

Report

8

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	9 November 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Schools Inspection Framework Review: Public Consultation
----------	---

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the public consultation on proposals for Her Majesty's Inspector of Education (HMIE) school inspection framework starting in Autumn 2011; and
- ◆ request approval for Education Resources to develop an authority response to the HMIE consultation on proposals for the schools inspection framework review.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Executive Director (Education Resources), in consultation with the Chair and Depute Chair, be authorised to develop an authority response to the HMIE consultation on proposals for the HMIE school inspection framework by the closing date of 17 December 2010; and
- (2) that a report on the consultation response to the HMIE proposals be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

3. Background

3.1. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 set out the national agenda for education. The Act provides an improvement framework for Scottish Education, an integral aspect of which is the planned programme of inspection of schools by Her Majesty's Inspector of Education. Schools in South Lanarkshire have been subject to inspection in recent years as part of the planned programme.

3.2. Early in September 2010, HMIE announced their intention to undertake a planned consultation on proposals for the HMIE school inspection framework to gather the views of stakeholders on a number of proposals for school inspections. The consultation documentation cites a number of aspirations. These include:

- The need for HMIE to regularly review the inspection framework to ensure it remains up to date;
- To decide how to select schools for inspection in the future;
- To ensure that inspection is seen as a positive, partnership experience; and
- To ensure that the principles set out in the Government's response to the Crerar Review (2007) are supported.

4. Proposals for the Inspection of Schools/Scope of the Consultation

4.1. Following the completion of a cycle of inspections involving every local authority school in the country within a seven year period (six in the case of secondary schools), HMIE has continued to inspect a sample of schools (approximately 400 per year) to provide a national overview of the quality of school education in Scotland.

4.2. HMIE now propose to change how they decide which schools will be in the national sample each year. This would mean:

- Making better use of information on schools and centres in order to make sure that HMIE inspect where it really matters;
- A smaller sample of school inspections each year. This sample would cover both small and large schools and the sample would provide HMIE with enough evidence to retain a national overview of the quality of schools education in Scotland;
- Working with local authorities, through an annual process of risk assessment, to identify any additional schools that should be added to the inspection sample;
- Continuing to inspect what really matters: supporting the aims of Curriculum for Excellence by providing an independent view of how successfully it is being implemented, taking a closer look at learning and teaching, and learners' experience of their broad general education, including literacy and numeracy and health and wellbeing
- Moving away from concentrating inspection activity on four subject departments in every secondary school, instead spreading observation of learning and teaching more widely across the secondary school;
- Placing a greater emphasis on getting everyone involved, through increasing the involvement of parents in inspections;
- Increasing the involvement of staff in the inspection process, encouraging senior staff, and, where appropriate, education authority staff to participate in class visits and take part in inspection team meetings;
- To move to shorter reports which provide assurance to service users and learners on how their school is performing, including information pertaining to key areas for improvement; and
- To reduce the period of notice given prior to the inspection of a school in order to increase public confidence that inspectors observe the school as it normally works.

4.3. HMIE further note that these proposals are designed to help them to meet the challenges which all public sector bodies are facing of improving their impact whilst using fewer resources. In order to do so HMIE recognise the need to focus inspections and to concentrate effort in the places which will have the greatest benefit for learners.

5. Consultation Timescales

5.1. The consultation period runs from 23 September 2010 to 17 December 2010, and is completed via an online questionnaire. The analysis of all responses to this questionnaire is expected to be completed by February 2011. Following which HMIE intends to introduce a pilot inspection framework during the summer term of 2011 with full implementation from September 2011.

6. Immediate Challenges for Education Resources

6.1. The consultation proposals present a number of immediate challenges and questions for Education Resources. These can be summarised as follows:

- Immediate and longer term implications for Education Resources' own quality assurance procedures with schools and establishments;
- Relationship implications with schools and establishments when considering the anticipated annual "*risk assessment*" model highlighted by HMle as part of the revised model of inspection;
- An anticipated increase in specialist subject visits to schools and establishments;
- Resource implications for Education Resources to support a revised model of inspection
- Web-based publication of inspection reports

7. Employee Implications

7.1. None

8. Financial Implications

8.1. None

9. Other Implications

9.1. There are some risks associated with the proposals put forward by HMle in the revised inspection framework and they are highlighted in paragraph 6.1 above.

9.2. There are no significant sustainability issues in connection with the recommendation contained within this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

10.1. This report does not present a new strategy, policy or plan and is therefore not subject to consultation or equality impact assessment.

10.2. The opportunity for Education Resources to participate in the HMle consultation on their proposals for a new school inspection framework prior to the closing date of 17 December 2010 is noted.

Larry Forde
Executive Director (Education Resources)

19 October 2010

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

♦ Raise educational attainment for all

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

♦ Consultation on Schools Inspection Framework Review

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Jim Gilhooly, Head of Education (Quality)

Ext: 4475 (Tel: 01698 454475)

E-mail: jim.gilhooly@southlanarkshire.gov.uk