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Education

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24 January 2014

Dear Peter

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE INQUIRY

I refer to your letter dated 10 January. I will answer each point in turn.

Information on the Irish language fluency of its Irish-medium Education inspectors

Specialist Irish-medium inspectors are recruited under the normal procedures of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, involving open competition which is advertised publicly.

A specialist inspector of Irish is required to hold a degree-level qualification relating to Irish and to be fluent and proficient in spoken and written Irish.

An update on a reported new parental questionnaire process which is said to be under trial by ETI

During 2013 ETI reviewed and revised the parental (and the staff) questionnaire used on school inspections through consultation with focus groups and in trials in the summer term of 2013. The main purpose of the review was to improve the quality of the questions and to consider implementing an online version.

From September 2013, the parental questionnaire was issued on all inspections in a web-based, online, format, in addition to its continued availability in a paper format.

Unlike the original paper-based parental questionnaire which was distributed to a sample of parents, the web-based questionnaire is available to all parents.

ETI is monitoring the uptake of the web-based version by parents throughout this school year and will make an evaluation in due course.

A breakdown of ETI's financial and personnel resources in respect of the sectors which it inspects

School provision

If we define the school provision as including early years, primary, post-primary, special and alternative education provision then the percentage of ETI time allocated to the inspection of schools, based on the 2012-13 academic year, would be 71%.

Early years (EY)	6.5%
Primary (P)	33.3%
Post-primary (PP)	25.9%
Special education (Spec)	5.0%
Alternative education provision (AEP)	0.3%
Total	71%

The number and nature of specialist inspectors in ETI

As ETI is a *unitary* inspectorate, inspectors are recruited with experience and expertise in, and contribute to inspection in, a number of different specialist areas.

As a consequence, the numbers which follow represent the memberships of the specialist panels within ETI, supplemented by some individual specialisms. As inspectors are members of several such panels, therefore the totals below are much greater than the total number of inspectors.

English/Literacy:	9
The Arts and Physical education:	8
Environment, history, citizenship and Learning for Life and Work:	4
Modern Languages:	5
Mathematics/numeracy:	7
Science and technology:	8
Careers and employability:	4
ICT:	6
Personal development:	4
Pastoral care and safeguarding:	11
Special needs and inclusion:	10
Youth and community:	3
School design:	2
Initial teacher education:	6
Mechanical engineering:	1
Electrical and electronic engineering:	2
Construction and civil engineering:	1
Software engineering:	1
Agriculture:	1

Business education:	1
Retail management:	1
Health & social care:	1
Hospitality, catering and tourism:	1
Road safety and traffic education:	1
Primary Education:	11
Early Years Education:	6

Clarity on the information and paperwork requirements that ETI requests from schools prior to an inspection

The requirements prior to an inspection are set out in the inspection notification letter and schools are clear about what is required. They obtain further advice in advance of the inspection from the Reporting Inspector, if required.

In all sectors, schools are asked to complete an ETI child protection and safeguarding proforma.

In primary, special and post-primary schools, the governors are asked to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire in relation to the effectiveness of their roles and responsibilities. The school is asked to distribute guidance material informing parents, carers and staff as to how to access the questionnaires that seek their views of the school prior to the inspection.

In the early years sector, the principal/leader is asked to complete a short statistical information sheet and to check the pre-school setting information held on the Department of Education's database and to update it if necessary.

In the primary and special education sector (and in AEP inspections), the principal is asked to complete a basic information statistics table and to prepare a short presentation overview of the key work of the school.

In the post-primary sector, two proformas are provided on the ETI website for a school to complete prior to the inspection. (Schools are encouraged to use these documents for routine self-evaluation, even if they are not due to be inspected).

The first proforma:

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-post-primary/inspection-overview-document.htm>

is a short 2/3 page overview of the school development planning documentation and processes to guide the inspection team in its review of this aspect of the work of the school.

The second proforma:

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-post-primary/statistical-data-tables-charts-and-the-schools-evaluation-of-performance-in-public-examinations.htm>

comprises the school's own evaluation and review of its achievements and standards. Part of the evidence required for the school's review is qualitative and part of the evidence is quantitative.

The school extracts, into spreadsheets, the quantitative data it requires from its own school administration system (SIMS) and can obtain hands-on assistance from C2k officers should it require help. The data extracted is a small proportion of the information which the school holds and uses routinely for management purposes. The extraction process is automated so as to reduce as much as possible any specialist skill and effort needed. The files extracted are also available to the ETI team.

An estimate of the uptake of self-evaluation among schools

All schools are required to conduct self-evaluation as set out in the Department of Education's School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

All schools undertake self-evaluation of their provision and outcomes through the monitoring, evaluation and review of the effectiveness of their action plans which are drawn up as part of their school development plan.

ETI evaluates the appropriateness of the priorities in the school development plan, the effectiveness of the self-evaluation processes and the extent to which the processes lead to improvement in the provision and outcomes. ETI reports what it finds in the inspection report on each school.

ETI finds that the quality and effectiveness of the school self-evaluation varies considerably from school to school. For example, in the Chief Inspector's Report for 2010 – 2012 ETI reported that, in the post-primary sector, self-evaluation was less than effective in almost half of the post-primary schools inspected in that period.

The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to seek its views on the benefits or otherwise of increased independence for ETI from the Department in-line with the practice in other jurisdictions

I note that you have agreed to write to the Department about the independence of ETI.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Bintley (mm)". The signature is written in a cursive style.

VERONICA BINTLEY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer