

Noelle Buick Evening Extra Interview with Seamus McKee 8/1/2014

I want to reassure parents tonight that inspection is frequent, robust and absolutely has their children at the heart of all the work that we do.

Not frequent enough according to their figs?

We have a number of models of inspection : for post primary school we have a 5 day model of inspection. For small, low risk schools we have a 2 day model and for larger primary schools a 5 day model.

How often does that happen?

For all those we have a follow up inspection process if the provision is satisfactory or below.

We have a proportionate risk based approach so we target inspections based on a number of risk categories which is around performance, District Inspector intelligence and other information that we have about schools.

So up until 2010 inspections were carried out every seven years but now they're carried out more on a proportionate risk based approach.

That's 7 years for primary and post primary?

It was that prior to 2010.

So why is it not that anymore?

Because we are taking a much more proportionate risk based approach to inspection and I think Parents Outloud are inaccurate to discount the short inspections and the follow up inspections because on those and all inspections we assess the overall effectiveness of provision, achievements and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management. So whether its a 5 day, 2 day or a follow up we evaluate those aspects of provision.

Are they all announced inspections? Yes they are

Why do you tell them you are going in?

There are a number of reasons for doing that but we have reduced the notification period from Sept 2013 from 4 weeks to 2 weeks and we are looking at reducing that further but for the moment 2 weeks works for us and the school. We want to make sure pupils are in the school, that the Principal is in the school when we come to visit so 2 weeks works all round.

Can you tell parents tonight that every school will be inspected without fail no longer than a particular interval. What is the interval that you are telling parents tonight will be the one which elapses between inspections and that will never get any longer

At the moment there isn't a set period between inspections because we are working to this proportionate risk based model. But we implemented this model in 2010 and over a six year period we will get to the point where every school will have an inspection intervention every 3 years. By 2016 that's the model that we are going to be working to. Because you will have your original inspection - if its satisfactory or below you'll have a follow up inspection within 2 years. But if you're a good or better school you will have a sustaining improvements inspection every 3 years

But I think the crucial part for tonight is to reassure parents that inspection is frequent, it is robust and it has their children at the heart of what we do.