

Country Profile SWEDEN

Basic information

Country name: Sweden

Structure of inspectorate: The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is a central state agency organised in regions with offices in Göteborg, Linköping, Lund, Stockholm and Umeå. The inspection regulation is the same across the regions.

Age of inspectorate: Sweden has had a system with regular educational inspection since 2003. Until September 2008, the Swedish inspection was organised as an independent agency under the Ministry for Education and Research; The National Agency for Education. In 2008 an independent school inspectorate was established.

Size: Approximately 400 full time equivalents, and 250 inspectors.

Remits: The inspectorate inspects pre-schools, after-school and youth centres, compulsory schools, upper-secondary education and adult education.

Unit of inspection: In the regular supervision we inspect schools as well as the municipal level or the independent school owner. In the regular supervision the main focus is legality and the purpose is to ensure the right of each individual in relation to the Education Act. The municipality or independent school owner is given a separate report that presents an overall assessment of the schools in the municipality/or the schools belonging to the independent school owner or group of schools and a judgment of the accountability of the local authority/ independent school owner.

The topics for thematic quality evaluations are chosen from a strategic point of view, for example teaching of mathematics and education for newly arrived immigrant students. The thematic quality evaluations visit a number of schools, usually around 20-30 schools.

What is your strapline? All children and young people should have equal access to education regardless of gender, where they live, or social or economic factors. The school should provide a safe environment that is constructive to learning.

Relationship with government: The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is a central governmental agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. The Government decides on the objectives, guidelines and distribution of resources for the operations of the agency through a yearly letter of regulation/commission. However, the Government does not control the application of laws or the inspectorate's decisions on specific matters concerning the exercise of official authority towards an individual person or a local authority or independent school owner.

Accountability: The Inspectorate summarises all inspection results in an annual report to the Government.

Evaluation process

Self-evaluation: According to the Education act every municipality and independent school owner must develop its quality and have an evaluation system which is systematically

managed. The same legislation applies to all schools which needs to have a continual process of follow-up and evaluating the activities. There is not, however, a prescribed or standardised self-evaluation procedure.

What do you examine during inspection?

The audit of schools in the regular supervision includes the following standards:

- If the teaching is planned and evaluated in relation to the national curriculum.
- If the teaching is performed to meet individual needs of the students and if the school supports students with special needs.
- If the assessment and grading processes are performed in a correct way
- If the school can provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning and if and how schools are working to prevent bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- If the work of the school health services, guidance counselling etc. is carried out based on the needs of the pupils.
- If the school has a self-evaluation system to develop quality.

In thematic quality evaluations different areas are examined. The quality audits are reported back to each inspected school as well as to the national level in a summarising report.

During 2018, the inspectorate will introduce a new model of inspection, Regular Quality Audit, which will focus on quality aspects, especially in the teaching and learning processes and not on accountability.

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

In the regular supervision the main focus is legality and the purpose is to ensure the right of each individual in relation to the Education Act. In the thematic quality evaluations focus is on quality aspects in the teaching and learning processes in relation to the results and performance of schools. The assessments are based on steering documents such as the national curriculum and on research and best practice.

Inspection time and resource. The visit lasts two or three days and there are usually two inspectors participating in the school visit. The inspectors interview various categories of staff, including head teachers, teachers, health services, as well as pupils, and the responsible local politicians. Usually inspectors also observe lessons. The inspectors have different backgrounds for example teachers, head teachers, legal practitioners, social sciences as well as researchers and analysts in different disciplines.

Frequency of inspections: In the regular supervision we are at the moment, in 2018, completing a three year inspection cycle. The inspection is risk-based using following information: National statistics at municipal/school owner and school level, findings from previous inspections, complaints, survey results, other documentation and other information about the municipality and the schools. However, we inspect all the schools for children with disabilities and also all the independent schools. During three years we will have inspected all school owners, a range of municipality schools and all independent schools.

Main business: The Swedish Schools Inspectorate examines applications for approval as an independent school. What is examined is the organiser's ability to run the school in a stable and long-term manner. The Inspectorate is also responsible for investigating complaints. We often receive reports from parents or others wishing to draw attention to apparent inconsistencies in a school.

Consequences of inspection

Reporting: All reports, to schools and school owners, are addressed to the responsible authority (municipality or independent school owner). All reports are published online and anyone can access them.

Grade:

In the regular supervision the main focus is legality and therefore there are no grades given. However there is a possibility for the inspectorate to issue penalty fines. The Inspectorate can also revoke an independent school's permit if the activities have serious shortcomings which are not rectified. In the thematic quality evaluations focus is on quality aspects in the teaching and learning processes in relation to the results and performance of schools.

Knowledge sharing:

Every school will get a report after a thematic quality evaluation and a regular supervision. In a quality evaluation project a general report that summarises the results from the evaluated schools is written in addition to the school reports.

What happens following an inspection?

The inspected local authority or independent school owner has to report on the work carried out to rectify shortcomings. If the Inspectorate believes that the requirements are satisfactory it will conclude the inspection; otherwise, the Inspectorate requests additional measures from the responsible organisation. For independent schools the Education Act states that the inspectorate has the possibility to withdraw the approval and the right to public funding if the independent school does not fulfil its obligations in accordance with the rules and regulations. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate can conduct a new inspection to certify that measures have been taken to rectify identified shortcomings.

What is the stated purpose of your inspectorate?

After a regular supervision the Inspectorate requests additional measures from the responsible organisation until the school fulfils its duties according to the law. The purpose of thematic quality evaluation is to improve quality and to contribute to development by high-lighting important development areas. The inspected local authority or independent school owner has to show the inspectorate that work has been carried out.