

SICI NEWSLETTER

The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates

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EDITORIAL

In advance of changes to be talked about at the next General Assembly in Hesse (Germany) on 7th and 8th October 2005, the Executive Committee of SICI has asked me to take over the duties of editor of the newsletter. This is a hard job to do for a non-native speaker – but, with your help, I hope to be successful.

Therefore, I would like to ask you all, members, readers, friends, guests, to share responsibility for the content of our newsletter by sending in information, notes, articles and so on, concerning workshop activities, developments in inspection and educational systems in your country or region.

The General Assembly in Hesse on October 7th and 8th is the regular meeting of SICI representatives of all member institutions which takes place every two years. But this year's General Assembly also provides an opportunity to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of SICI, which was founded in Dillingen, Bavaria, in 1995. Today, I am glad to be able to offer an issue of the newsletter which refers to this special event with an article by Herbert Schnell, who describes the development and history of SICI from a German perspective.



The current situation of inspection in Germany is the focus of the article by Johan van Bruggen, who was involved in numerous meetings with inspectors and representatives from different German Länder. Bernd Schreier, head of the newly founded Insti-

tute for Quality Development in Wiesbaden (Hesse), places emphasis on new inspection activities which are being developed right now in Hesse and which will bring more dynamics to the existing system.

As usual, you also will find Workshop reports and information about forthcoming events in this issue.

Many thanks to all those who helped to prepare this Newsletter, and I look forward to meeting many of you during the General Assembly on October 7th and 8th in Hesse.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Kipp'.

Heinz Kipp
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SICI:

A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In 1985, the 'Conference of School Inspectorates in Europe' was founded by the OECD at the instigation of the Netherlands. It was the intention of the OECD that this should be a first step towards international cooperation, which would then be continued autonomously. The conference served as a forum for exchanging experience on a regular basis concerning the function and importance of school inspection in European countries.

Here is an extract from the report of the German representative who was sent to the conference in Straßburg in 1989; it includes special references to certain themes, courses and results:

In many European countries, school inspection is facing a crisis and still looking for its own identity. All over Europe, modern school life is greatly influenced by increasing independence among all parties - administrative staff, teachers and pupils. Consequently, the present status and function of school inspection has to be considered against this educational backdrop. Open borders in the European Union mean greater mobility among both teachers and pupils. Thus, school inspection needs to include quality assurance at home while, at the same time, opening up to other systems abroad.

On November 22nd and 23rd 1993, an extraordinary meeting took place in Paris to discuss the future of the Conference of European Inspectorates. There, it was decided to continue the Conference under the name: Standing International Conference of School Inspectorates (in cooperation with the OECD). The existing forum would be kept alive in order to exchange information and ideas pertaining to the different school systems on an international level and to look for mutual solutions without sacrificing the specific character of the individual states.

With increasing internationalism, it became important to have more knowledge about the different school systems and to intensify the mutual search for answers to those questions which concerned young people in Europe and worldwide. An organisation such as SICI could only work efficiently if a number of minimum

requirements were met - there had to be a legally-based structure (with as little administrative regulation as possible), clearly defined aims and regular contacts among the members. In order to fulfil this purpose, a group consisting of representatives from England, France, Scotland, Germany, Portugal and the Netherlands was to be set up.

In October 1995, the Standing International Conference of Central and General Inspectorates of Education, SICI was founded in Dillingen in Bavaria.

The legal requirements were met by entering the newly founded body in the Register of Associations in Breda/Holland in 1996. In the Articles of the Conference, the following aims are stated: sharing experience, updating developments regarding education systems, finding ways to improve working methods and establishing a basis of cooperation between the various school authorities. At the time when the organisation was founded, a membership fee of DM 3,000 was agreed upon.

The meeting in Dillingen was attended by Georg Knauss from Bavaria, who at that time was Chairman of the Schools Committee of the Kultursministerkonferenz (Board of Ministers of Education). Mr Knauss later became an important figure in building up SICI.

During the 316th meeting of the Kultursministerkonferenz, which took place on December 7th and December 8th in 1995, the Schools Committee stated that, for financial reasons, it would not be possible for the Kultursministerkonferenz itself to participate in the International Union of School Inspectorates.

The states of Bavaria, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Thuringia expressed their willingness under reserve to take part in the planned Standing Conference of the International Union.

Bavaria, Saxony, Northrhine-Westphalia and Hesse went on to become members. *[If all its 16 federal states were admitted, Germany would become too dominant within the organisation. Therefore, only four states have become members up to*

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now. At present (2005), negotiations are going on to admit a fifth state (Lower Saxony).]

By 1998, the Union comprised the following European countries: Denmark, England, France, Belgium (Flanders), Belgium (Wallonia), Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland and Germany.

Today, in 2005, there are a total of 22 members. In 1997, Douglas

A. Osler, Her Majesty's Senior Chief Inspector (HMSI) and chief of the Scottish Inspectorate (which at this point in time was still a Department within the Ministry of Education) was elected President. The General Secretary and spiritus rector of the Standing Conference since its foundation in 1995 was Johan van Bruggen (who was responsible for international affairs in the Dutch Inspectorate).

Between 1997 and 2000, a number of initial steps were taken:

- organising workshops with the respective documentation in the form of booklets
- developing a descriptive study on the supervision and inspection of schools in Europe, including reports written by the member states themselves
- compiling a critical analysis of school inspection in Europe
- instigating the first mutual projects based on joint visits or joint inspections
- publishing a regular Newsletter
- holding a general meeting every two years

In 2002, a homepage was installed (www.sici.org.uk), giving information about the various activities of SICI.

In Hesse, an internal working structure was built up. A SICI representative was named in every Local Education Authority (in about 50% of cases, the respective chief officer took on this job). General



management duties were put in the hands of Ms. I. Hars from the Local Education Authority in Darmstadt-Dieburg.

Once or twice a year, meetings were held under the chairmanship of **Mr. H. Schnell** from the Ministry of Education. At these meetings, the participants reported on their experience during the workshops, exchanged material from other European countries and

discussed who would be involved in future workshops and projects. As a rule, the German Institute for International Educational Research was also represented.

The themes of the Workshops included: School inspection and school management, Indicators for assessing schools, Teaching democracy, Foreign languages, PISA and its effects, Influence of information technologies on schools, Effects of inspections, etc.

Following the publication of the TIMS study, it was decided to carry out a project with the title Assessment of mathematics teaching in secondary schools - this was done between 1998 and 2001. Corresponding workshops were held at the same time. The following countries took part in this project: Bavaria (Germany), Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, England, France, Hesse (Germany), Ireland, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) and Portugal.

A mutual instrument of evaluation was developed, which was used for all inspections in the 11 participating countries. During the inspections, the countries were organised as a chain, which meant that each participant was linked to two others.

For example, the Netherlands were linked to Portugal and Northern Ireland - that is to say, representatives from Northern Ireland and Portugal visited the maths lessons at a school in the Netherlands, and representatives from Portugal and the Netherlands visited the maths lessons at a school in Northern Ireland. A

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final report was presented at the General Meeting in Utrecht in 2001.

With this project, which was cofinanced by the European Commission, SICI went beyond simply exchanging experience gained in the workshops. The aim now was to develop a form of cooperation among the inspectorates which was based on specific themes.

Another project which was initiated by SICI was the Socrates 6.1 project Effective school self-evaluation – ESSE, which ran from April 2001 to March 2003.

The project had the following aims:

- to identify key indicators for assessing the quality and effectiveness of the process of self-evaluation within schools
- to develop a method for inspecting self-evaluation which could apply to all members of SICI
- to identify strengths and weaknesses of self-evaluation in schools in different countries
- to analyse the relation between self-evaluation and external evaluation in different countries and to find out how they could be coordinated effectively
- to compile case studies for effective self-evaluation

The project was given scientific support by the Dienst voor Onderwijsontwikkeling.

A final report was published in autumn 2002 and can be seen on the SICI website.

The ESSE project, like the QPR project, provided the inspectorates and school supervisory boards with useful information concerning quality management.

One of the results of the ESSE project had special relevance for the British and Dutch inspectors, namely, the balance between self-evaluation and external evaluation in regional and/or national systems with regard to quality-determining processes. This theme is closely connected with the role of the inspectors and the support offered by the schools, together with the question of reliability. It is also about inspectorates

ensuring that their function is quality assurance and not merely quality control. In other words, the scope of the inspectorates was widened.

Quality development, as defined by internal evaluation, leads to a higher demand for counselling on the part of the school itself. This was made clear during the meta-evaluation. As a result, school inspectorates and supervisory boards became aware of the necessity to react to this demand and, possibly, to deal with it directly.

Thus it can be said that the countries of Europe are coming closer together as regards their views on quality development. In Central Europe, inspection and supervision of schools often used to be seen in an educational context; counselling and control were seen as areas of conflict.

As systematical and systemic external evaluation became further developed, a more structured form of feedback could be given to the schools themselves, using facts and data within a meta-evaluation. This process gained importance across Germany as the role and function of school inspection were defined anew.

The fact that the state of Hesse is a member of SICI and participates in the above-mentioned projects has led to greater awareness concerning the steps and procedures which are necessary for developing quality in schools.

In line with the politically desirable goal of making schools more independent, there is now a greater awareness of the need for quality. This includes knowledge about systematic and systemic instruments used for evaluation purposes, knowledge and experience derived from carrying out inspections and, last but not least, the shift in emphasis concerning the tasks of the Local Education Authorities.

The interesting thing is that all these processes were able to develop with any intervention on the part of politicians. It was not until the Kultursministerkonferenz had established common goals and standards in education (including output steering and the establishment of a Federal Institute for Quality Development) on the basis of comparing international and national performance that the discussion about internal and external evaluation

*ESSE-
effective school
self-evaluation*

*The future of
school inspectorates
in the 21st century*

was taken a step further by the politicians. This led to the rise in some states of independent inspectorates (e.g. Lower Saxony and Brandenburg) and so-called institutes of quality development (e.g. Saxony, Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg and, later, Hesse).

In Hesse, the newly founded Institute for Quality Development organised an international congress (which took place in Wiesbaden on 29th and 30th June, 2005) to discuss the question of external evaluation and inspection. Several SICI member countries, including Holland, England and Scotland, sent representatives. This shows that international meetings held with the purpose of exchanging ideas have become a permanent feature on the yearly calendar.

In connection with the impending introduction of external evaluation and inspection in Hesse, it is perhaps useful to quote some statements made by the former Senior Chief Inspector of Scotland, Douglas Osler, at the International SICI Congress, which was held in Utrecht on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of school inspection in the Netherlands. Mr Osler spoke about 'The future of school inspectorates in the 21st century'. The statements also make clear the possible difficulties associated with the Hessian solution:

- It is not sufficient in terms of school inspection just to write a report - it is also necessary to supplement each and every evaluation with a proposal for improvement.
- With their day-to-day work, schools are responsible for their own quality standards. During an evaluation, the inspectorate does not only make an assessment, but also supports the school and encourages it to perform even better.
- Learning is the most important thing, and not the school as such. Schools, of course, provide the framework for learning as well as a social environment for interaction among pupils.
- The inspectorates have to protect those who suffer from inequality. They should help to guarantee equity and inclusion within the educational system.
- Inspectorates have to be independent, so that they can conduct their professional evaluations without being exposed to external pressure. The evaluations have to be published.

Literature

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NEW IN GERMANY: INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS

Yes, indeed; inspection of schools, such as has been developed in many other European countries since 1992/1993, is now starting in several Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In this short article, I want to give some facts and personal reflections about this rapid development – based on contacts in seminars and conferences, observations, exchanges, exploration of websites and various articles.

Only one Land in Germany currently has a state-wide system in place with an organisation that may be called an “inspectorate”; its task is to inspect schools in accordance with a number of quality indicators in a number of quality domains. The system which has just started (September 2005) in Lower Saxony is the result of numerous tryouts since 2002 (also in a cooperative project with the Dutch Inspectorate of Education). It has a fully designed framework for inspection with six domains of quality (learning results, teaching and learning processes, etc.), 25 performance indicators and 70 criteria for quality. Some 70 inspectors have been appointed. They have their own central office in an old castle in Bad Iburg in the south of the Land, some 20 kilometers from Osnabrück. For many German colleagues, it was remarkable that the changeover from a Social-Democrat (SPD) government (that had prepared the school inspections based on a decision early in 2003) to a Christian-Democrat (CDU) government (following the election in 2003) brought no important changes in this development.

As far as I know, there are three other Länder which have the explicit intention of putting a state-wide system of school inspections in place in the near future. Firstly, Hesse is planning to start this year with a pilot scheme comprising some 50 schools. But, contrary to several other Länder that have started pilot projects,

Hesse aims to implement the system of external school inspections by the summer of 2006.

Secondly, Baden-Württemberg has a similar intention: a pilot scheme with dozens of schools which are being prepared in

2005 and will be ready for real inspections early in 2006. A decision has been made that external school inspections will be mandatory for all schools in Baden-Württemberg by 2008. Furthermore, all schools will be obliged to carry out self-evaluation from 2007 onwards.

Thirdly, Berlin (a Land in its own right, like the two other city states of Hamburg and Bremen) has got the same aspirations:

a pilot scheme with nine volunteer schools started in September 2003; a political decision came late in 2004; development of the framework followed in 2005; schooling of newly appointed teams of inspectors (45 persons) is due to begin in November 2005; the first inspections will take place in February 2006, with the goal to have inspected all 850 schools within five years.

Most other Länder have tryouts involving dozens of schools, some of which are inspected on a voluntary basis and some of which are chosen at random by the authorities. But, unlike the four Länder mentioned above, the other states have not made clear decisions about a state-wide implementation of school inspections for all schools of the Land.

Most of these Länder have formed teams of inspectors consisting of staff from regional authorities (Schulaufsicht) plus school leaders and teachers from other regions, plus people from universities and enterprises, plus lay people. These teams have a temporary character and are not formally embedded in ministries or institutes or regional authorities. This is the case in Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia, Saxony, Sachsen-Anhalt, Bre-



An article from

Johan C. van Bruggen

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men, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Rhineland-Palatinate. All these Länder have had pilot projects on a smaller or larger scale for one or two years now or they are preparing pilots (like Saxony and Rheinland-Pfalz for starting in September 2006).

For example: Bavaria had a pilot with some 80 schools from various regions in the Land with 20 inspection teams in 2004-2005, but is extending this pilot for 2005-2006 to 34 teams with some 150 schools spread over all regions of the state. But, there is not yet a formal decision in Bavaria to introduce external school inspections as a structural element in its policy for quality assurance, as is the case in Lower Saxony, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse and Berlin. In the same way, Brandenburg started a pilot in spring 2005 with 28 schools and will extend the pilot to 120 schools in late autumn 2005. Thuringia had a pilot scheme with 20 schools in spring 2005; this scheme was based on an interesting combination of self-evaluation performed by the school itself, critical evaluation done by a team from outside and an external inspection conducted by staff from the Schulaufsicht. In Schleswig-Holstein, 150 schools will be inspected in the school year 2005-2006 following an earlier two-year pilot during the EVIT project. Also here – like in Lower Saxony – the switchover, in spring 2005, from a Social-Democrat (SPD) government to a coalition government (SPD-CDU) brought no real changes. In almost all Länder, these pilot schemes or basic decisions were often the result of heated and lengthy discussions among politicians, teachers' unions and other bodies (parents' associations, employers, university staff) which had continued since 2002/2004.

After years of discussion and following participation in a cooperative project with the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, North Rhine-Westphalia succeeded in developing a tryout: inspection of 50 schools – ten in each larger region (Bezirk) of the Land, with ten teams of inspectors working with a framework of quality indicators; the tryout started in summer 2005. The framework was developed by the Landesinstitut für Schule ("National institute for schools, curriculum development and in-service training of teachers and other Educational Staff") in Soest. Training was originally scheduled for spring and summer 2005. But due to the change in government in May 2005 (from SPD to CDU), it is not absolutely clear now if this tryout will take

place in the designated way – although, to my knowledge, the new minister of education of the Land, Ms Barbara Sommer, has not yet taken any new decisions. School inspections are actually also part of the plans of the CDU government that is now in charge in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The Land of Hamburg is planning external inspections, but everything is still undecided and without time schedules, etc.

Saarland, the small Land in the southwest of Germany, is the only Land that has no plans for introducing school inspections.

Of the 16 Länder that form the Federal Republic of Germany (population = 80 million inhabitants), 15 – with some 78 million people – have already started systems of school inspection or are experimenting with such a system.

By the way, in Switzerland, 18 Swiss-German-speaking cantons (smaller states that enjoy the same type of autonomy in educational policy) have shown the same rapid development in the last two years. And in Austria, there is also much talk about school inspections, but, so far, no real decision to start pilots has been made.

For experts from other European countries, who have been observing these developments in Germany for some ten years now (as I have), this rather quick development of the last three years and, in particular, of the last year since summer 2004, is remarkable. What are the driving forces behind it?

Certainly the so-called PISA shock in 2001 has had an influence.

The results on the first PISA study (OECD project: Performance Indicators for Student Assessment) were rather alarming for German politicians; and – such was the thinking – inspection of schools in the way it was done in countries like the Netherlands, England, Scotland and so on, could be one of the instruments (apart from longer school days, examinations of a more or less central type and new federal standards for learning results) which might bring about improvement. What was needed was more open discussion about quality indicators and the criteria for what we can expect from good schools. Furthermore, it was considered important to focus more sharply on learning results, good learning and teaching methods, and promoting a more professional discussion among teachers in

schools as well as between teachers and inspectors. Finally, putting a little more pressure on schools might also help.

In general a more fact-driven and research-based style of discussion about education issues is emerging in Germany in specialist journals, in magazines of teachers' unions and at the hundreds of education conferences every year. Moreover, informative articles (e.g. about developments in education and school inspections in foreign countries), in quality newspapers like "Die Zeit", "Süddeutsche Zeitung" and "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" have likewise made an impact.

I also have the impression that international contacts among leading persons in some of the 16 ministries of education – also within the network of SICI – have played a significant part. Some people have participated in SICI workshops; there have been visits to institutions like Ofsted in England and HMIIE in Scotland. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education has received a large number of visitors from Germany since 2002: 12 delegations, two ministers of education, the board of the federal parents' association; a few journalists specialised in education, among others.

Since 1995, I have had the opportunity to attend many meetings and conferences; I was also able to hold seminars and lectures. Based on these contacts and impressions, I gained the impression that since 2003, leading education circles in Germany have no longer been talking about inspection of schools as something exotic, but they are seriously seeking an instrument for improving schools and raising standards of education. One no longer hears the old stories about secret state police coming into schools and firing teachers within one week after a school inspection; people do not talk about costs amounting to hundreds of millions of euros; no school principal is in danger of committing suicide before or after an inspection! The experience made in some Länder where inspections have been on a voluntary and tryout basis is positive. As in other countries in Europe, teachers and school leaders in Germany are realising that a professional discussion with inspectors in an orderly way based on well-defined quality indicators can help to bring a sharper focus on quality and improvement. The two cooperation projects between the Dutch Inspectorate and groups of the Schulaufsicht in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia have had great influence – shared across Germany through articles

and lectures and visits – not only in technical terms (how to do things), but, perhaps even more importantly, in the sense that inspectors and teachers and school leaders working together can bring new perspectives and new discussions and new ideas for improvement.

Therefore I expect that the implementation of external school inspections in all German schools is only a matter of a few years – as has been the case in most other countries where the inspectorates are members of SICI.

A particular problem is that, in all German Länder, the governing of schools is the task of the so-called Schulaufsicht. This is a body of civil servants who supervise schools and have a number of managerial and administrative tasks. They are partially Länder-based (ministry of education) and partially Bezirk-based (a Bezirk is a larger region of say 1 to 4 million people), and, in some Länder, also locally based in towns or rural areas (Kreise). The position of these bodies is strong, in particular concerning staff matters: they appoint teachers and school leaders, they decide – after watching one or two lessons – about promotion of teachers or transfer to other – more popular – schools; they have to take care of substitute teachers in the case of illness. School leaders have to ask approval for all kinds of decisions about the use of buildings, financial matters, schedules and exceptions. The position of the school leaders is becoming stronger, but this is a slow process. In almost all Länder, the political rhetoric is about more autonomy for schools, less steering from outside and decentralisation, but, in the everyday world, this still proves difficult.

And in this traditional context – comparable with Spain and France and still usual in Austria – a big problem is, quite simply, what do school inspections have to do. Most Länder find that there has to be a clear difference between the inspections and the follow-up in terms of contracts concluded by schools with the Schulaufsicht about improvement, replacement of staff, in-service training of staff, etc. Furthermore, it is not easy to take the decision that a new body has to be formed alongside the Schulaufsicht – for reasons of costs, of course, but also due to a shortage of experts, and – although this is not said openly – also due to resistance within the Schulaufsicht itself. In Lower Saxony, a new body has been formed – financed with budget cuts par-

The fresh experiences in some Länder with inspections on a voluntary and try-out basis are rather positive.

tially affecting the Schulaufsicht and partially affecting staff. In Länder like Bavaria – and many others – the inspection teams are formed with experienced school leaders from another region, plus staff from the Schulaufsicht, plus – in some cases – lay people, plus university staff. If Schulaufsicht staff are used, they inspect other schools than those for which they have the authority; thus there is a kind of geographical separation of roles and functions. It is too early to predict how the staffing of the inspectorates will develop in the coming years; but, of course, it is fully understandable that, in tryouts, this problem can best be solved by temporary measures.

There seems to be no real difference in policy between the Social Democrats (SDP) and the Christian Democrats (CDU) regarding school inspections. Even changes of government, like in Lower Saxony from SPD to CDU, brought no vital changes in this respect.

The cooperating body of the 16 ministers of education is the Kultusminister-Konferenz (KMK), but this body has no visible function in the process of developing school inspection as an instrument in education. There is also little exchange of information among the ministries and project teams working in this field. Thus, each Land develops its own framework for inspection, its own set of quality indicators, etc. Fortunately, there are meetings organised by professional associations and teachers' unions. What is also important for the process of networking within Germany are the international contacts of several Länder with the inspectorates of the Netherlands, Scotland, England, Flanders – by personal visits and by reading reports. The Bertelsmann Foundation is helpful in organising regular conferences and other forums for leaders of ministerial departments (Schulaufsicht). In June 2005, the Hessian ministry of education organised a conference with the explicit aim to offer a platform for exchanging information about school inspections; the conference was heavily overbooked.

Something which is, of course, interesting for SICI experts are the sets of quality indicators used by the Länder themselves: what do German colleagues find to be the most important indicators for good quality? Another question concerns the criteria for evaluation: insufficient, reasonable, good, excellent. There are

several criteria and terms used by the various inspectorates in Europe, but, generally speaking, I think one can say that there are no vital differences within the mainstream of thinking concerning effective schools and the indicators for good quality; this applies to most inspection frameworks in Europe, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Argentina, New York State, etc. Lower Saxony clearly states that their framework is based on the Dutch one. Berlin and Brandenburg say their frameworks are similar to that of Lower Saxony. Other groups were inspired by frameworks from Scotland, England and the Netherlands.

It would be a good idea to develop a SICI project and/or workshop with the aim of taking stock (by information exchange and analysis) of these new developments and of defining the best set of quality indicators for use in school inspection and, of course, self-evaluation. Much has changed since the analysis by Ann Deketelaere of six frameworks in the SICI report "Indicators for good schools" written in 1999! Not only is there the very interesting work of the German Länder, but also the frameworks for inspection in England (September 2005, very new!), the Netherlands (new in 2005 after an important change in 2002) and Scotland. Innovative developments are found in Sweden, France, the Czech Republic, Portugal, etc. But the scope of this short article does not allow me to go any deeper into that issue. Readers who speak German might find a lot of information on the website of the KMK. The path www.kmk.de/schule/landesinstitute gives links to some of the institutes of the Länder that are involved. And the path www.kmk.de/aufbau gives links to the 16 ministries, where departments or projects may be found dealing with school inspection. In some cases the headlines of the frameworks are given. Another source is www.bildungsplus.forum-bildung.de.

The Bavarian set of indicators may be found under www.isb.bayern.de/evaluation; the interesting selection of domains and indicators of Hesse are available on www.iq.hessen.de; for Lower Saxony, see www.mk.niedersachsen.de/schulqualitaet and www.mk.niedersachsen.de/schulinspektion; for Baden-Württemberg, see www.leu-bw.de; for Berlin, see www.senbjw.berlin.de/bildung/qualitaetssicherung The website of the IQ

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in Hesse, www.iq.hessen.de/dokumentation, gives a report of the meeting held on June 30 and July 1, 2005.

As is the case in most other countries, the thinking in Germany is that schools should do well if they develop good systems for self-evaluation that lay the foundations for well-steered self-development and self-profiling. And that, in turn, enables the external inspectorate to act in line with the results, provided all important aspects of quality are covered and the procedure is reliable. In most schools, this practice is only just beginning. Both in Germany and in other European countries, governments not only set up external inspections of schools, but also sup-

some extra money from the Land, with introductory courses offered by experts from Bertelsmann and with Länder-based support – to develop their self-evaluation programmes as quickly as possible (with SEIS instruments and software that automatically generates comparative reports) and to connect this with external evaluation. Thus, a link is created between the two forms of evaluation, which is a really promising development! Contracts are already in place with Lower Saxony and Thuringia and nearly ready with Baden-Württemberg; others are being prepared.

For those watching the developments in Germany from the outside, some problems may become apparent. I would briefly like to mention three of them.



In June 2005 the Hesse – ministry organised a conference with the explicit aim to offer a platform for exchange of information about school inspections.

port self-evaluation. Germany has the SEIS project (Selbst-Evaluation in Schulen), which is supported by the Bertelsmann Foundation. The website www.gute-schulen-machen.de gives all necessary information about the instruments for self-evaluation that have been developed since 1999 in the project "International Network of Innovative Schools". Very interesting and internationally unique – to my knowledge – is the public-private cooperation in contracts that are currently being concluded (summer 2005) between the Bertelsmann Foundation and some Länder. The intention is to enable schools – with

Firstly, there is an understandable fear that the report of a school inspection may be published. This would, of course, deeply offend teachers; moreover, any ranking list which is compiled might easily be misinterpreted by parents; and what would the media make of such insider information? In most pilot projects, the idea that a report could be published is not being discussed at the moment. However, such an issue might cause the same problems as arose a few years ago (1998/1999) in the Netherlands.

Secondly, what will be the follow-up? Will there be enough support for schools in

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order to proceed with the real work of improving conditions that are uncovered by school inspections? There are, indeed, institutes for curriculum development and in-service training, but they are rather far away (both geographically and mentally) from schools and not very client-oriented. On the other hand, the support groups in Schulaufsicht are generally small and scattered. The people working in teacher education at universities also seem to be somewhat divorced from practical problems in schools. So the question now arises of what to do with schools with real quality problems. Not much has been said or written about the very important issue of follow-up.

Thirdly, what are norms? Who can decide about norms? What level of mathematics teaching, for example, can be expected in the upper classes at primary schools (ages 9 and 10 in Germany, where primary school takes four years from 6 to 10)? What should be the learning results of the best 75 percent of children at this age? The list of questions is long. The KMK has started a project about federal

standards, and, for some subjects and age groups, standards have meanwhile been set. One year ago, the Federal Institute for Quality Assurance in Education (Institut zur Qualitätssicherung im Bildungswesen an der Humboldt-Universität Berlin; Director Professor Olaf Köller) was set up. But, for the coming years, it is clear that the emerging 15 inspectorates (in the 16 Länder except Saarland) will have to do this job of norm-setting themselves. Will they do this in consultation with groups of schools or, perhaps, in consultation with each other? Or will the inspectorates simply mirror individual standards for each school? This is, of course, a dilemma that many inspectorates are aware of, at least partially. Who gives them the right to set norms and to expect that schools meet them? Should these norms be laid down in writing? The push effect derived from the bad results of the PISA study naturally demands higher standards and ambitious norm-setting by inspectors; if the Germans do not react in such a way, school inspection will not have much impact on German schools.

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New methods of management support in education in the state of Hesse

1. Direct responsibility on the part of the school – the key to quality

On 1st January 2005, the Institute for Quality Development was founded. The organisation is principally concerned with education in the state of Hesse (Germany) and is an official institution without any specific legal form.

The idea of creating such an institution was born in response to the results of several international studies, such as TIMSS und PISA. These studies led to a change in thinking among those responsible for education policies.

New goals were set

- to improve the quality of schools by giving them more direct responsibility
- to streamline the thinking of all those who support schools on whatever level
- to make schools more independent.

In other words, the principle of independence combined with self-responsibility was taken as a key idea in education management. This principle was to be supported by a well-devised system of 'checks' and 'balances'.



Together with the newly created office for the further education of teachers and the planned transformation of local school authorities into regional offices for quality control, the Institute for Quality Development offers greater opportunities for carrying out necessary changes and improvements. But it is the schools that have to show the way by implementing the principle of independence combined with self-responsibility.

2. Tasks and functions of the Institute for Quality Development

As a rule, old-established hierarchical and bureaucratic structures do not disappear of their own accord, but tend, as far as possible, to adapt to any new situation. Thus it is essential that all changes are implemented correctly. Mere optimisation of existing methods is not, in itself, sufficient; in many cases, basic patterns have to be changed. It is one of the tasks of the Institute, together with others, to support this process. In order to achieve such an aim, it will be necessary to develop

measures for helping schools to take on responsibility directly.

Furthermore, the Institute shall ensure that any changes are part of a system and that individual features of quality assurance are related to



An article from

Bernd Schreier

*IQ = Independent,
professional assessment
agency, which tests
quality on all levels of
the school system*

one another. This means that it may be necessary to intervene should any of the processes of change be heading in the wrong direction.

The Institute for Quality Development works on the basis of projects, whereby extensive operating processes and single intentions are combined in working units and service units.

At the moment, the main emphasis is on the following products and concepts:

- establishing quality-oriented goals with regard to work carried out by schools
- devising instruments for fixing standards
- developing concepts for and implementing a cyclical, external assessment of schools (inspectorate)
- carrying out online accreditations for improving market transparency regarding school support schemes and for guaranteeing that such schemes fulfil minimum standards



- analysing the suitability and cost-effectiveness of such schemes

- counselling those who offer and those who use support

schemes

- offering external assessment of school-management concepts on different levels (e.g. pursuing strategic aims)
- helping schools to take on direct responsibility for their actions

3. The way the Institute sees itself

The Institute for Quality Development sees itself as an independent, professional assessment agency, which tests quality on all levels of the school system. In order to fulfil its tasks, the Institute collects and evaluates relevant data. The general quality standards prevailing in the state of Hesse are used for monitoring school development and are, in themselves, the basis of the Institute's accountability.



The Institute for Quality Development is still in the process of developing its main goals and organisational structure. A basic principle in this connection is not to perpetuate the „bureaucratic“ concepts and instruments which are in place at the moment. The Institute is far more interested in the methods applied in the so-called Anglo-Saxon systems, which are founded on a system of “checks“ and “balances“. This involves combining independence with engagement, while, at the same time, avoiding any unnecessary bureaucracy. In order to achieve this aim, it is important that all staff members are trained to act as efficiently as possible in their respective fields.

All requirements and expectations concerning quality assurance must be related to the existing resources. The success

of the project for which the Institute was set up depends largely on developing realistic quality standards. It must be obvious that any unclear or inadequate procedures would endanger the effectiveness of the system.

The Institute is developing a public relations platform (mainly based on Internet communication) which can be accessed easily by other parties. In this way, the performance of the Institute, and any problems that may arise, can be made more transparent. The Institute has the following Internet address: www.iq.hessen.de . The website is updated regularly and contains all important information pertaining to the Institute.

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Workshop

,Evaluating early years education‘

A REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP HELD IN BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND ON 27 AND 28 SEPTEMBER 2004

The workshop was planned to give opportunities for the participants to share perspectives on early years education and their approaches to inspecting it, and to consider some specific early years issues. We took as a planning framework the idea of a journey. We started with the basics: what do we mean by ‘early years’, and how do we inspect it? We then travelled to more complex territory: what and how do young children learn and how do we recognise good practice? As ‘early years’ may encompass pre-school provision and the beginnings of compulsory primary education, the next stage was to look at what happens to learning and teaching at this transition point. Finally, we explored what is fast becoming a reality for many inspectors of early years, but which may well become an imperative for all: how do we work effectively with others in joint inspection activity?

It was very helpful that many of the participants had met up over the weekend prior to the workshop. Some took the opportunity to spend a day or two viewing the attractions in Belfast and beyond.

The workshop included some formal presentations but focused mainly on opportunities for group discussion. There were ideas and perspectives from inspectors and also from practitioners and other education professionals. An important aspect was the opportunity for participants to visit early years settings, interact with children, and talk with practitioners about their work. There were also opportunities for participants to meet outside of workshop sessions and to form links that might persist after the workshop was over.

Marion Matchett, Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) opened the workshop and set the scene for the two days. We followed up the presentations and small-group discussions with oral feedback and displayed flipchart records of the groups’ thinking. The presentations outlined a range of

issues related to the quality of provision and, more specifically, to the inspection of early years education, including coherence in approaches to learning and teaching across the early years, difficulties when children transfer from pre-school to primary education, the elements of effective inspection and experiences of working jointly with other non-education inspectorates.

In discussion groups, we considered, and compared from our national perspectives, the distinctive features of early years education, and what makes an effective inspection. There was general agreement on the nature of the evidence that might be used to make evaluations and on the need for inspectors to have a good understanding of early years practice.

The sessions dealing with more practical aspects of early years education included presentations and discussion in small groups on the areas of creativity, learning through play, and personal, social and emotional development. Each presentation raised important points about the nature of early years education and the discussions following provided opportunities for in-depth consideration of how we evaluate early years provision. There was agreement on the elements of good practice and on criteria for evaluating quality, including the importance of talking with practitioners and children.

In considering the issues around the transition from pre-school to primary education, we shared views on continuity across the early years, and identified the barriers to a more joined-up approach and what might be done to improve matters.

A report from

Efiona Crawford



On the second day of the workshop, everyone visited one of a range of settings chosen to illustrate particular strands of early years education. The settings included pre-schools and early years classes in primary schools, with the focus of visits including developing creativity, working with parents and the community, developing the early years curriculum, special educational needs, and immersion teaching in Irish in the early years. Participants found this aspect of the workshop particularly valuable.

The workshop concluded with a consideration of integrated inspection involving non-education inspectorates. Colleagues representing Ofsted and HMIE in Scotland spoke about the benefits, including the reduction in the demands on providers, the greater sense of coherence, and the emphasis placed on the experiences of children and the outcomes for them. The challenges involved the differences in culture and traditions, the logistics of planning inspections and co-ordinating work, and the difficulties of communicating across a diverse workforce.

In the plenary discussion, we considered in particular the links that could or should be developed with other non-education inspectorates, and what could be done to make such joint work operate smoothly.

There was agreement that a more integrated approach could be beneficial. The issues we identified included policy direction for joint working, the establishment of trust and respect, reaching agreement over the detail of working practices, and operational difficulties in co-ordinating work. Joint training was crucial to success and the identification of a 'lead' inspectorate was very helpful.

Loretto Watson, Assistant Chief Inspector, summed up the workshop and paid tribute to the contribution that all the participants had made.

We wanted to have some feedback about the success of the workshop so an external 'observer' (not an inspector) was invited to take part and to give her views on the event. We also used a pro-forma to seek the views of participants; the responses were recorded in the workshop report.

Finally, as organising a SICI workshop takes a lot of time and effort, we wanted to make sure that our own organisation gained as much as possible from it. The event was therefore viewed as an important staff development opportunity for members of ETI.

There was agreement on the elements of good practice and on criteria for evaluating quality.

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WORKSHOP ,EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION‘

A report on the workshop held in Copenhagen in January 2005

In January 2005 the Danish Evaluation Institute together with the Danish Ministry of Education hosted a two-day SICI workshop on the project Effective School Self-Evaluation, ESSE.

Central in the workshop were the experiences and perspectives of the schools which had participated in the ESSE project during its three years of existence. The participants of the workshop met to discuss and share experiences on self-evaluation as a tool for improvement within schools. Having in total 41 participants the workshop included representatives from five schools, twelve different countries and regions and seventeen inspectorates and ministries. In this way, the workshop became a shared discussion forum for schools, inspectorates and central authorities.

In 2001 the European Commission had funded SICI's Effective School Self-Evaluation project for a two-year period. And in March 2003 the project resulted in a report containing among other issues quality indicators for school self-evaluation and for external support, guidelines for school visits, country reports and case studies.

Three parallel workshops

As a central and quite particular element in the workshop five schools had been invited to give a presentation on

their experiences on different issues related to self-evaluation. All five schools had participated in the ESSE project at an earlier stage. The schools' presentations were organised in three parallel workshops during the afternoon of day one.

Workshop on indicators of quality

The focus of workshop 1 was the indicators of quality which may be applied in an evaluation of how good a school is at evaluating and improving itself. A Danish and a Northern Ireland school presented their experiences.

State the ideal

The leaders of the school from Northern Ireland found that it is very important that the individual school states an ideal to work towards so that the school has clear goals. Secondly, it is essential that teachers are part of and contribute to the self-evaluating work. And furthermore, for a self-evaluation to be effective it should focus on the pupils' learning, and it should be rigorous and comprehensive in methodology.

Results on all levels

The Northern Ireland school told that the results of its self-evaluative work are a higher degree of knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, the pupils achieve better marks, the school results as a whole have improved, the teachers are now working in teams sharing their experiences and developing their

A report from

Marie Nielsen



teaching together, and pupils find that bullying no longer exists. Apparently, reflection on one's own practices and behaviour had disseminated at all levels, the school's leaders pointed out.

Focus on teaching

One effective method which the school's leaders had initiated the use of, was to record on a DVD the teaching situations. This enabled them afterwards to gather the teaching team and discuss the handling and organisation of the class room teaching. When all parts have a positive attitude this method works well and has an impact on the professional development, eg when it comes to learning support, accelerated learning, differentiation of teaching to complement whole class teaching. In addition, teachers found the personal experience of teaching more rewarding, the school's leaders told.

Summing up on the workshop the indicators of quality should be:

- sharp success criteria;
- change in relationship (between teachers and pupils, schools and inspectors?);
- culture of self-evaluation;
- balanced trail of strengths and weaknesses; and
- schools on the move.

Workshop on balance between external and internal processes

Two schools from The Netherlands and England focused in their presentations on the balance between internal processes and external support. The two schools' experiences demonstrated the importance of finding a proper balance between internal and external evaluation. The proportionality must be considered, and the workshop concluded that this can be done by reflecting on two questions:

- Where **does** external inspection begin? In many countries, inspectors have an agenda based on specific criteria when they enter a school for external evaluation. This agenda is followed regardless of the quality and effectiveness of the school's own quality assurance.
- Where **should** external inspection begin? It may be that an

inspector should consider what the school knows about itself and how they are addressing their own priorities for development. Using this as a first step in external evaluation, the inspector might decide to engage in less rigorous evaluation in schools engaging in effective self-evaluation and spend more time in schools which have not yet reached an effective stage of self-evaluation.

Workshop on visits with an outcome

In the third workshop a Danish and a Scottish school told about their experiences of visits and the ESSE project's guidelines for school visits. The schools concluded that the inspectorate visits had affected their work, and that the meeting with a professional inspection group can indeed have a positive outcome. However, it is essential that the keyword of the visit is dialogue – in line with commitment, awareness and reassurance. In this context the ESSE project is part of an ongoing process on how visits are considered and planned.

Catalogue of ideas

The SICI workshop also resulted in a catalogue which gathers the ideas raised by the different discussions. Four different groups organised across school leaders, inspectors and representatives from central authorities were given the same four questions, and they were asked to return to a plenum session where they should present what they through their discussions had found particularly important to bring to light.

The questions were:

- What can school self-evaluations contribute to?
- Which are the most important pre-conditions for school self-evaluations to be successful – for the self-evaluating school and for the inspectorate or central authority?
- Which are the most significant barriers for school self-evaluations to be successful – for the self-evaluating school and for the inspectorate or central authority? and

*The SICI workshop
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different discussions.*

- How can inspectorates and central authorities contribute to the schools' work with self-evaluation?

Improving pupils' learning

The catalogue sums up that self-evaluation contributes to the improvement of pupils' learning – in terms of what they achieve as well as how they experience the teaching. The shared experiences also show that teachers develop their teaching methods, and that the school culture is strengthened.

Shared language

The pre-conditions for self-evaluation to be effective involves, according to the catalogue of ideas, that self-evaluation is de-mystified for example through training of teachers in self-evaluation. In this way a shared language and understanding as well as a positive attitude towards the self-evaluative work can be ensured. At the same time it is crucial that school leaders at all levels are committed to and engaged in the self-evaluation.

Dialogue with schools

The most significant barriers for effective school self-evaluation

which the participants agreed on at the workshop, is poor leadership, lack of follow-up on evaluations, and self-delusion of schools. Other barriers are that it might be unclear to teachers and pupils what they achieve from the self-evaluation, that teachers are afraid of

showing their weaker sides, and that they fear losing their professional autonomy. Therefore, it is important that inspectors are sensitive, willing to enter into a dialogue with the schools and to provide good questions rather than answers to the self-evaluating school.

Read more on the workshop

A more detailed report on the SICI workshop in Copenhagen is available on SICI's website. The report contains the main points from the different presentations during the workshop.

On day one of the workshop the programme also included an introduction to the ESSE project by Chris Webb from HM Inspectorate of Education, Scotland. Executive Director of the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA), Christian Thune, spoke on EVA's approach to self-evaluation in the Danish school system. On day two Henriette Kschwendt presented her experiences with the ESSE-model in her inspectional work in Austria. Chris Constantine



from Ofsted focused in his presentation on the development of a new framework for inspection in England. Gonnie van Amelsvoort and Frans Janssens from The

Netherlands presented their preliminary results from research into (side) effects of the use of the self-evaluation. James Cuthbert, Secretary-General of SICI, gave the closing session speaking on self-evaluation as part of quality assurance in the school sector.

WORKSHOP ,COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES‘

Impression of the workshop held on 24th and 25th February in Haarlem, The Netherlands.

During this workshop representatives of the inspectorates of Education of England, Flanders, Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Czech Republic, Saxony (Germany), Sweden and the Netherlands discussed several dilemmas regarding their strategic communication. (The Scottish Inspectorate had inscribed for this workshop but could not come. Also the Portuguese inspectorate was very interested in the subject of the workshop but had let know the organisation that the time on which the workshop was held was inconvenient to them.) Beforehand the participants had received a discussion paper and had given input for the debate. At the beginning of the workshop the participants decided on the dilemmas they wanted to discuss. These are the dilemmas that were chosen.

Dilemmas:

- Can the various roles of inspectorates or other supervising bodies (s.a for instance in Saxony) be fulfilled in combination or do they lead to conflicts? And if inspectorates play various roles, how can this be communicated? How do we communicate that sometimes we are supervisor and other times we want to make a stimulating contribution to the quality of education? And what do the various roles mean in communication with the government?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of active communication towards a broader public, and parents and pupils in particular? Is this a new task for inspectorates and if so how can this best be shaped?
- How do we communicate about the question of how effective supervision is and whether it brings value for money? Do we as organisations have sufficient credibility or must we work with other parties (chain supervision)? And how can

we acquire insight into the relationship between the costs and effectiveness of supervision? And to what extent are we aware of undesirable side effects of educational supervision?

These dilemmas were discussed in plenary sessions and in small working groups. During the first day there were not only small presentations of all representatives about ‘the state of strategic communication’ in their country, but also a presentation of a case as an example of communication with a specific target group i.e. tax payers in the Netherlands. What kind of communication strategy had been chosen, how the government determined the objectives and how the target groups were reached (what was going well and what was not). The second day the manager of the (Dutch) project: ‘Integrated Juvenile Affairs’ presented the pilot of chain supervision: how to work with other supervisors and to communicate regarding the (preliminary) results with different target groups.

Conclusions:

After the discussions about the dilemmas and the different presentations the participants have drawn the following conclusions:

The role (or the future role) of the inspectorate has to be established. Some roles are more visible to the outside world than others. For example the ‘coach’ is less visible than the ‘police man’ (the controlling officer). The roles of the different inspectorates differ and therefore the communication aims differ.

Before determining the communication objectives a clear perspective is needed of the goals of the organisation. The communication goals are always based on the goals of the organisation. Choose a strategy that matches with the goals of communication and the profile of the organisation.

The target groups of inspectorates are: society, schools, government (and parliament), pupils and parents. These are very different groups and thus the aims of

A report from

Ferry de Rijcke

communication vary per group. Regardless of the aims of the communication it is necessary to evaluate the communication actions that were taken. Continuous evaluation of the effects of communication is necessary in order to decide whether a change of strategy is needed.

In the closing session of the workshop every participant was invited to state whether the expectations that were written down at the beginning had been met during the workshop. Despite the big differences in position and roles of the several inspectorates, they stated that:

- they had reached insight in the aims and dilemma's of strategic communication
- there was offered an overview of good practices,
- there was time for reflection,
- there was the possibility to share practices and dilemmas with others.

The participants stressed the aspect of learning in an international setting.

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27.-28. April 2006	Learning and living Democracy: the way ahead" (Conference)	Bucharest/ Romania
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Day 1

08.30-09.30	Registration
09.30-10.30	Opening Chair: Minister of Education of Romania [t.b.c.] Host country (15 min) President of Romania / Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania [t.b.c.] Council of Europe (15 min) Secretary General [t.b.c.] World Programme for Human Rights Education (15 min) UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [t.b.c.] Learning and living democracy: the way ahead (15 min) Evaluation of the European Year of Citizenship through Education and recommendations for the future
10.30-11.00	- Coffee break -
11.00-12.30	Panel: Three “thought provoking” statements on “Learning and living democracy” followed by a discussion
12.30-14.00	- Lunch -
14.00-18.00	“The European Year of Citizenship through Education: Achievements, difficulties and lessons for the future” 3-5 parallel working groups

Day 2

09.00-10.30	Plenary Reports from the working groups Key note speech Round Table with international institutions and organizations
10.30-11.00	- Coffee break -
11.00-12.30	“Learning and living democracy: The way ahead” 3-5 parallel workshops
12.30-14.00	- Lunch -
14.00-15.30	Working groups continued
15.30-16.00	- Coffee break -
16.00-18.00	Closing: Summing up of the work of the working groups Panel: “Critical friends” Discussion Adoption of the Final communiqué Closing remarks by the host country





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An organisation of 22 members drawn from across Europe, working together to improve their understanding of education and inspection.

The current members are:

Austria, Bavaria, Belgium-Flanders, Belgium-Walloon, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eire, England, France, Hessen, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Associate member), Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Northrhine-Westphalia, Portugal, Saxony, Scotland, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Wales (Associate member).

