

SICI – The Newsletter

July 2026

We support the improvement of education

through improving inspection processes

From the President

June has been a month that reflects the full breadth of SICI's work, from strengthening our governance foundations to deepening our shared professional learning. Following the decisions taken at our Extraordinary General Assembly in May, we are now moving into the implementation phase, with short-life working groups being established to develop the internal regulations. I want to thank members once again for your thoughtful engagement and for the constructive feedback provided as the minutes were finalised.

Alongside this governance work, our professional activity has been equally rich. The Plovdiv workshop brought colleagues together to explore future-oriented inspection, while the publication of the Cymru report and evaluation highlights the growing interest in AI across inspectorates. Member contributions including research, requests for practice examples, and updates from the NCOF continue to demonstrate the strength and generosity of our network.

As we move into the summer period, I want to express my appreciation for your continued support and collaboration. I wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer break, and I look forward to reconnecting in August as we prepare for the busy months ahead.

With warmest wishes,

Janie

SICI Bulgaria 2026

The workshop 'Future-Oriented Inspection as a Driver for Educational Quality' took place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria from 10-12 of June, hosted by the Bulgarian inspectorate of education.

It was held in hybrid format: on site and online with 98 participants from 13 countries.

Participants gather, discuss and reflect on new inspection issues, caused by dynamic changes in the technological environment and the transformation of educational systems, which also require a change in the evaluation of new realities, including, cybersecurity, using the AI. Several inspectorates presented their latest developments on increasing the impact of inspections, including better links between internal and external inspection, better interaction of stakeholders and policy makers on all levels. Particularly good interaction and quick feedback were obtained through the use of technologies and gamification for additional questions to the participants, which ensured their active participation and in-depth research of the presented issues.

Inspectors shaped their vision on the quite simple but very important question: "What does future-oriented inspection look like?" several messages emerged:

- inspection is increasingly expected to contribute not only to accountability but also to improvement.
- competency-based education challenges us to rethink some of our traditional approaches to assessment and quality assurance.
- digital transformation, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity are no longer topics of the future. They are realities of today that inspectors need to understand and address."
- inspectors play a crucial role in balancing international developments with national priorities, cultural contexts and local realities.
- future-oriented inspection is not a matter of choosing between one or the other, but of connecting all of these.

Upcoming Workshop – Scotland, 30 September–2 October 2026

A reminder that our next SICI workshop will take place from 30 September to 2 October 2026 in Edinburgh, hosted by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). The theme will be Embedding Learner Voice in Policy, Practice and Inspection, with a focus on how inspectorates gather, interpret and use learner perspectives to support improvement.

A save-the-date has been shared, and further programme details will follow shortly. We look forward to sharing a fuller overview once the final arrangements are confirmed.

SICI Cymru 2026 - Report and Evaluation Now Available

The full Summary Report and Post-Event Evaluation from the SICI Cymru Workshop 2026 are now available online. The workshop, held in Cardiff Bay from 22–24 April, brought together 63 delegates to explore the role of artificial intelligence in inspection work through a mix of presentations, practical activities, and cultural events. As the report notes, the programme “highlighted both opportunities and challenges” of using AI in inspection and provided delegates with clear, practical examples of how emerging tools can support tasks such as analysing evidence and producing digital content.

The accompanying evaluation shows that the workshop was very well received. Participants valued the relevance of the topic, the smooth organisation, and the chance to learn from colleagues across different inspectorates. Feedback highlighted the usefulness of hearing how AI is already being applied in practice, with many delegates reporting that they left with “new ideas and a better understanding of what is possible.” The social and cultural programme also contributed to a welcoming atmosphere and strengthened professional relationships.

A small number of suggestions were made for future events, including offering more advanced content, additional hands-on activities, and minor practical improvements such as earlier sharing of materials and more breaks.

Overall, both the report and evaluation confirm that the Cymru workshop provided a strong foundation for continued collaboration as inspectorates navigate the fast-moving AI landscape.

Member Request – Evaluation of Boarding Schools (German-speaking Community of Belgium)

The German-speaking Community of Belgium would welcome insights from across the network. In this system, inspections focus on schools, with findings compiled into a school-wide report that supports development. A question has now arisen about how boarding schools and pupil accommodation facilities should be evaluated, particularly where pupils live in settings that are not schools themselves but spend significant time engaged in homework, tuition, and other educational activities.

The Community is keen to understand how this is approached elsewhere. Specifically, they would like to know whether boarding or accommodation facilities are evaluated; which bodies are responsible; the standards or frameworks used; and whether any documentation exists describing how quality is monitored.

Members able to share examples, frameworks or references are invited to contact Mrs Angélique Emonts at angelique.emonts@ahs-ostbelgien.be.

Extraordinary General Assembly – Final Minutes Now Available

Thank you once again to all members for your engagement in the Extraordinary General Assembly on 5 May. This was an important milestone for SICI, marking agreement on the transformation into an AISBL under Belgian law, the transfer of the registered office to Brussels, the adoption of the revised Statutes, and the transitional arrangements that will guide us through to March 2027.

Earlier this month, members were invited to review the draft minutes and share any comments or corrections. We are grateful for the thoughtful feedback received. The minutes have now been finalised and are available online for reference.

These decisions represent a significant step forward in strengthening SICI's governance and ensuring a clear, stable framework for the next phase of our development.

Short-Life Working Groups – Call for Nominations

Earlier this month, we issued a communication inviting members to nominate colleagues for the new short-life working groups that will develop the internal regulations required to implement the revised Statutes. These groups will meet 3–4 times during September and October 2026, preparing draft regulations for consideration by the Executive Committee and discussion at the General Assembly in November.

Nominations should be submitted by **3 July 2026** using the SmartSurvey link circulated in the earlier message. Participants will be confirmed in late August.

We warmly encourage members to take part in this important phase of SICI's development.

STESSIE Final Report – 89% Approval



The STESSIE final report (Erasmus+ KA2 project 2022-1-BE02-KA220-SCH-000089675) received an overall score of 89/100 from Epos, the Flemish Erasmus+ National Agency. The evaluation praised strong project management, an evidence-based methodology behind the STESSIE self-evaluation tool, and extensive training activities across multiple European countries that exceeded original participation targets. The platform is now available in 14 languages and supports schools in assessing inclusive practices. All targeted EU priorities on inclusion and teacher support were met or surpassed. Built by international experts through Erasmus+ research, it combines staff, parent, and student perspectives into one reliable, GDPR-approved framework. More information: www.stessie.eu

How Ofsted is putting children known to social care at the heart of education inspections

Children in care are among the most vulnerable in our society and often face complex challenges that can affect their learning and wellbeing. However, we know that with the right support, schools and colleges can play a transformative role in helping these children thrive.

Ofsted explored how schools and colleges support the academic and personal progress of children in care, and how they are considered through inspection. Ofsted's renewed education inspection framework places inclusion firmly at its centre. This research informed the development of the renewed education inspection framework introduced in November 2025.

Ofsted's research team visited a range of mainstream schools and colleges during 2025. Researchers spoke directly with children in care about their experiences, as well as with school and college leaders, staff, parents and carers, social workers and virtual school representatives. The research focused on identifying effective practice, understanding lived experiences, and exploring barriers to progress.

Several key themes emerged. Schools and colleges that understood each learner's individual circumstances, rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach, were better able to provide timely and effective support. Emotional and social wellbeing was a clear priority, with learners valuing trusted adults and safe spaces. However, the research also identified ongoing challenges, including instability caused by changes in care placements, inconsistencies in local authority processes, access to specialist training, and pressures faced by learners in further education.

Overall, the study highlights the need for stable, well-coordinated and child centred support. It emphasises the importance of collaborative working between schools, colleges and partner agencies to reduce disruption, respond to individual needs and support both progress and positive experiences of education.

The full report can be found [How schools and colleges support the academic and personal progress of children in care - GOV.UK](#)

National Coordinators Open Forum – Update

The National Coordinators Open Forum met on 25 June to continue its programme of shared learning and exchange. Coordinators reviewed the SICI calendar for 2026 and noted that preparations for the

Scotland workshop are now underway, with members invited to express interest in contributing presentations.

The main discussion focused on the link between school self-evaluation and external evaluation, exploring how self-evaluation can become a continuous process rather than an activity triggered only by inspection. Coordinators heard examples from several systems, including approaches that use follow-up inspections, improvement plans, digital tools, and closer alignment between leadership evaluation and self-review practices. The conversation highlighted the importance of clarity, consistency and support in building sustainable internal evaluation cultures.

Members also shared reflections on key features of their inspection systems, offering insights into strengths, pressures and areas of ongoing development. The next meeting will continue this comparative exploration.

Call for Member Articles – Thank You for Your Contributions

As we continue to build the rhythm of our monthly newsletter, we want to thank members for the thoughtful contributions shared so far. Your articles, updates and reflections have greatly enriched each edition and helped strengthen collaboration across the network.

As we move into the summer period, the newsletter will pause in July and resume in August. We warmly encourage members to submit pieces for the next edition by **15 August 2026** at contact@sici.international. Articles of around 250–300 words work well, and photographs from events or activities are always welcome.

Your insights remain central to highlighting the breadth of work across members and supporting shared learning within SICI.

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