

Country Profile SLOVAK REPUBLIC

1. Basic information

Country name: Slovak Republic

Structure of inspectorate: The Slovak School Inspectorate is a state administrative body. It is independent in its work and is acting in accordance with laws and other generally valid legal norms, acts and decrees. It consists of headquarters based in Bratislava and 8 regional inspectorates the location of which corresponds to 14 regional territories of the Slovak Republic. They are governed by common rules.

Age of inspectorate: It was established in 2000. Before it was the part of local government on a district and regional level.

Size: There are 180 inspectors and other administrative/technical staff and specialists.

Remits: School inspection is carried out in all state, private and church kindergartens, primary schools, all types of secondary schools, centres for practical training, as well as schools for children and pupils with special educational needs, language schools, leisure centers, and centers/school facilities of prevention and educational counseling.

Unit of inspection: School inspectors assess the conditions, course and results of education in accordance with relevant national and school educational programmes. Their findings are generalized within the groups of schools. Inspectors analyze school documents, conduct interviews, observe lessons/classes, they do not inspect local authorities.

What is your strapline? We use strapline of SICI "Better inspection – better learning".

Relationship with government: Inspectorate is independent in its activities, it is governed by laws and other generally binding legal regulations. It is founded by the Ministry of Education and financed from its budget. The Inspectorate is an advisory body for the Minister and the Ministry. It is headed by Chief School Inspector, who yearly submits the inspection plan and the report on the state and level of education and training to the Minister. There are no restrictions on commenting on government policy on education and on news publishing.

Accountability: Funding of the Inspectorate is provided through the budget of the Ministry, which is given by law. Inspectorate submits the management report every year and all expenses are subject to the approval process of the Ministry.

2. Evaluation process

Self-evaluation: Schools are not obliged to carry out self-evaluation. Inspectorate encourages schools to perform this process and compares some of their findings with the results of self-assessment when the schools accomplish it.

What do you examine during inspection? Inspection is a combination of control (compliance with legal regulations relating to the provision of education, management and leadership, the conditions of education) and evaluation of the quality of the teaching and learning process based on evaluation criteria and scaling. The quality of education is evaluated during the lessons observation. Inspectorate does not supervise the financial matters of schools.

Do you have an inspection framework? Inspectorate developed a set of evaluation criteria and scales, which represent a quality model used in the case of full and thematic inspection. There are also types of inspections where only compliance with the principles given by the state (e.g. monitoring of external testing) is controlled.

Inspection time and resource Inspection activity depends on the type of inspections and on the size of the school. In the case of full inspection they are conducted over a period of five days, or two weeks at the secondary vocational schools. Thematic inspection can take 1 - 3 days. The size of an inspection team and its composition depends on the size and type of a school/school facility. The inspection team usually consists of school inspectors, and possibly invited persons (experts). Inspectors need to have professional knowledge of their subject or area of education, they should have either school management practice (former head teachers) or a second attestation exam. They are recruited on the basis of selection procedure.

Frequency of inspections Full inspections should be conducted in each school once every five years. They are carried out on the basis of inspectorate planning, or external request, and complaint. Results of complaint investigations are reasons for carrying out risk based inspection.

Main business The inspectorate is responsible for handling complaints, assessing application for school decommissioning. Inspectors are involved in the process of interviews of new head teachers, they are asked to comment on drafts for prepared legislation, and conceptual materials of the Ministry of Education, they cooperate with school founders, collaborate with universities, other institutions dealing with education.

3. Consequences of inspection

Reporting Inspectorate publishes on its website Summary reports of all types of performed inspections, and Annual Inspection Report which gives a summary evaluation for the education system as a whole based on inspection analysis about all schools that have been inspected. This report is submitted to the Ministry of Education and the Parliamentary Education Committee. Reports from individual inspected schools are not published, current legislation does not allow it. School founders, local

and regional authorities are informed about the school reports by the school inspectors.

Grade: Do you grade institutions? All schools are inspected in the same way against the same quality indicator framework. The quality level of the inspected domains and aspects (i.e. pedagogical management, school conditions and process of education) is assessed by the given assessment scale: very good, good, average, less satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. An exceptionally good level is a reason to introduce the school as an example of good practice, while the insufficient level may result in proposal to dismiss the head teacher, or to exclude school from the national school network.

Knowledge sharing In thematic inspections a sample of schools is inspected for only a specific topic or theme. Some themes may be of high priority and be included also within the full inspection procedure. Findings are published.

What happens following an inspection? In all types of inspection inspectors may identify deficiencies, for example, the violation of a particular regulation and may impose one of the following measures: recommendations; warnings; the requirement for the school to adopt certain measures within a given time-period; orders for the school to immediately conduct specific tasks in order to eliminate serious mistakes and failures. The inspectorate conducts follow-up inspections to monitor a school's success in correcting or improving the identified deficiencies.

What is the stated purpose of your inspectorate?

The Inspectorate shares the view that the purpose of school evaluation should not be only reflection of the school's quality, but evaluation has real meaning only if it leads schools to achieve better quality of education. Through inspection we support schools to achieve better quality of education.

We are focused on:

1. the areas and themes that are crucial for the quality of education,
2. encouraging schools to provide self-evaluation,
3. building relationships of partnership and trust between the inspectorate and the schools,
4. pointing to incorrect tendencies in school management on the country level,
5. helping to build networking of successful schools,
6. being part of the network of institutions supporting development of teachers' competencies.