

# POST-PRIMARY Inspection Guidance

September 2017

## GENERAL INFORMATION: Sustaining Improvement Inspection

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE





## GENERAL INFORMATION: Sustaining Improvement Inspection

### Background

After a school has been evaluated through inspection, by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement, or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement<sup>1</sup>, ETI will monitor the school's continuing action to sustain and effect improvement; a sustaining improvement inspection (SII) will be used for this purpose.

Typically, schools that were evaluated as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement will receive a SII three years after their last inspection; however, there may be occasions when ETI deem a different model of inspection to be more appropriate.

The SII gives the school the opportunity to demonstrate to ETI that it continues to act effectively to sustain and effect improvement through its school development planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes. The model enables ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The inspection will typically be conducted by the District Inspector (DI) as RI wherever possible, and an Associate Assessor (AA). The inspection will take place over two days. The AA normally attends for one day. The RI will keep the principal updated on the arrangements as the inspection progresses.

At the beginning of the SII, the RI, in discussion with the principal, will identify one or two lines of inquiry linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan (SDP).

The line(s) of inquiry must be substantive and, in the case of a school previously evaluated as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement<sup>2</sup>, may include confirming that any area(s) for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection has been addressed.

During the SII, there will be a scrutiny and discussion of a specific sample of school self-evaluation documents as part of the school development planning process and

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<sup>1</sup> In inspection reports prior to July 2015, the equivalent overall effectiveness outcome was denoted by outstanding, very good or good.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2015 the equivalent overall effectiveness conclusion was denoted by good.

of first-hand data<sup>3</sup> analysis related directly to the line(s) of inquiry. This will include the school's evaluation of: outcomes for pupils; the quality of learning and teaching; and leadership and management at all levels. Typically, this will involve discussions with relevant staff members and be informed by lesson observations. The purpose of the lesson observations is to provide the school with an opportunity to present first-hand evidence of the impact of improvement work. The SII will include a review of safeguarding.

### What is the focus of a sustaining improvement inspection?

While the ETI will focus on priority areas of development and the school's evaluation of safeguarding, ETI's prime interest lies in the strength and effectiveness of the school's capacity to effect and to sustain improvement. The purpose of reviewing the line(s) of inquiry is to determine the extent to which the school is able to illustrate the impact of how its teachers and leaders (supported and challenged by its governors) use first-hand evidence to reflect on, evaluate and act on to sustain and bring about improvement in their own practice. It is this **capacity for self-evaluation leading to improvement which ETI will inspect and report upon primarily.**

### How will a sustaining improvement inspection work?

#### Notification

- Schools will receive telephone and email notification two working days prior to the SII<sup>4</sup>.
- Further guidance on the inspection process will be provided by the IST at the time of notification.
- Where possible, the RI will also make contact with the principal of the school by telephone prior to the commencement of the inspection; this should enable any queries to be clarified.
- The principal should inform the chair of the Board of Governors that the SII is taking place and make arrangements for the report back at the end of day two, at approximately 3:30pm.
- If available, a base room should be provided for the inspection team.

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<sup>3</sup> C2K are not engaged in the sustaining improvement inspection: any data must be supplied by the school.

<sup>4</sup> There may be occasions, for example, school/public holidays where the notification period will be more than two days.

- The Complaints Procedure is available on the ETI website.

### The inspection

The following inspection activities may take place over the course of the inspection.

- On the first morning, the RI, in discussion with the principal, will identify and agree the line(s) of inquiry linked to the priorities identified in the SDP. Normally evaluation of the line(s) of inquiry will lead to an analysis of: learning and teaching; action to promote improvement; actions to address any issues identified during the last inspection; and outcomes for pupils.
- At the meeting the RI and principal will discuss:
  - the outcomes for pupils, including the data trends since the last inspection;
  - how the SDP priority areas were identified;
  - the key staff involved and their role throughout the school development planning process;
  - the on-going monitoring and evaluation strategies used to measure and evaluate the impact of actions to effect improvement;
  - the school's evaluation of how successful it has been in affecting improvement in the pupils' learning and attainment; and
  - the safeguarding proforma.
- The agreed line(s) should demonstrate to the ETI the capacity of the school to effect continued and sustained improvement or its capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
- The RI will agree a programme for the inspection with the principal; this programme, however, may change as the inspection activity progresses.
- The school should make available existing documentation relating to relevant aspects of development, a copy of the SDP, teachers' planning, available data and pupils' work.
- In addition, the organisation should provide a copy of the completed safeguarding proforma signed and dated by the chair of the board of governors and the principal; any issues identified will be followed up by the RI.
- Lesson observations will be selected through discussion between the principal and the RI; the school may wish to identify particular sessions that best demonstrate the improvements in learning and teaching.

- The RI will scrutinise the schools internal and external data, including data from public examinations, including the data available through the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) dataset. No SSID will be produced and there is no involvement from C2k.
- The RI will scrutinise the documentation, including the school's internal and external performance and the quality of the pupils' work.
- The RI will arrange meetings with key staff, including the principal, members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders as necessary.
- The RI will present an oral report to the principal and chair of the board of governors<sup>5</sup> (if available) at the conclusion of the inspection.

### The quality of arrangements for safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding will be included in the inspection and reported on. On SIs, the ETI reviews and reports on the school's evidence of assurance that safeguarding reflects or reflects broadly the relevant guidance.

The ETI also determines whether the school is monitoring and reviewing safeguarding and the pupils' welfare at least annually. Schools are recommended in the DE Circular 2017/04 Guide for Schools (Para 4.2) to use the ETI safeguarding proforma<sup>6</sup> to underpin this.

- The ETI child protection/safeguarding proforma is a key piece of evidence and is designed to help schools establish the extent (ideally on an annual basis) to which they comply with child protection/safeguarding requirements and how their arrangements reflect best practice in all aspects of safeguarding pupils.
- The completed proforma (signed and dated by the chair of governors and principal) will indicate to the RI the extent to which the school (based on its own annual review) reflects or reflects broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education and Section 2(c) School Development Planning Regulations (2010).
- Schools should note that the signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by ETI as record of the school's evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.
- Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the line(s) of inquiry may change to that of safeguarding. If the school does

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<sup>5</sup> Or another representative of the governors if the chair is unavailable.

<sup>6</sup> ETI Safeguarding proforma (2017/18): Guidance for the Review and Evaluation of Safeguarding and Child Protection

not provide sufficient assurance that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments, the ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

### Documentation

There is no requirement for the school to create additional documentation for the inspection. The key documents required will be:

- the school development plan and associated action plans;
- a list of staff and classes;
- a copy of the completed child protection/safeguarding proforma signed and dated by the chair of the board of governors and the principal;
- long-term (whole-school) and medium-term (year group or class) planning;
- most recent data from public examinations;
- performance data (qualitative or quantitative data) which forms part of the development plan evaluation and review process, indicating that the actions taken are leading to improvement for the pupils, including interventions for individuals or small groups of pupils;
- individual education plans or personal learning plans;
- teacher timetables and those for any intervention groups; and
- samples of work which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes for pupils.

The SII will last for two days. The following is an illustration of the activities where the full two days are required. On all inspections, the RI will agree the timetable with the principal (and this may include a shorter duration):

**Day one (illustration):**

Day one	Activity
9 am	Team arrival; introductions.
Period 1	Initial meeting with the principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review SDP for line(s) of inquiry.</li> <li>• Completed safeguarding proforma provided to the RI.</li> <li>• Queries clarified.</li> <li>• Timetables obtained to select observations.</li> </ul>
Period 1 (onwards)	Lesson observations/scrutiny of relevant documentation. Meetings with teachers/leaders as required, eg senior leaders/middle leaders/designated teacher/literacy co-ordinator/numeracy co-ordinator. <sup>7</sup>
After school	Brief update meeting with the principal.

**Day two (illustration):**

Day two	Activity
Morning	Brief meeting with principal to confirm arrangements for day/ address any issues or concerns arising from previous day.  Lesson observation as required.  Scrutiny of documentation/class visits as required.  Meetings with senior/middle leaders.
Afternoon	Report writing.
After school	Report back to the principal and chair of the board of governors or representative of the board of governors (if available) at 3:30pm approximately. (15-30 minutes maximum)

<sup>7</sup> Throughout the guidance co-ordinator should be taken to mean co-ordinator or head or department/year/key stage, etc



The RI will discuss arrangements for meetings and the oral report back<sup>8</sup> with the principal as the inspection progresses. The short report will reference the outcome of the original inspection, the line(s) of inquiry, key findings, the evaluation of safeguarding at the time of the SII and a conclusion as detailed below.

## The report

If the school continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement or capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners, then ETI will report accordingly. If during the SII, the ETI identifies an area for improvement which the school has the evident capacity to address, it will report accordingly. The outcome of the SII will inform the timing and extent of future inspection activity.

If the school does not demonstrate sufficiently to ETI that it has sustained its high level or capacity for improvement, and/or if performance has declined, the ETI will report accordingly and the school's next full inspection will be brought forward with an appropriate degree of urgency commensurate with the degree of risk determined by ETI.

Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the focus may change to that of safeguarding. This may include identification of an area related to safeguarding in circumstances where the RI deems it necessary to report on such issues, for example, where a safeguarding disclosure<sup>9</sup> is made to a member of the ETI team by a member of staff or a pupil or there are obvious breaches of on-line safety. This may trigger a six week follow-up visit.

## Conclusion

In the case of a school evaluated as **outstanding or very good** in the last inspection:

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity<sup>10</sup> for sustained improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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<sup>8</sup> *The overall inspection outcome is subject to moderation through the ETI's quality assurance process and is not final until the report is published. The RI will mediate any changes, as a result of moderation, to the principal.*

<sup>9</sup> *If a disclosure is made the RI will follow the procedures outlined in 'Safeguarding of Pupils, Young People and Vulnerable Adults: A Code of Good Practice for Members of Inspection Teams'.*

<sup>10</sup> *From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as outstanding/very good/good will be evaluated as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement/capacity to identify and bring about improvement.*

Or

[Insert name of school] has not demonstrated sufficiently a high level of capacity for sustained improvement; this will be reflected in the future arrangements for inspection of the school.

In the case of a school evaluated as **good** in the last inspection:

[Insert name of school] continues to demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

Or

[Insert name of school] has not demonstrated sufficiently the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils; this will be reflected in the future inspection arrangements for the school.

The arrangements for safeguarding will also be reported on. If arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory<sup>11</sup>, reference will be made to a six week follow-up visit.

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<sup>11</sup> *Or the school does not provide evidence of assurance that the arrangements reflect or reflect broadly the relevant guidance.*



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