

## Country Profile HESSE

### 1. Basic information

**Country name:** Hesse, Germany

**Structure of inspectorate:**

Educational administration has undergone a lot of institutional and organizational changes during the last three years in Hesse. The school inspectorate merged into the department of "Evaluation", which is embedded in the "Hessian Teachers' Training Academy".

In Hesse school inspection is no longer compulsory for all public schools, but only for those which obtain and maintain a higher degree of autonomy. For these schools inspections are standardized, regularly repeated and centrally organized.

All other public schools can voluntarily apply for an external evaluation which is conducted by evaluators (the former school inspectors). These "external evaluations on demand" are individually and regionally designed according to the specific needs of the school. This is also true for external evaluations on behalf of the local school authorities which can apply for an evaluation of a specific school, too.

Besides these forms of inspection/evaluation the educational government can authorize the inspectorate to conduct central forms of monitoring studies to determine the state and the development of quality concerning a specific topic (e.g. use of digital devices) by examining a representative sample of schools. In addition effect analysis of programs and projects are conducted.

Nowadays the former school inspectors' tasks focuses mainly on counselling and empowering schools to promote internal school evaluation.

**Age of inspectorate:** In Hesse school inspectorate was founded in 2005, as a reaction to the "PISA-2000-Shock". There had not explicitly been a predecessor organisation. Local educational school authorities have been and still are in charge of the regional schools' quality assurance. In contrast to school inspection educational authorities don't refer to scientific research methods to rate the schools' quality.

**Size:** Currently there are 24 school inspectors/school counsellors responsible for the four tasks mentioned above. Overall there are 36 persons belonging to the staff of the department.

**Remits:** Education in primary and secondary schools (including education in vocational schools) is evaluated according to the above mentioned premises.

**Unit of inspection:** Primarily single schools but also networks of schools can be evaluated in order to monitor and analyse the efficacy of special programs or projects. In case of external evaluations on demand, single aspects such as for example self-organized learning can be evaluated on behalf of the school (and/or the local school authority) as well. School inspection in schools with enlarged autonomy always refers to the single school.

**What is your strapline? ---**

**Relationship with government:**

The Hessian Teacher Training Academy is subordinate to the ministry of education. The department for evaluation (school inspectorate) has to give regular accountability reports to the ministry. If the department wants to publish a report, the governmental approval is needed. The results and findings of monitoring studies or efficacy evaluations form a data-based support for governmental decisions (evidence based policy making).

**Accountability:** As an organisation the Hessian Teachers' Training Academy (and its departments) has to report every four months to the president of the academy who reports to the ministry in turn.

## 2. Evaluation process

**Self-evaluation:**

According to hessian school law, schools have to conduct internal self-evaluation. The results of self-evaluation can be used for target agreements between schools and their local school authorities. Self-Evaluation (e.g. report forms and their results) is not part of the school inspection, but the practice of evaluation and feedback within schools is one of the criteria that is rated by inspection/external evaluation. Schools can be supported in conducting self-evaluations by counselling.

**What do you examine during inspection?**

Inspection is normatively based on the hessian quality framework for schools, which intends to describe and promote good quality of processes within schools. Legal compliance is not in the focus of school inspection or external evaluation on demand.

Monitoring studies as a means of accountability can check for the implementation status of programs, that should be ran within schools on behalf of governmental order.

**Do you have an inspection framework? Is this a quality or compliance model?**

The hessian reference framework for the quality of schools gives a definition of good school quality and provides the users with criteria as an orientation for quality enhancement at schools and also for internal and external evaluation. Inspection/Evaluation reports offer feedback on a wide range of criteria covering the scope of the reference frameworks. The feedback is given on a four-point likert scale varying from 1 "poor quality" to 4 "excellent quality".

**Inspection time and resource.**

The duration of school inspection / external evaluation and the number of inspectors in team depend on the size of the school, varying from two inspectors / two days (school visit) to four inspectors / four days (school visit). Most inspectors have been teachers before they became inspectors, but there are also some psychologists within the staff of inspectors. At the beginning of school inspection they were all trained for their new role as inspector in a 6-months course. Now they are

continuously trained in counselling competences on the job according to the new focus of their activities.

**Frequency of inspections:** Schools with extended autonomy are inspected / evaluated in a four-year-cycle. For all other schools external evaluation is an offer free to choose.

**Main business:** Besides school inspections/ external evaluations the staff of the department is in charge of the organizing and conducting of external evaluations on demand, practicing monitoring studies as well as efficacy evaluations of programs and first and foremost of counselling schools.

### **3. Consequences of inspection**

**Reporting:** The publication of inspection/external evaluation reports is not compulsory. Schools can decide on their own whether to publish their reports on their websites or not.

**Grade:** In Hesse schools are not graded or ranked with regard to evaluation or inspection results.

**Knowledge sharing:** Since school inspections are no longer compulsory aggregated reports are not published anymore in Hesse. In case we are authorized to do so we analyse the results referring to specific topics (e.g. inclusion, digital media...) and report them to the departments of ministry of education.

#### **What happens following an inspection?**

The inspection report leads to a formal cooperation with educational authorities when it comes to target agreements with schools.

#### **What is the stated purpose of your inspectorate?**

The hessian inspectorate that merged into the department for evaluation is supposed to support data-based school development and governmental steering decisions by means of (more or less) standardized and analysed quality data and intensive counselling and accompanying schools.