors are considering a schools context during inspection.

3. Organisation of Feedback – Arrangement and Organisation of Inspection Feedback Sessions

There were a number of questions asked in relation to the organisation of inspection feedback sessions. The first question in this section centred around **when the inspector should conduct the feedback session**. Respondents were given the option of three answers 'prior to the submission of the draft report', 'after the submission of the draft report' or 'other'. **Ninety percent (n=18) said 'prior to the submission of the draft report**. Two specified 'other' and mentioned the following comments alongside this: *"In Scotland, we conduct feedback at every stage of the inspection process"* and *"we normally conduct feedback at the end of the week of inspection which is about three weeks before draft report"*.

In this section people were also asked about the length of their last sharing of findings session, the results can be seen in Figure 8 below. **Most sessions (75%, n=15) lasted between 1-2 hours**.

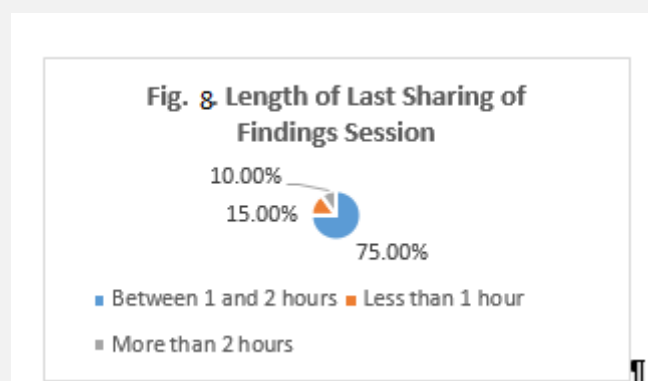


Fig.8. Length of last sharing of findings session

The inspectors responding to the survey were asked about the importance of two areas **in relation to the organisation of feedback sessions**. **The session taking place at the right moment in time and the amount of time set aside for inspections being sufficient**. Figure 9 shows the results. **In both cases 100% (n=20)** of respondents considered these areas to be 'very important' to the success of a feedback session.

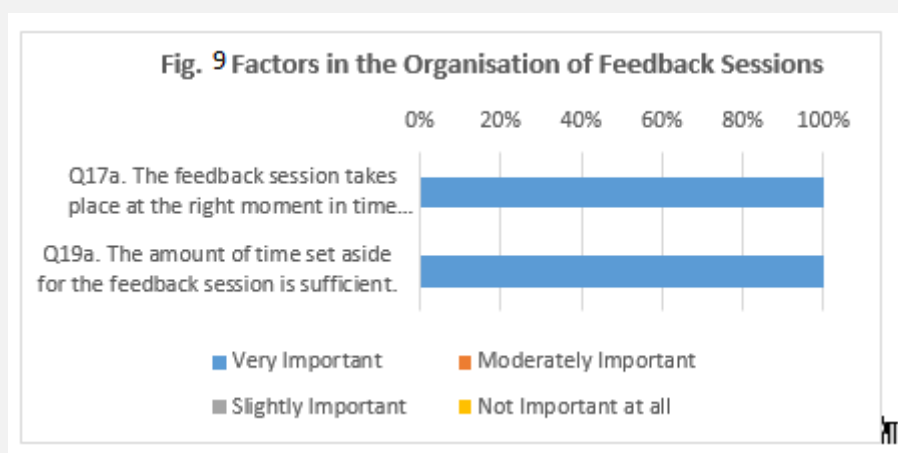


Fig.9. Factors in the organisation of feedback sessions

The respondents were then **asked how often these factors were considered by inspectors.** **The results of this can be seen in figure 10. 100% (n=20) of respondents considered inspectors 'often' ensured that the feedback session takes place at the right moment in time.** Only 65% (n=13) of inspectors considered that 'often' enough attention was paid to ensuring that the amount of time set aside for the feedback session was sufficient. This answer suggests that inspectors in Scotland do not yet feel that the amount of time set aside for a feedback session is sufficient.

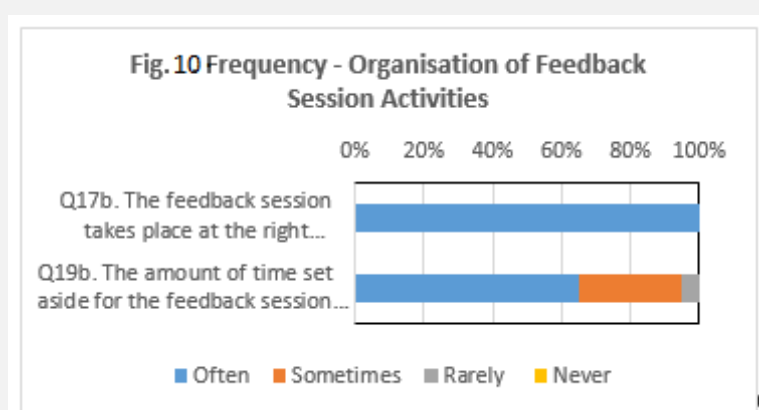


Fig.10. Frequency –Organisation of feedback sessions

4. Establishing Effective Feedback Sessions

At the end of the survey inspectors were asked a number of open questions to gather their views on certain areas relating to the success of feedback sessions.

4.1. What is crucial during feedback sessions at schools that have been assessed with weak/inadequate evaluations?

The first of the open questions asked what the biggest determinant was for establishing a successful feedback session **where weak evaluations** were identified. In total 19 respondents answered this question. A number of key themes came out, these are highlighted below:

- Professional dialogue should be happening throughout the process to ensure there are no surprises (*circa 14 mentions*).
- A trusting positive relationship should be built with the headteacher and staff prior to feedback (*circa 9 mentions*).
- The school should have opportunities to provide further evidence and discuss evaluations (*circa 5 mentions*).
- Ensuring that evidence is triangulated well to supports evaluation (*circa 4 mentions*)
- Recommendations for improvement made clear (*circa 3 mentions*)
- Respectful delivery of feedback (*circa 2 responses*).
- Scottish inspectors should model the Scottish inspectors PRAISE framework (see Appendix 1) at all times during inspections. (*circa 2 mentions*)

4.2. What is crucial during feedback sessions at schools that meet good quality standards?

The respondents were then asked what they consider to be the biggest determinant in establishing successful feedback sessions **where the evaluation was graded at good or more. Many of the comments said that they considered the factors to be the same ones that were important with feedback at weak evaluation sessions.** A summary of the key themes and examples of responses are given below:

- Same as with weak evaluations (*circa 9 mentions*)
- Clear identification of strengths and areas for improvement (*circa 8 responses*)
- Sharing of findings happening throughout the inspection process (*circa 4 mentions*)
- Respectful and positive relationships are crucial (*circa 4 mentions*)

4.3. What does not work well during a feedback session?

The next question asked respondents about what factors did not contribute to a successful feedback session. Seventeen people responded to this question. The responses have been grouped into a number of key themes which came out of the answers, these are detailed below:

- Attitude/demeanour/approach of inspectors (*circa 6 mentions*)
- Clarity and accuracy of delivery (*circa 5 mentions*)
- Attitudes/receptiveness of staff (*circa 4 mentions*) *e.g.*
- Not sharing evidence/evaluation not based on evidence/evidence base not used (*circa 4 mentions*)
- Length of feedback session being too short or too long (*circa 3 mentions*) -
- Messages coming as a surprise (*circa 3 mentions*)

4.4. What could the inspectorate improve in our working method in order to achieve a highly effective feedback session?

The final question asked respondents **what the inspectorate could to improve in order to achieve highly effective feedback sessions**. Eighteen people responded to this question. Comments were again grouped into the following themes that came through:

- Length / timing of session (circa 6 mentions)
- Ensuring succinct high level messages conveyed (circa 4 mentions)
- Consistency of feedback delivered by all inspectors (circa 4 mentions)
- Considering the impact of the allocations of grades / tensions in allocating grades (circa 4 mentions)
- Use of PRAISE framework (circa 2 mentions)
- Offering a clear high level summary of inspection findings (circa 2 mentions)

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 In relation to clarity during the feedback session:

- Scottish inspectors all agree that clarity is extremely important to the success of a feedback session

5.2 In relation to the stimulating nature of feedback:

- 100% of inspectors in Scotland believe they need to ensure they share the strengths as well as the areas for development
- 100% of inspectors appreciate the efforts taken by the school as part of the inspection. They also demonstrate they have thoroughly taken account of the context of the school

5.3 In relation to organisation of feedback:

- In Scotland, most inspectors (75%) reported that most feedback sessions lasted between 1-2 hours.
- Only 65% of inspectors in Scotland considered that the amount of time set aside for the feedback session is sufficient.
- 100% of inspectors in Scotland believe the sharing of findings session stimulates and supports the school to reflect on the direction they should take as part of school improvement.

6. Open comments received from the 20 inspectors:

- Inspectors believe that strong interpersonal skills are very important and that colleagues need to be triangulating evidence well leading to accurate evaluations.

7. Recommendations to be considered:

- Training for all new inspectors needs to include a strong focus on emotional literacy skills with a full understanding and use of the Scottish inspectorates praise framework. The development of positive interpersonal relationships is key to a successful feedback session
- All inspectors need to provide clear evidence on the strengths and areas for development in a way that supports the school to remain on an upward improvement flightpath.
- Messages should always be shared during the inspection visit. There should never be any surprises at the feedback session.
- The development of skills in triangulating evidence should be highlighted as an important factor in arriving at the correct evaluations.
- Inspectors need to ensure they are developing skills in providing high level accurate messages that summarise well the team's findings, discussions, conversations and observations. This includes providing positive messages on any strengths observed as well as defining the areas that need to be developed.
- Inspectors should consider the use of more digital support such as the use of digital video during feedback?
- The addition of a digital poster/factsheet exemplifying high quality feedback may be of use for Scottish Inspectors.

7.1. Comments from the Strategic Director of Scrutiny :

The results were analysed by the Education Scotland Improvement and Evaluation team and have been discussed with the Education Scotland Strategic Director for Scrutiny Janie McManus. Her comments are attached below:

"Inspection is a key approach to supporting and promoting improvement in schools. We give priority to supporting improvement through constructive professional dialogue, including as part of feedback. This is one of our most valuable tools for supporting improvement when engaging with staff during inspections. Staff value the dialogue with inspectors because the discussions can be strongly contextualised to particular local circumstances. Through professional dialogue, inspectors signpost effective practice from which others can learn and offer advice and guidance about improved ways of working. This helps promote improvement and innovation.

References:

Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to social research problems* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Merriam, S.B. and Tisdell, E.J. (2016). *Qualitative research – a guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix A: The PRAISE Framework

Best Practice Framework for Education Scotland inspections and reviews

The Framework is based on data gathered from: representative samples of experienced inspectors from Education Scotland and heads of organisations that have been inspected; and feedback from post-inspection questionnaires. The following principles were identified as underpinning best practice.

Purpose – being clear about the overall purpose of the inspection and retaining this throughout. Creating a shared agenda with staff in the organisation and amongst members of the inspection/review team.

Relationships – building and maintaining constructive relationships throughout the process as the basis of a high quality inspection/review.

Awareness – maintaining a high level of awareness of the context in which staff are operating, of their feelings and reactions to the process and of the inspector's own approach and its impact.

Information gathering – careful inquiry to gather and analyse evidence. Retaining an objective stance, testing assumptions and assimilating data before evaluating.

Sharing information – communicating thoroughly throughout the process to prepare and inform staff. Encouraging staff to be open in providing their perspective and providing appropriate feedback as the inspection/review progresses.

Enabling – treating people with respect, engaging them in professional dialogue, recognising their efforts and providing feedback in a constructive way to encourage ownership and learning to take place.

Appendix 5: Professional Communication questionnaire - inspectors

Introduction

Many Inspectorates of Education are concerned with the question how much impact their work has on the school improvement. The feedback session (sharing of findings session) at the end of a school visit is an important element of inspection. In these sessions inspectors can engage schools in a professional dialogue to encourage their ownership and willingness to improve the quality of education.

In 2018 the four inspectorates of Scotland, Estonia, Lithuania and the Netherlands started an international project¹⁰ about the impact of the feedback session.

Aim of the project

We identify elements of feedback sessions that have a positive influence as well as elements that have a negative influence on the willingness of schools to improve their quality of education. We developed a questionnaire to identify elements that are crucial for a successful feedback session. On the other hand, this questionnaire is also meant to reflect on our current practice of feedback sessions. In 2019 we will present the findings. The final product will help the inspectorates to evaluate and improve their own feedback sessions.

Literature and experiences of inspectors and schools reveal a number of important characteristics of a feedback session. These involve, for example, being clear and listening well.

We would like to ask you, as an inspector, how you value the effect of several elements on the success of the feedback session. We characterize a feedback session as successful when at the end you have the impression that the findings are recognized and the school shows willingness to work on further improvements.

We also ask you whether you believe that you paid sufficient attention to these elements during feedback sessions you recently conducted.

¹⁰ The project was initiated by SICI (The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) in 2017.

Blok 1: 'being clear' The following questions and statements involve being clear during the feedback session (sharing of findings session).					
1 Prior to the feedback session, the inspector makes clear what the purpose and content will be.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
2 The inspector discusses the findings using well considered evaluation statements based upon clear exemplars.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
3 The inspector provides clear evidence to support the judgements.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
I/ The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
4 After the feedback session, it is clear to the school what their strengths as well as their					

areas for development are.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
I / The inspectorate pay (s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

Blok 2: 'professional dialogue' The following questions and statements involve (giving room for) conducting a professional dialogue during the feedback session (sharing of findings session).					
6 The school will be given the opportunity to share its own vision on the findings and judgements (evaluations) of the inspector.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
7 The inspector shows that he listens carefully.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
8 The inspector is open to input from the school and takes this input seriously.					

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.					
9 The inspector reacts appropriately in response to emotions his judgements might evoke. (for example: acknowledging emotions, giving room for emotions)					
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.					
10 The inspector takes care of (retaining) the relationship with the school. (for example: establishing a nice ambiance during the feedback session, mentioning the goals they both have in common, making conversation on a more personal level)					
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of feedback session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.					

Blok 3: 'stimulating nature'

The following questions and statements involve the stimulating nature of the feedback session (sharing of findings session).

11 The inspector ensures mentioning the strengths as well as the areas of development.				
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12 The inspector appreciates the efforts of the school.				
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
13 During the feedback session, the inspector demonstrates he has thoroughly taken note of the context of the school.				
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14 The inspector provides suggestions for improvement, matching with the context of the school.				

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.				
15 The inspector stimulates (supports) the school to reflect on their own vision on quality of education.				
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I/ The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.				
16 The sharing of findings session stimulates (supports) the school to reflect on the direction they should take as part of school improvement.				
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.				

Blok 4: 'arrangement and organization'

The following questions and statements involve the arrangement and organization of the feedback session (sharing of findings session.)

17 At what moment should the inspector conduct the feedback session?

☐ Prior to the submission of the draft report.

☐ After the submission of the draft report.

☐ Otherwise, namely

18 The feedback session takes place at the right moment in time (for example: shortly/long after the inspection visit.)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?					
I/ The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

19 The amount of time set aside for the feedback session is sufficient.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?					
I / The inspectorate pay(s) enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

General open questions:
20 In your opinion, what is most determinative for establishing a successful feedback session in case of weak/inadequate quality of education?
21 In your opinion, what is most determinative for establishing a successful feedback session in case of sufficient/good quality of education?
22 Which factors do <u>not</u> contribute to a successful feedback session?
23 What in particular could the inspectorate improve to achieve a highly effective feedback session?

Appendix 6: Professional Communication questionnaire – school boards

Professional Communication 'questionnaire'

Introduction

Many Inspectorates of Education are concerned with the question how much impact their work has on school improvement. The feedback session (sharing of findings session) at the end of a school visit is an important element of inspection. In these sessions inspectors can engage schools in a professional dialogue to encourage their ownership and willingness to improve the quality of education.

In 2018 the four inspectorates of Scotland, Estonia, Lithuania and the Netherlands started an international project¹¹ about the impact of the feedback session.

Aim of the project

We identify elements of feedback sessions that have a positive influence as well as elements that have a negative influence on the willingness of schools to improve their quality of education. We developed a questionnaire to identify elements that are crucial for a successful feedback session. On the other hand, this questionnaire is also meant to reflect on our current practice of feedback sessions. In 2019 we will present the findings. The final product will help the inspectorates to evaluate and improve their own feedback sessions.

Literature and experiences of inspectors and schools reveal a number of important characteristics of a feedback session. These involve, for example, being clear and listening well.

We would like to ask you, as a school leader, how you value the effect of several elements on the success of the feedback session. We characterize a feedback session as successful when you recognize the findings of the inspector and you feel motivated to work on further improvements. We also ask whether you believe that, during the last feedback session you experienced, the inspector paid sufficient attention to these elements.

¹¹ The project was initiated by SICI (The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) in 2017.

Blok 1: 'being clear' The following questions and statements involve being clear during the sharing of the feedback session (sharing of findings session).					
1 Prior to the feedback session, the inspector makes clear what the purpose and content will be.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
The inspector / The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
2 The inspector discusses the findings using well considered evaluation statements based upon clear exemplars.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
The inspector / The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
3 The inspector provides clear evidence to support the judgements.					
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
4 After the feedback session, it is clear to the school what their strengths as well as their areas for development are.					

How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

Blok 2: 'professional dialogue'

The following questions and statements involve (giving room for) conducting a professional dialogue during the feedback session (sharing of findings session).

6 The school will be given the opportunity to share its own vision on the findings and judgements (evaluations) of the inspector.

How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
The inspector / The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

7 The inspector shows that he listens carefully.

How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	

8 The inspector is open to input from the school and takes this input seriously.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the sharing of findings session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The inspector paid enough attention to this.					
9 The inspector reacts appropriately in response to emotions his judgements might evoke. (for example: acknowledging emotions, giving room for emotions)					
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the sharing of findings session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The inspector paid enough attention to this.					
10 The inspector takes care of (retaining) the relationship with the school. (for example: establishing a nice ambiance during the sharing of findings session, mentioning the goals they both have in common, making conversation on a more personal level)					
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the sharing of findings session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The inspector paid enough attention to this.					

Blok 3: 'stimulating nature'

The following questions and statements involve the stimulating nature of the sharing of findings session.

11 The inspector ensures mentioning the strengths as well as the areas of development.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.				

12 The inspector appreciates the efforts of the school.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.				

13 During the feedback session, the inspector demonstrates he has thoroughly taken note of the context of the school.

	Very important	somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.				

14 The inspector provides suggestions for improvement, matching with the context of the school.				
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15 The inspector stimulates (supports) the school to reflect on their own vision on quality of education.				
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16 The feedback session stimulates (supports) the school to reflect on the direction they should take as part of school improvement.				
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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Blok 4: 'arrangement and organization'

The following questions and statements involve the arrangement and organization of the feedback session (sharing of findings session).

17 At what moment should the inspector conduct the feedback session

- 0 Prior to the submission of the draft report.
0 After the submission of the draft report.
0 Otherwise, namely

18 The feedback session takes place at the right moment in time (for example: shortly/long after the inspection visit.)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.					

19 The amount of time set aside for the feedback session is sufficient.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important	
How important do you think this is for the success of the feedback session?					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The inspector/ The inspectorate pays enough attention to this.					

General open questions:
20 In your opinion, what is most determinative for establishing a successful feedback session in case of weak/inadequate quality of education?
21 In your opinion, what is most determinative for establishing a successful feedback session in case of sufficient/good quality of education?
22 Which factors do <u>not</u> contribute to a successful feedback session?
23 What in particular could the inspectorate improve to achieve a highly effective feedback session?