

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate:

## 1. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate in brief

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is an agency under the Swedish government.

The agency is responsible for supervision and quality assurance in regard to preschools (primarily the municipal preschools), compulsory schools, upper secondary schools and the various forms of adult education. University colleges and universities, however, have a different supervisory authority.

The primary aim of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is to contribute to school improvement and development. The overall goal is a school system where all children have equal rights to a good education and knowledge in a secure environment.

The agency is headed by a Director General appointed by the government; however, it is not a part of the Ministry of Education and Research, but an independent agency. The agency's commission is based on the Swedish Education Act (last changed in 2011), a special commission and on appropriation directions written by the government each year.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate was formed as a separate agency in 2008. The agency's tasks were previously carried out by the Swedish National Agency for Education, which is still the normative and evaluating authority for the Swedish schools.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has approximately 450 employees at five locations around the country. The main office is in Stockholm.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has four main tasks:

- Regular supervision

- Quality audits
- Investigations and decisions regarding individual complaints
- Issuing permits for independent schools

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate also includes the Child and School Student Representative, a legal expert appointed by the government to investigate and make decisions in matters relating to offensive treatment of individual pupils. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is responsible for the Child and School Student Representative's investigative resources.

Also connected to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is the Board of Appeal for Education, which is a court-like authority that receives appeals from private individuals in regard to certain types of decisions concerning pupils in school. This authority receives its office resources from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate.

## **2. The Swedish school system**

Sweden has a nine-year compulsory school. This compulsory attendance starts the year a child turns 7 years old and ends after the spring term of year 9. All children have a right to education.

The general Swedish school system consists of different types of schools. There are municipal, independent and state school authorities. The majority of schools are municipal. The proportion of independent schools is the greatest at the upper secondary level.

The main types of school in Sweden that are under the supervision of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate:

- Preschool (children aged 1-5)
- Preschool class (children aged 6)
- Compulsory school (ages 7-15)
- Compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities
- Special school (for deaf or hearing impaired)
- Sami school
- Upper secondary school (ages 15/16-18/19)

- Upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities
- Municipal adult education
- Education for adults with learning disabilities
- Swedish tuition for immigrants

In addition to the above formats, there are also a few international schools in Sweden, as well as leisure-time centres during the initial school years, and a few other special types of education for pupils.

Compulsory school is nine years. Prior to compulsory school, children can attend preschool. Preschool class is a voluntary type of school during the year before compulsory school. However, more or less every 6-year-old attends a preschool class.

Upper secondary school is a voluntary, three-year school form. Nevertheless, almost all young people in Sweden (around 90 per cent) start upper secondary school. Not everyone who starts will finish though.

In total, there are approximately 7,500 school units (and close to 10,000 preschool units) in Sweden. In each school year, with some variation, there are approximately 100,000 students.

## **2.2 Development of the school system over time**

Sweden introduced a public elementary school in 1842. For many years, Sweden had two parallel school forms, i.e. one for pupils that intended to go on to further studies and one for pupils who were aiming to go into a profession early on. But since the late 1960s, all students attend a unified 9-year compulsory school. The preschool has been gradually expanded, and it now includes a large proportion of Swedish children. The preschool class has existed since 1976; it is not compulsory for the pupils but nearly all six-year-olds attend it.

At the upper secondary level, a similar reform towards unification was implemented in 1971. The earlier school forms of upper secondary school, two-year continuation school and vocational school were merged

into the upper secondary school. The upper secondary school has later gone through further changes.

The compulsory school and the upper secondary school have both had several different curricula over the years. The current curriculum was established in 2011. In the same year, Sweden also got a new Education Act.

Up until the early 1990s, the responsibility for the schools was shared between the state and the municipalities. The teachers adhered to state agreements. The then National Swedish Board of Education and the regional county boards of education were the state agencies that governed the school system, which was clearly regulated.

## 2.3 The school system of today

Several different decisions adopted by the Riksdag (Parliament) in the early 1990s decentralised responsibility for the schools. The municipalities<sup>1</sup> (approx. 300) were given the overall responsibility for school activities and consequently an undivided employer responsibility for all staff, including the teachers, who previously had state-regulated positions. The preschool, leisure-time centres and the schools thereby received a common responsible authority in all municipalities. At around the same time, it also became possible for independent actors to own and run a school, after obtaining a permit. This means that a teacher can currently be employed either by the municipality or by an independent employer.

Parents and pupils can choose schools freely. All schools must receive the pupils that want to go there, as long as there are places.

All schools must be free of charge. This includes the independent schools. Instead Sweden has a kind of voucher system which means that there is a (tax-funded) capitation allowance associated with each pupil, regardless of what school they attend. The school capitation allowance corresponds to the cost per pupil in municipal schools. The independent schools can be profit-driven or non-profit.

The reforms that took place in the early 1990s were to enable schools to adapt to local needs. The intention was to establish the school more firmly with the citizens, get more people involved and become better adapted to local conditions than the school that had been so clearly regulated centrally by the state.

As within many other areas of society in this period, performance-based management was introduced as the governance model for the decentralised school. This means that the state set up national objectives for the

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<sup>1</sup> In Sweden, municipal elections are held every four years. The municipalities have a far-reaching responsibility for health care, education and social care but also for other administration of various joint activities. In order to finance its activities, the municipality charges a tax on income, approximately 30 per cent, but it also receives contributions from the state.

schools to achieve, but the school authorities got to select the methods, i.e. how they were to achieve the objectives.

However, one important principle was that all pupils were to receive an equal education. The state was to guarantee this equality. It would do so through the national objectives and regulations set by the Riksdag (Parliament) and the government (in the Education Act, curricula, course syllabuses and to some extent the teacher education programme). Another important part was the state supervision, which would monitor the schools' compliance with the national objectives and regulations.

### **3. Agencies and national governing documents**

At the foundation of the Swedish school and preschool system is the Education Act. This Act is drawn up and adopted by the Riksdag (Parliament). The current Education Act was established in 2011. It regulates the rights and obligations for children, students, pupils and their guardians. The Education Act also describes the responsibility of the individual school and the school authority in regard to the activities.

This is the chain of governance for the Swedish schools:



The opening paragraph of the **Education Act** reads as follows:

“The education provided within the school system is intended for children and pupils to obtain and develop knowledge and values. It shall promote the development and learning of all children and pupils as well as a lifelong desire to learn. The education shall also impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values upon which the Swedish society is based.”

**Curricula** exist for most types of schools. The government sets the core parts of the curricula while other parts are set by the Swedish National Agency for Education. Curricula have been established for compulsory school and upper secondary school, for example. The curriculum describes the core values, mission as well as the objectives and guidelines that apply for the type of school referred to. The curriculum is one of the national governing documents for the school system.

**Course syllabuses** set knowledge requirements for each school subject. These also belong to the group of national governing documents. The course syllabus is set by the Swedish National Agency for Education,

while the division between subjects, i.e. the timetables, are determined by the Riksdag.

### 3.1 Four government agencies

Within the school sector, there are four independent agencies under the government at the national level. These are:

**The Swedish National Agency for Education.** The agency sets up frameworks and guidelines on how education is to be provided and assessed with the aid of syllabuses and subject plans, knowledge requirements and tests, as well as general guidelines. Major initiatives are taken to provide support for the implementation of new reforms, covering conferences, web-based information, and different types of informational material. The National Agency for Education is also responsible for the evaluation of the Swedish school system and publishes an annual situation report. The National Agency for Education certifies teachers. National tests are the domain of the National Agency for Education.

The Agency provides support to preschools, schools and principal organisers for their development. The support to be given should be nationally prioritised. This may involve general development initiatives, which are justified on the grounds of shortcomings and problems that have been identified by means of different national and international studies, such as in mathematics, languages, and reading and writing skills. It can also deal with other issues such as mobbing and bullying, gender equality, minority languages and the position of newly arrived pupils in Sweden.

Competence development is also an important part of our work. The Agency is responsible for the National School Leadership Training Programme and the initiative for professional supplementary training of preschool teachers and teachers.



Conferences, support and inspirational material, as well as web-based support are common forms for contributing to development. The Agency is also responsible for distributing and evaluating government grants to stimulate goal attainment and ensure quality of schooling.

- **The Swedish Schools Inspectorate.** As mentioned, the agency is responsible for supervision, quality assurance, complaints and permits for independent schools. (Read more below).
- **The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (SPSM)** works with special education teaching materials and is also a form of consultant on special education issues for schools and school authorities. The agency also runs special schools for pupils with certain disabilities.
- **The Swedish Centre for Educational Research** was started in 2015. This agency is commissioned to systematically compile research results and make them available to teachers, head teachers and other actors within the school system.

**Teacher Education Programmes** is taught at university colleges and universities. After completing the programme, a teacher must do an induction year. After that year, they can become certified. Teachers shall be certified to teach their subjects. In order to award grades, they must be certified.

## 4. Swedish Schools Inspectorate

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has four main tasks:

- Regular supervision;
- Quality Audit;
- Investigations and decisions regarding individual complaints

; and

- Issuing permits for independent schools.

The overall goal is a school system where all children have equal rights to a good education and knowledge in a stimulating and secure environment. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate's work is based on each individual child's/student's right to develop as far as possible based on their prerequisites. The four main processes listed above represent the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's contribution to ensuring this right.

Another task is investigations regarding the revocation of a teacher registration (see more below).

#### **4.1 Regular supervision**

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate audits all school authorities, i.e. municipalities, education enterprises and other organisations running school activities. These audits are carried out every three years, notice of which is normally given in advance.

The purpose of regular supervision is to discover improvement needs in schools and other activities and to promote development.

The supervision applies to all schools. However, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate adapts its measures to the situation of each school. The result is that approximately 25 per cent of the schools are monitored more closely. These schools, which receive visits, have a high proportion of pupils at risk of not getting the education they are entitled to. The authority otherwise monitors that the school authorities assume responsibility for their schools as prescribed by law.

The 25 per cent of schools that are monitored more closely are selected based on a risk based approach. This analysis is based on the school's results, an extensive survey (see below) of pupils, parents and staff, and certain other information about the school. If this documentation indicates significant development needs, the school is selected for more extensive supervision, including visits.

The school survey that forms the basis of the regular supervision includes:

- All pupils in year 5 and year 9 of compulsory school and year 2 of upper secondary school.
- All education staff within the compulsory school and upper secondary school.
- All guardians of children in preschool class, compulsory school and compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities.

***This is what is assessed by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate***

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate's audit is based on the school's governing documents – the Education Act, ordinances and curricula. These documents contain provisions that the activities are obligated to compliance to.

Based on the requirements set out in the Education Act, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has chosen to focus on the factors highlighted in research as being particularly important for the learning and security of all children and students. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate also audits important matters relating to the students' rights.

For all school authorities, i.e. municipalities, education enterprises and other organisations conducting school activities, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate audits:

- **Educational conditions:** Such as the education and experience of the head teacher, access to pupil health services, guidance counselling etc.
- **Educational development** – Such as quality initiatives and resource allocation.

- **Financial and legal conditions for the school authority to provide education** – Such as a base of enough students to make continued operations possible in the future.

At individual school units, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate audits:

### **Teaching and learning**

- The teaching is based on and includes the objectives of the curriculum and the respective course syllabuses.
- The teaching entails an active teacher support for the pupils.
- The teaching takes into consideration the needs, circumstances, experiences and thoughts of each individual.
- The teachers reinforce the pupils' desire to learn as well as their confidence in their own abilities.

**Particular adaptations and special support**

- The responsible actors at the school promptly provide the pupil with support in the form of particular adaptations within the framework of the regular classes, if the pupil is at risk of not attaining the minimum knowledge requirements.
- The responsible actors at the school promptly investigate the pupil's need for special support, if the aforementioned adaptations do not lead to the desired result.
- The support is extensive enough to give the pupil an opportunity to attain the minimum knowledge requirements.
- The school monitors and evaluates any support provided.

**Assessment and grading**

- When making assessments and grading, the teacher uses all available information on the pupil's knowledge in relation to the national knowledge requirements and makes a comprehensive assessment of this knowledge.
- The student and his/her guardian are informed of the student's development.

**Security, a peaceful study environment and measures against offensive treatment**

- The education programme is designed to ensure all students a school environment characterised by security and peace.
- Goal-oriented efforts are carried out at the school unit to counteract offensive treatment of students.

**Conditions for learning and security**

- The school ensures that students participate in the education unless they have valid reasons to be absent. If a pupil is absent without a valid reason, the head teacher informs the student's guardian on the same day.

- The teachers at the school unit are certified and authorised to teach their subjects, unless they are covered by one of the exceptions to these requirements.
- The teachers at the school unit collaborate to attain the educational goals.
- Preventive work is carried out in relation to core values to create an environment founded on respect and inclusion.
- The student health services are primarily used for preventive and health-promoting reasons, in order to support the student's development towards the educational goals.
- The educational and vocational activities meet the pupils' needs for guidance in preparation for their choice of future education and work.
- The school library is used to support the student's learning and development.

### **Steering and development of the activities**

- The head teacher follows up the school unit's results in relation to the national objectives and documents them.
- Based on an analysis of the information from the follow-up, the head teacher decides on necessary development measures.
- The head teacher plans the implementation of development measures and carries them out. The planning and the measures are documented.
- The staff of the school unit are given opportunities for the development they need to carry out their tasks professionally.
- The head teacher distributes resources within the school unit according to the different circumstances and needs of the children and students.

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## **Inspection in practice**

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate gathers information for its assessment in different ways: The school's results and other documents where the school describes its activities, interviews and, in some cases, observations constitute an important basis, as do the results of the school survey. When relevant information has been gathered, the agency makes an assessment of whether the activities, within the above-mentioned areas, live up to the laws and regulations set in place for them.

After the inspection, all school authorities receive an inspection report referring to the activities that the authority is responsible for. The report lists any and all shortcomings that the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has noted in the school. The agency also sets requirements for the school or the authority to rectify these shortcomings.

The model used by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate for its regular supervision is deviation reporting. This means that the agency assesses whether, and if so how, the audited activity does not comply to the regulations. It does not describe the operation as a whole, with strengths and weaknesses. The agency's audit is based on the requirements set out in the Education Act, ordinances, curricula and course syllabuses.

All decisions are addressed to the school authority or the independent school owner, i.e. the actor with the ultimate responsibility for the education. The school units visited by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate will also receive inspection reports relating to the parts that concern that particular school. If the inspection indicates any shortcomings, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate will set out requirements for measures to be taken in its report. The report also specifies the amount of time the school authority has to rectify the shortcomings; normally follow-up will take place after three months. The decisions will be ready approximately one month after the visit.

At that point the school authority or the owner of the independent school, i.e. the actor running the school, is obligated to rectify the shortcomings, and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate will follow up to make sure that this is done. If not, the agency may resort to more severe sanctions.



***Different types of sanctions***

A decision may contain different requirements for the activities.

**Injunction:** If a school or an activity has any shortcomings, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate can decide on an injunction. An injunction specifies what the school has to rectify along with the related requirements that the Swedish Schools Inspectorate sets for the responsible authority, i.e. the actor running the operation. After some time, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate conducts a follow-up to ensure that the school authority has rectified the shortcomings.

**Injunction with a penalty:** An injunction can be combined with a fine if the school or the responsible authority fails to rectify the shortcomings in the way required by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. In the case of certain serious shortcomings, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate shall (in accordance with the law) combine its injunction with a penalty.

An injunction can also form the basis of other coercive measures, such as a

**Temporary operating ban:** If the school has such major shortcomings that it entails various risks to the pupils, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate can impose a temporary operating ban.

**Revocation of the permit to operate an independent school:** The Swedish Schools Inspectorate can revoke a school's permit if the activities have serious shortcomings which are not rectified.

**Government rectification measures for municipal activities:** The Swedish Schools Inspectorate cannot permanently close down a municipal school. However, the agency can issue a decision regarding measures to improve quality. The costs of such measures fall to the municipal school authority.

The school authority or the owner of the independent school, i.e. the actor responsible for the school, may appeal the decision of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate in court.

**Other types of decisions include:**

**Reprimand:** For a school or activity that has less severe shortcomings, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate can decide to issue a reprimand.

**Refraining from intervention:** Even if a school or an activity has shortcomings, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate may refrain from intervening. This possibility exists if the shortcoming is minor, if it can be quickly rectified or if there are special reasons not to intervene. The agency will still describe the shortcoming in its decision.

### ***Responsibility of the school authority***

The school authority or the owner of the independent school, i.e. the municipality, education enterprise or other organisation conducting the school is responsible for ensuring that the activities comply with requirements set out in the regulations. They are also responsible for the monitoring, evaluation and development of their schools. This is the responsibility supervised by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate.

### ***Common shortcomings noted***

The supervision is carried out through deviation reporting. This means that the agency primarily takes note of and reports the shortcomings found in the schools and at the responsible authorities.

Some shortcomings are more common than others. The most common shortcoming in compulsory schools and upper secondary schools alike is found in the school's work with security and a peaceful study environment. Other areas that the Swedish Schools Inspectorate often criticises include the head teacher's way of leading the educational work and the way the school monitors, analyses and develops its own work, i.e. its quality management. Another area is how the schools work with special support for students who need it. Other shortcomings include the education not containing all that the students are entitled to, such as a lack of student health services and mother tongue support for pupils who have recently arrived in Sweden.

Among the school authorities, the most common shortcoming is that they are not working systematically to enhance the quality of education. In order to develop the activities, it is important to follow up on the results and to implement changes as needed. The work with follow-up is

the most common shortcoming among the inspected school authorities, i.e. municipalities, enterprises and other organisations that run schools.

In 2014, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate audited close to 1,600 schools and 100 school authorities, i.e. municipalities, enterprises and other organisations that run schools.

### **Effects of the supervision**

It turns out that many head teachers use the supervisory decisions in attempts to push for changes and additional resources in relation to both employees and the responsible authority. The inspection report is thus often used as an external consultancy report, which provides a departure point for change.

Using a subsequent anonymous survey with school authorities and head teachers, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate follows up the target groups' perceptions of the inspection. Their answers indicate that the head teachers are generally satisfied, even if the shortcomings at the school are often already known. The head teachers feel that the inspection focuses on the right areas, and agree with the criticism they receive. They are also pleased with how they are treated. Many say that they plan to institute measures.

No studies have been conducted of long-term effects, such as what relation the supervision has to the knowledge results.

## **4.2 Quality audits**

The purpose of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate quality audits is to monitor the quality in schools and to contribute to development by highlighting important development areas.

A quality audit is an in-depth audit of a limited area within the school system. The audits are based on the national objectives and guidelines, supported by research results and proven experience, and focus on various quality aspects. These can relate, for example, to the contents and

format of the education in a subject such as English, physics or mathematics, the work with follow-up and assessment of the pupils' knowledge, or the head teachers' role as educational leaders.

30-40 schools are usually part of a quality audit, but it can also include more or fewer schools. Certain audits constitute case studies, and these may for example refer to students with special diagnoses.

Current research, proven experience, laws and regulations constitute departure points for how the quality audits are set up. Most often, an audit will involve the auditors gathering written documentation and visiting the schools, observing lessons and interviewing staff and students, but methods may vary depending on what the subject of the audit is. Sometimes, more extensive surveys for students, staff and school authorities will be involved.

Each audited school will receive a report of the assessments made in regard to their audited activities. Once the entire audit is complete, the agency will also present the overall results of the audit in a general report. The aim is to improve activities, both at the audited school and within the entire school system.

If the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has identified important development areas for a school, the agency will follow up within 12 months to see whether the organisation has implemented or has planned for the necessary measures. Follow-up can also be conducted at a later stage within the scope of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's regular supervision.

In the period 2009–2014, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has published some 70 audits within different areas.

**Examples of such audits include:**

Instruction in mathematics

Instruction in physics

Access to student health services

The situation for newly arrived pupils

Adaptation of teaching

Special support  
Resource allocation  
School authority management  
Support and stimulation in the classroom

### **4.3 Complaint cases**

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate receives complaints referring to individuals from students and parents who are dissatisfied with various conditions in the school. This may refer to offensive treatment (from staff or other students), lacking support for the student or other issues that are important to the teaching and the student's sense of security in school.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate investigates what is behind the complaint. The school authority is asked to make a statement regarding their view of the problem. After the investigation, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate writes a report what the school authority must do to rectify the problem. If the Swedish Schools Inspectorate finds that the school authority has followed the existing regulations, this will also be specified in the report.

The report of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate will be a guide to other schools.

Certain cases will be referred back to the school authority without further investigation by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. These are matters that the school authority has not examined before they have come to the attention of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate receives nearly 4,000 complaints per year. Approximately half of them were investigated further, and out of these, the school authority was reprimanded in approximately 60 per cent of the cases.

Most of the complaints relate to the compulsory school. In 2014, three complaints were received per 1,000 pupils in compulsory school, which can be compared to a little over one complaint per 1,000 pupils in upper secondary school.

Boys in compulsory school are overrepresented in the complaints regarding perceived poor conditions received by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate and the Child and School Student Representative (BEO). In 2014, a little over 50 per cent of the complaints for compulsory school related to boys and 30 per cent related to girls. In the other types of schools, the complaints generally related to an equal proportion of boys and girls.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has the possibility to impose an injunction or an injunction with a penalty to make the school authority correct the conditions discovered through the complaints.

### **Child and School Student Representative**

Cases relating specifically to offensive treatment in schools are decided by the Child and School Student Representative. She is also able to lodge a compensation claim on behalf of the pupil and represent them in court if the school authority refuses to pay the compensation.

### **Cases referring to teachers' certification**

Since 2011, Sweden has a system for registering teachers. The National Agency for Education determines whether a teacher can be certified. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has been assigned to investigate the circumstances surrounding a teacher who fails in their duties and should possibly have their registration revoked.

The point of departure for such an investigation is complaints that target individual teachers. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate can also find, based on other complaints, that there is cause to investigate a teacher's suitability or skill more closely.

If, based on the regulations of the Education Act, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate finds severe shortcomings, the agency can turn to a special board, the Teachers' Disciplinary Board, to request that a teacher's registration is revoked or that the teacher receives a warning. This Board, which includes representatives of the teachers' unions, will then decide the matter.

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#### **4.4 Issuing permits**

Since the early 1990s, Sweden has a system of independent schools. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is the agency that approves independent school authorities that wish to start or expand a school. Permits for independent preschools and leisure-time centres, on the other hand, is a matter for the municipality.

The application procedure is regulated. An application shall be submitted no later than 31 January in the year before the school or education programme is intended to begin. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate then makes a decision during the year.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate assesses whether the school shall be given a permit based on a number of criteria. The school shall fulfil all the requirements set out in the Education Act in the same way as a municipal school.

The application is submitted for referral to the municipality where the school is to be located.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate makes a decision after an overall assessment. In that assessment, aside from the legal requirements, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate also considers whether the education adds anything new to the range of education programmes already available in the municipality. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate also assesses whether the establishment of an education programme entails a risk of the municipality having to close a school. Other factors include the school being able to prove that it will get students and the school's finances.

Before the school is allowed to start, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate shall conduct a check to ensure that all essential aspects are in place.

A little more than 15 per cent of the compulsory schools and 30 per cent of the upper secondary schools were independent in the school year 2013/2014. In addition, there are several independent preschools.

## **5. Working method of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate**

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate's main tasks have been formulated as processes. This means that its work with inspection, auditing, complaints and permit issuing has been standardised in order to achieve the greatest possible equality.

After each completed inspection, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate conducts an anonymous survey of people affected by the audit at the school authority and schools. The answers are analysed and used to improve the process. This process-focused working method also involves identifying the need for changes and deviations from the established process in order to improve quality and streamlining the process.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate also uses other formats to continuously ask the opinion of its target groups, for example in relation to their confidence in the agency.

### **5.1. Swedish Schools Inspectorate employees**

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has approximately 400 employees with various areas of expertise. The goal is that, out of the auditors, approximately one third shall be legal experts, one third shall be educators and one third shall be sociologists (investigators).

In addition to these staff groups, there are other employees who are legal experts focusing on educational law, statisticians, communicators and various administrators.

The agency has a brief introductory training course for all employees, and a more specialised and extensive auditor training programme for employees who work with supervision and auditing. There is also special training for administrators.



## **5.2 Swedish Schools Inspectorate communication**

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate engages in extensive communication with its target groups.

The website makes it possible for everyone to read decisions and reports regarding schools.

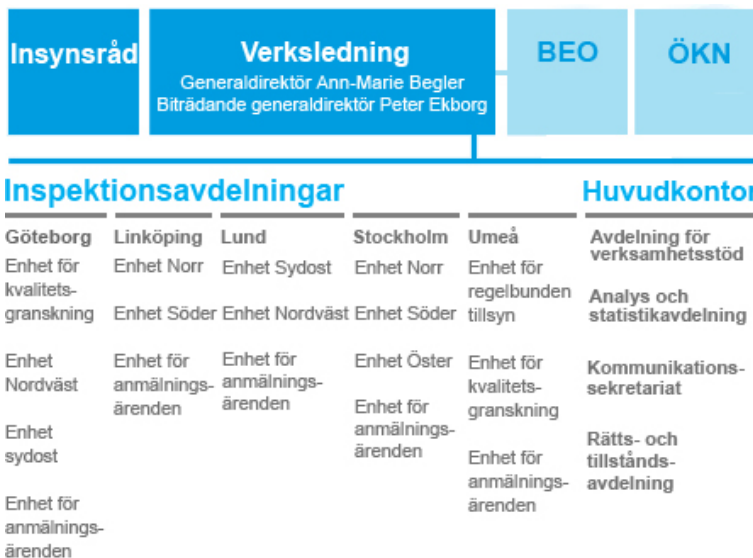
One important principle is also to publish the agency's points of departure and the questions it uses in its audits. Among other things, the site contains a simpler self-evaluation tool using the same points of departure as the agency's auditing. This makes the supervision completely transparent, and schools and other organisations know what will be included in the audit.

The reports and other knowledge produced by the authority are used as a basis for webinars and seminars. The agency disseminates information and knowledge via social media, such as Twitter and Facebook.

The agency also engages in extensive communication with the mass media, including press releases and other contacts with journalists.

## **5.3 Swedish Schools Inspectorate organisation**

Below is a chart illustrating the organisation of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate.



## 5.4 Contact with the Swedish Schools Inspectorate

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Other websites of interest:

[www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se)

[www.skolfi.se](http://www.skolfi.se)

[www.spsm.se](http://www.spsm.se)