

Guidance Notes for Inspectors

Before the Inspection

The lead inspector and accompanying inspector will be designated and informed by the Monitoring Committee. A member of the Committee will be appointed to liaise with the lead inspector in order to resolve any problems, offer clarification or advice, and ensure deadlines are met.

The lead inspector should make contact with the other team member and discuss the overall approach to the inspection, taking into account prior professional experience and specialisms. Any specific allocation, for example to phases, should be agreed at this point. Dates should be confirmed, including the period identified for report writing. The lead inspector should contact the school and agree the date of the inspection, allowing a reasonable period of notice to the school and time for the preparation and despatch of documentation. (See schedule.)

The whole process should be outlined to the school to ensure there are no misunderstandings or ambiguities.

The school should be told clearly what documentation is required on site, especially in terms of quantity and organisation of the material. Dates should also be agreed for the despatch of other documentation to the inspectors.

Domestic arrangements should be agreed with the school, for example travel and accommodation. It should be made clear that while the inspectors welcome local advice and knowledge, these arrangements and the consequent expenses are the responsibility of the Association.

In all dealings with the school, the tone should be professional but diplomatic and friendly. Special mention should be made of the code of conduct.

The schedule should be re-read or checked, if necessary.

The school documentation and the last inspection report should be read very carefully, keeping firmly in mind the criteria for inspection. After reading the information and analysing the data, inspectors should share early impressions and raise key questions, but avoid drawing conclusions.

The lead inspector should consult the school timetables and draw up a provisional timetable for the day. The school should be informed of the blocks of time required and any key interview times, for example feedback to the headteacher.

Inspectors should agree the organisation and time schedule for the report writing process.

During the Inspection

The inspection should be conducted in a professional but friendly manner. There should be as much contact as possible with staff.

Adequate time should be given to the inspection of accommodation and resources.

Observations should focus on whether they enable and support a good quality British education. Health and safety is the responsibility of the local authority but inspectors should assure themselves that the school has made adequate provision.

The visit should include discussions with staff, particularly senior management.

Ample time, for example one and a half to two hours, should be allowed for the scrutiny

of pupils' work and teachers' policies and planning.

A balanced sample of lessons should be seen, for example including all phases and core subjects.

Notes should be made of all observations and meetings.

The inspectors should allow time at the end of the visit to compare impressions and key findings.

The lead inspector should feedback key findings and recommendations to the headteacher/owner and confirm the timetable for the draft and final reports.

N-B.

At the close of the inspection the inspectors meet with the school representative/s to feedback the key findings. In this way the school will be made aware of the likely main content of the final report. At this time the inspector might engage in a professional discussion about the outcomes, in particular the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is important that inspectors should not instruct the school to follow a particular course, such as recommending a specific commercial scheme or programme, but inspection should leave a school with a clear idea of the inspectors' views on its provision. The school itself will decide on the appropriate course of action.

Similarly, inspectors should be wary of any continuing dialogue with the school after the inspection is over. Some schools, naturally, might seek further help and turn to inspectors for advice. However, inspectors must not be seen as consultants and should not assume such a role after an inspection.

After the Inspection

The team inspector should send his/her observations to the lead inspector within the agreed timescale.

The lead inspector should produce the first draft and send to the team inspector for editorial comment and opinions.

It is vital that the report writing conforms to the standards and criteria laid down by the Association.

The draft report, once agreed by the inspectors, should be sent to the designated external reader for comment.

The reader checks the recommendations and conclusion are consistent with the report

The lead inspector sends official recommendation to the British Council

The reader sends comments on draft to the lead inspector

The lead inspector should include any agreed revisions and send the second draft to the school.

The school may suggest amendments based on factual information but cannot alter inspectors' judgements.

The lead inspector should write the final draft and send copies to the school, the British Council and the monitoring committee. Hard copy and an electronic copy should be sent to the Council.

A brief record of the evidence base for the inspection should be sent to the monitoring committee along with the report. This should summarise the range of lessons seen, discussions, scrutiny of work, etc. The original notes made by inspectors should be kept

for a period of one year. These may be required by the monitoring committee.

After the Report

The British Council will issue the appropriate certificate to the school.

The British Council will send a copy of the final report to the monitoring committee.

The monitoring committee will review the report and recommendations at their next meeting.

As necessary, the monitoring committee will arrange follow up action and/or consult with inspectors.