
1. Basic information

Country name: Northern Ireland

Structure of inspectorate: The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) serves all of Northern Ireland.

Size: There are 46 inspectors, including the Chief Inspector.

Remits: The ETI is a 'unitary' inspectorate and part of the Department of Education (DE), providing independent inspection services and policy advice for DE and the Department for the Economy, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, and the Home Office.

Unit of inspection: ETI inspect lessons, subject departments, schools and groups of schools, youth centres, Further Education, Initial Teacher Training Colleges, and aspects of the Education Authority, for example services to support Special Educational Needs.

What is your strapline? Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners.

Relationship with government: ETI are part of the Department of Education, Northern Ireland, but operate independently. The Department may commission ETI to evaluate specific projects for them, these may or may not be published. All school inspection reports are published.

Accountability: The legal basis for ETI's work is set out in The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (Articles 102 and 102A). The Chief Inspector provides regular comprehensive reports to the Department of Education.

2. Evaluation process

Self-evaluation: The ETI encourage, but do not demand, the use of a sector specific inspection and self-evaluation framework, available to all on the ETI website.

What do you examine during inspection? Leadership and management, provision, and outcomes for the pupils through lesson observations and evaluations, meetings with staff and scrutiny of documents. Questionnaires are sent to pupils, parents/carers and staff for their views.

Do you have an inspection framework? Is this a quality or compliance model? Inspection is designed to provide an evaluation of an organisation across the broad spectrum of its activities. ETI encourage the use of the self-evaluation framework for each particular sector. The main emphasis of the inspection and of the report is on the education and training provision and outcomes, as seen in the quality of the learners' recent standards and achievements and of the learning and teaching. There is also an emphasis on the leadership and management of the whole organisation and how this contributes to improvement.

Inspection time and resource. The length of the inspection is proportionate to the size of the organisation being inspected and varies from two to four days for schools, and up to two weeks for larger organisations. The size of the inspection team varies in line with the size of the organisation, from a minimum of two

inspectors. In addition, Associate Assessors may be deployed on the inspection team. Associate Assessors are serving principals, or vice-principals, or leaders in the education sector who undertake training by ETI and are deployed as inspection team members.

Frequency of inspections: There is an inspection cycle, currently seven years with follow-up inspections where required within two years. Schools that do not require follow-up fall into a shorter inspection cycle which is largely self-evaluative.

Main business: Along with inspections, ETI provide evidence to the Department of Education to enable the registration of independent schools. ETI provide a complaints process for parents and schools. District Inspectors provide a challenge function to schools.

3. Consequences of inspection

Reporting: ETI publish inspection reports and they are available on the ETI website. They are used by schools for improvement and dissemination of good practice, by parents for information about schools, and by the Department of Education and the Education Authority for information about learning and teaching, leadership and management and safeguarding pupils, and to inform overall area and nationwide educational information.

Grade: The concluding paragraphs of inspection reports are standardised and use one of the following:

- The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.
- The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.
- The organisation needs to address (an) important area (s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners.
- The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

Organisations that are evaluated as having the third and fourth conclusions have a follow-up inspection within two years from the inspection.

Knowledge sharing: ETI hold dissemination events for different sectors. District inspectors share practice amongst schools. Reports with case studies of effective practice are written and shared on the ETI website.

What happens following an inspection? Schools that need a follow-up inspection receive support from the Education Authority to support improvement. District Inspectors provide a challenge function to school planning and self-evaluation.

What is the stated purpose of your inspectorate? The purpose of inspection is to promote the highest possible standards of learning, teaching, training and achievement throughout the education, training and youth sectors.